

OF ORIGINAL SIN.

Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.—

PSALM LI. 5.

THE end of the ministry of the gospel is to bring sinners unto Christ. Their way to this end lies through the sense of their misery without Christ.

The ingredients of this misery, are our sinfulness, original and actual; the wrath of God, whereto sin has exposed us; and our impotency to free ourselves either from sin or wrath.

That we may therefore promote this great end, we shall endeavour, as the Lord will assist, to lead you in this way, by the sense of misery, to him who alone can deliver from it.

Now the original of our misery being the corruption of our natures, or original sin, we thought fit to begin here, and therefore have pitched upon these words as very proper for our purpose.

They are part of the psalm which is styled 'a Psalm of Repentance.' In the beginning whereof you may observe the expressions and the grounds of David's repentance.

The expressions are, petition and confession; that in the 1st and 2d, this in the 3d verse.

The grounds of it are, 1, the object of this sin; 2, the fountain.

1. The object against which his sin was directed, ver. 4: that is, God.

2. The fountain from whence his sin sprung; *i. e.*, his natural corruption. He follows the stream up to the spring head, and there lays the ground of his humiliation, ver. 5.†

Obs. The ground of a sinner's humiliation should be the corruption of his nature. Original sin should be the rise of our sorrow. I shall not attempt a full and accurate tractation of original sin, but confine myself to the text, and the scope I aimed at in the choice of it.

And that I may open and confirm it more clearly and distinctly, I shall take the observation into parcels, and present it to you in these three propositions: 1, The corruption of nature is a sin; 2, We are guilty of this sin as soon as we are born, as soon as we are conceived; 3, This sin, thus early contracted, must be the ground of our humiliation. This we shall confirm, and then add what is practical, so representing this natural corruption in some particulars, as may humble us, render us vile in our own

eyes, and drive us to Christ, who can deliver you from the guilt and power of this pestilent evil.

I. Natural corruption is a sin; so it is styled twice in the text, both $\Pi\Upsilon$ perverseness, iniquity; and ΝΩΠ , sin. That is sin which the Lord pre-emptorily forbids. The apostle's definition of it is unquestionable, 1 John iii. 4. No greater transgression than this, since it transgresses all at once.

We are commanded to be holy; so the want of holiness is forbidden, which is the privative part of this sin. We are commanded to love the Lord with all our hearts; so the heart's inclination to hate God is forbidden, which is the positive part of this sin.

A nonconformity to the whole law of God is a transgression of the whole law; and this being such, it is not only a sin, but all sins in one.

The apostle Paul was more able to judge what is sin than any papist, Socinian, &c., and he calls it sin five times, Rom. vi.; six times, Rom. vii.; three times, Rom. viii.

The apostle's description of it, Rom. vii., is very observable; for therein you may find near twenty aggravations of this sin. I will point at them, and leave the enlargement to your own thoughts.

(1.) It is that which is not good, ver. 18. Why did no good thing dwell there, but because nothing dwelt there but this corruption, which is wholly evil.

(2.) And that we may not mistake it for an evil of suffering, he calls it sin, as elsewhere, so ver. 20, sin, and so the greatest evil.

(8.) And that it may not pass for a sin of an ordinary size, he styles it, ver. 18, *ἀμαρτία ἀμαρτωλός*, nay, *καθ' ὑπερβολήν*, excessively hyperbolically sinful. Here is a real, not a verbal hyperbole: for as in a verbal hyperbole the expression exceeds the reality, so in this real hyperbole, the reality exceeds the expression; it is so sinful, as scarce any expression can reach it.

(4.) It is a condemned, a forbidden evil, ver. 7, that we may not question, but that it has the formality of a sin.

(5.) It is a positive evil: ver. 17, 'No more I that do it, but sin.'

(6.) A perverse evil; grows worse by that which should make it better, ver. 8.

(7.) A debasing evil; made and denominates him carnal, ver. 14.

(8.) An intimate inherent evil, ver. 17, sin in him, in his members.

(9.) It is a permanent evil, *δικούσα ἐν ἐμοί*; a fruitful evil, ver. 8, all manner of lust; a deceitful evil, ver. 11, *ἐξηπάτησί*; an imperious evil; a law, ver. 23, gives law; a tyrannical evil, *αἰχμαλωτίζοντά*, ver. 28, a rebellious, conflicting warlike evil, *ἀντιστρατεύόμενον*, ver. 28, an importunate and unreasonable evil, ver. 15, forces to do that which he hates; a watchful evil, ver. 21, is present, *παράκειται*; a powerful evil, ver. 24. Who shall deliver me? A complete evil, ver. 24, a body furnished with all members of unrighteousness; a deadly evil, ver. 24, the body of death; a miserable evil, ver. 24, above all things made him wretched.

Obj. If it be objected, this can be no sin, because it is not voluntary,

Ans. 1. That rule, whatever is not voluntary is not sinful, is not universally true, nor is it admitted by our divines, without limitation; no, not when it is applied to actual sin, much less in this case.

Ans. 2. But admit this rule. Natural corruption is voluntary, both *à parte ante*, in respect of Adam, and *à parte post*, in respect of us; or, as Augustine, *sive in opere, sive in origine*.

(1.) In respect of Adam, he contracted this evil voluntarily, and we in him. He is not to be considered as one man, but as the root or representative of all men. *Omnes eramus ille unus homo*: we all were that one man, and therefore his will was the will of all men. All being included virtually in him, what he voluntarily consented to, that was voluntarily consented to by all.

(2.) *A parte post*, in respect of us. It is voluntary, in respect of after-consent. All who are capable of humiliation have actually consented to their natural corruption, have been pleased with it, have cherished it by occasions of sin, have strengthened it by acts of sin, have resisted the means whereby it should be mortified and subdued, which all are infallible evidences of actual consent. That which was only natural is thus become voluntary, and so, by consent of all, sinful.

II. *Proposition*. We are tainted with this sin from our birth, from our conception, while we are formed, while we are warmed in the womb, as the word is. Natural corruption is not contracted only by imitation, nor becomes it habitual by custom or repetition of acts, but it is rooted in the soul before the subject be capable either of imitation or acting. It is diffused through the soul as soon as the soul is united to the body. And if we take conception in such a latitude as to reach this union, there will be no difficulty to conceive how we are capable of this sin in our conception.

The prophet upbraids Israel with this, Isa. xviii. 8, 'And wast called a transgressor from the womb,' and so may we all be called, though the expression be inclusively, not only from the time of our coming out of the womb, but from the time of our being formed in it.

If I would step out of the way, I might here inquire how this sin is conveyed unto us in the womb. But the curiosity of this inquiry is handsomely taxed by that known passage of Augustine. A man being fallen into a pit, one spies him, and admires how he came there. Oh, says the fallen man to him, *Tu cogita quomodo hinc me liberares*: Be careful, cries he, to get me out; trouble not thyself to inquire how I fell in.

Thus should we be disposed as to our natural corruption, not so curious to inquire how we came by it, as careful to know how we may be rid of it. And one way is pointed at in the next particular, the third proposition, which is this:

III. *Proposition*. This sin should be the ground of our humiliation. I might confirm this with many arguments, but I shall content myself with one, which, with the branches of it, will be sufficiently demonstrative it should be ground of our humiliation, because it is the foundation of our misery. Our misery consists in the depravedness of our natures, our obnoxiousness to the wrath of God, and our inability to free ourselves from either. But this is what has depraved our natures, or rather is the depravation of them; this makes us obnoxious to the wrath of God, &c.

1. The depravedness of our natures consists in a privation of all good, an antipathy to God, and a propensity to all evil. And these three are not so much the effects, as the formality of this sin.

(1.) It is a privation of all that is good. In that soul where this is predominant, there is neither seed nor fruit, neither root nor branch neither inclination nor motion, neither habit nor act, that is spiritually

good. No spark of holiness ; no relics of man's primitive righteousness ; no lineament of that image of God, which was at first fair drawn upon the soul of man : Rom. vii. 18, 'In my flesh,' i. e., in my nature considered as corrupted. Man's soul is left like a ruined castle ; the bare ragged walls, the remaining faculties, may help you to guess what it has been ; but all the ornaments and precious furniture is gone. Is not this ground of humiliation ? Thy ruined soul can never be repaired, but by him who brought heaven and earth out of nothing.

(2.) There is an antipathy to God, and the things of God ; to his ways and image. 'The carnal mind,' Rom. viii. 7, the mind overspread with natural corruption, usually called flesh, is not only an enemy, but 'enmity.' In enmity there is hatred, malice, despite, mischievous thoughts and contrivances. This is the temper of thy soul till thou art born again ; thy heart is full of enmity, malice, &c. Oh, is not this ground of humiliation, that a poor worm should swell big with malice and enmity against the great God, should be an utter enemy to him, in whom alone are his hopes and happiness ! A natural man will not believe this. But here is a demonstration of it from another fruit of this corruption ; and that is an antipathy to the holy ways, spirit and heavenly employments, to the image of God, to holiness itself. Naturalists write of a beast that will tear and rend the picture of a man if it come in his way ; and this is taken as an argument that he has a stronger antipathy to man than is in any other beast. And does it not argue as strong an antipathy to God, when men will tear his image, vent their malice in jeers and reproaches against holiness ? Does it not argue an antipathy to holiness, when holy employments and exercises are most tedious and burdensome ? Oh the sad issue of our depravedness, when it possesses with enmity against God ! Is it not a ground of humiliation ?

(8.) There is a propensity to all evil. I say not, an equal propensity in all to every sin, but a propensity more or less in every one to all sin. 'Folly is bound up,' Prov. xxii. 15. This folly is the sin of our natures ; all sin whatsoever is wrapped up in this natural corruption ; actual sins are but the unfolding of it.

As all men are said to be in the first virtually, *in primo cuncti fuimus patre*, so may all sins, in respect of this propensity to all, be said [to be] in this first sin, the sin of our births and natures. The Seventy render sin and iniquity in the text plurally, *iv avopias, iv aquarias*. There is a plurality of sins in our natural corruption. It is all sin virtually, because it disposes and inclines the soul to all.

And is not here ground of humiliation, when, by reason of this corruption, we are not only destitute of all that is good, but disposed to all that is evil ?

2. Another part of our misery is our obnoxiousness to the wrath of God. And natural corruption is the foundation of this also, Eph. ii. 3. Why by nature, but because there is that in our natures which is the proper object of God's wrath ? 'Children of wrath ;' born to it, because born in sin. Children, this is your portion, wrath is your inheritance ; the writings and evidences for it are the curses and threatenings of the law. These make it sure, by these wrath is entailed on you and yours. From the word in the text, which we read *conceived*, and in the margin, *warmed*, comes the word which we render indignation ; *קצף*. As soon as we are warmed in the womb, the Lord's indignation is kindled against us. The corruption of our natures is its fuel. Oh what ground is here of humili-

liation, that by reason of this sin of our natures we are exposed in our conception, birth, life, to the wrath of God!

8. Another part of this misery is your inability to free yourselves from this sin and wrath. This is evident from hence: those that are born in sins and trespasses are 'dead in sins and trespasses,' Eph. ii. 1. Till ye be born again, ye are dead. There must be a second birth, else there will be no spiritual life. Every one, since death entered into the world by this sin, is born dead; comes into the world, and so continues, destitute of spiritual life. And what more impotent than a dead man? You can no more repair the image of God in your souls, than a dead man can reunite his soul to his body; no more free yourselves from that antipathy to God, and inclination to wickedness, than a dead carcase can free itself from those worms and vermin that feed upon it; no more free yourselves from the wrath of God, than a dead man can raise himself out of the grave.

Into such a low condition has this corruption of nature sunk the sons of men, as nothing can raise them but an infinite power, an almighty arm.

Nay, so far are men, in this estate, from power to free themselves from this misery, as they are without sense of their misery. Tell them they are dead; it is a paradox. They will not believe the report of Christ; they will not hear, till a voice armed with an almighty power, such a voice as Lazarus heard, do awake them. Till then, they are without life, and so without sense. Here is the depth of misery: to be so miserable, and yet insensible of it. Yet thus low has this sin brought every sinner.

Nay, if they were sensible of their misery, and of their own inability to avoid it, yet can they not, yet will they not move towards him, who only can deliver them. They are without life, and so without motion. 'No man comes to me except the Father draw him,' John vi.

They lie dead, putrefying under this corruption, under the wrath of an incensed God, without motion or inclination toward him who is the resurrection and the life.

This is the condition into which this sin has brought you; and can there be a condition more miserable?

Is there not cause to be humbled for that which has brought you so low, which has made you so wretched? Should not this be the chief ground of your humiliation? I need say no more to demonstrate this truth.

IV. Let me now proceed, in the fourth place, to make this truth more practical. And this I shall endeavour, by representing this sin to you in some particulars, which tend to humble you, to make you vile in your own eyes, and drive you to Christ, who only can save you from this sin, and the woeful effects of it.

1. Its unnaturalness. This corruption is incorporated into our natures. It has a real being in us, before we have a visible being in the world. It is conceived in us at our first conception, Ps. li., 'in sin.' The old man is furnished with all its members, before we are formed, shapen; quickened, before we are alive; and is born before we come into the world.

This makes us evil in God's eye, before we have done good or evil; and by virtue of it, we are born heirs apparent to eternal wrath: Eph. ii. 3, 'By nature children of wrath;' we are born to it; this is our title. Though men use this to excuse their sin, It is my nature; yet this is the greatest aggravation of it. We can better endure a mischief, when it

comes accidentally, than one who is naturally mischievous. Would this be a good plea for one who has plotted treason, to say, I am naturally a traitor ; it is my nature to be treacherous, murderous ? This would make him more odious : such a man would not be counted fit to live a moment.

Why do we hate toads, but because they are naturally a poisonous vermin ? That which is so accidentally, we rather pity than hate it. The Lord has a stronger antipathy against natural corruption, than we against the most poisonous vermin. A toad is good physically, *sub ratione entis*, as a creature ; all the works of his hands are good ; but this corruption is both physically, morally, and spiritually evil ; and the worse, because it is natural.

2. The sinfulness of it. It is more sinful than the most grievous actual sin that ever hath, or ever can be committed. It is in some sense more sinful than all actual sins put together.

(1.) An actual sin does but directly violate one command of God ; but this is a violation of all God's commands at once, a transgression of the whole law, a contrariety to every part of God's revealed will. For this corruption is forbidden in every commandment ; because *cum prohibetur effectus, prohibetur causa*, when any sin is forbidden, that which is the cause it cannot be avoided, is forbidden. *Cum prohibetur actus, prohibetur inclinatio ad actum*, when any sin is forbidden, all degrees of it are prohibited. Now this is the cause of the inclination to all sin ; and so it is forbidden in every precept ; and therefore this is a breach of every precept.

(2.) Sin cannot be always actual, and therefore the law is but sometimes broken by actual sins ; but this is a violation of the law at all times. We are not actually sinners before we are born ; but in respect of this, we are sinners in our mother's womb. Infants, before all use of reason, do not actually sin ; but even when we are infants, we are sinners, transgressors of the law, by natural corruption, Rom. v. 14. Death reigned over infants ; therefore infants were sinners, though not actually, as Adam. Acts are transient, this is settled, continuing against God.

(3.) Actual sin does but break the law in being, the time it is in acting. But this is a continued violation of the law without any interruption, without the least intermission, from the instant of the soul's conjunction with the body to the hour of our dissolution. There is no *lucida intervalla*, no good fits, no cessation ; well may the apostle call it *καθ' ἑαυτῆς ἀμαρτωλὸς*.

8. Its causality. It is the cause of all actual sin. Every sinful act in us derives its descent from this. This is that loathsome spawn to which all this abhorred vermin owe their original, James i. 15, *ἐπιθυμία συλλαβούσα*, &c., *i. e.*, original concupiscence, as it is ordinarily called by the ancients, or natural corruption ; having conceived, *τίκτει*, brings forth actual sin, is its mother in both. This is actual sin as it were in the egg, worse than those of the cockatrice, which by Satan's incubation is hatched, and brings forth the serpent's cursed and poisonous issue.

There was a tree of life in the garden of Eden ; and so there will be in the paradise of God, Rev. xxii. 2, whose leaves will be for the healing of the nations. But since man was cast out of paradise, a tree of death, a root of bitterness, has grown in every soul, bearing all manner of cursed fruits ; and every leaf, every bud, tends to the death of mankind. It is a vine, as Deut. xxxii. 82, worse than the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah. Its grapes are grapes of gall, its clusters are bitter ; its wine is the poison of dragons, &c. By these allusions the Lord declares the

cursed nature both of tree and fruit : Mat. xv. 19, ' Out of the heart, ' i. e., corrupt heart, or natural corruption in the heart. If you pursue these filthy streams to their first rise, you will find the spring head to be this corruption. Actual sins are nothing but this native corruption multiplied, as an hundred is but one multiplied so many times, an hundred units. It is the cause of all. If we must repent of the effects, much more of the cause.

4. Its habitualness. It is not a transient act, nor a moveable disposition, nor a dull slow-paced faculty, as all faculties are till they be habituated ; but an habitual evil, both in respect of permanency and facility in acting.

(1.) Its permanency. A habit is *χρονιώτερον* and *μονιμώτερον*, more permanent, more durable than any other quality. So is this ; it will continue while the union betwixt soul and body continues. It is *ἀμαρτία δικούσα*, an inhabitant which will never be removed till the house be pulled down where it dwells. The power of grace may cast it down, but it will never be cast out. Some streams may be dried up, but we can never in this life dry up the spring ; we may lop off some branches, but it will sprout again ; we cannot root out this root of bitterness. It is like such a fretting leprosy in our earthly tabernacles as is described to be in the Israelites' houses, Lev. xiv. Though some infected stones be removed, and the house scraped, and the walls plastered, ver. 41, 42, yet the plague will break out again. No perfect freedom from this spreading incurable plague till the house be quite pulled down. It will reign in those that continue un sanctified, till eternity ; it will dwell in the best, till this earthly tabernacle be dissolved ; a constant occasion, do the best they can, of repentance.

(2.) Facility in acting. It is the property of habits, *facile operari* ; it makes the faculty nimble, quick, and freely active. All habits do so ; but above all natural habits, because the faculty hereby has a double advantage. Such is natural corruption. Hence it is that we sin so freely, find no such backwardness, reluctance to evil, as to good : ' Evil is present,' Rom. vii. 21, *παράστατος*, it is at hand, ready to further and facilitate sinful acts. Hence where this is predominant, sinful acts proceed as freely from it as water runs down a precipice from an overflowing spring. This being born with man, he is born not only to sorrow, but to sin, as freely as the sparks fly upward ; as freely, as heavy bodies move downwards towards their centre ; they need no outward impulse to enforce their motion ; their natural gravity is sufficient, if nothing interpose to stop its course. If God should withdraw restraining grace, this corruption would carry men on to act all wickedness with greediness. Every man would turn to the most desperate wicked courses, even as freely, as eagerly, as the horse rusheth into the battle, Jer. viii. 6, need no other spur but his native wickedness, which is secretly bent to all evil, without external enforcements. Here is great cause of repentance.

5. Its pregnancy. It is all sin virtually ; all sin in gross, which is reitailed out in sinful acts. All in one ; as he of Cæsar, *in uno Cæsare multi prodiitores*. All treasons, disobedience, rebellions against the sovereign Majesty of heaven, are to be found in this. It is the nursery, the spawn, the seed, the womb ; every sin that is possible to be committed is in this womb ; so conceived, formed, animated, brought to the birth, as there needs nothing but a temptation, occasion, opportunity, to bring it forth. Those several crooked lines, sinful acts, which are scattered in any man's life, as in the circumference, do all meet in this as in the centre.

The guilt of all abominations whatsoever are complicated, wrapped up in this one. And in respect of this we are guilty of all sin, how great soever, even of those that we were never actually guilty of.

It may be thou never embruedst thy hands in thy brother's blood, as Cain did. Thou art not actually guilty of that horrid murder, but thou art habitually guilty. In respect of thy corrupt inclination, thou art as apt to do such a bloody act as he. All the difference is, and all the reason why thou doest it not, is because the Lord restrains thee; like temptations and occasions are not offered thee. No difference, but from without; corrupt inclination is equal, thy nature as bloody.

It may be thou didst never commit adultery, incest, or such abominable uncleanness; thou art not guilty of this actually, but thou art guilty of this in respect of thy inclination; these sins are in thy heart.

It may be thou didst not set cities on fire, dash out children's brains, rip up women with child; thou art not actually guilty, but these sins are in thy heart, though they were never acted by thy hands. Hazael was angry that the prophet should tell him thus much, 2 Kings viii. 12, 18. But he acted that afterward, when king, which he seems here to detest, so far as though he should never be guilty of them, except transformed into a dog. He was not acquainted with the desperate corruption of man's heart, which habitually inclines him to the most barbarous and bloody acts.

It may be you detest Herod, Pilate, and the Jews as bloody monsters for swearing, wounding, crucifying our meek and innocent Saviour. Ay, but this very sin, though the most horrid act that ever the sun beheld, is in your hearts. And he is a stranger to the corruption of his nature, who will presume he would not have done as they did if he had had the same temptations, and no more restraint from God.

There was no sin ever was, nor ever can be committed by evil men on earth, but it is in every man's heart, and every one, in respect of habitual inclination, is guilty of it. If men believe this, sure there would need no arguments to shew the necessity of repentance for this corruption. But no wonder if it be not believed, since the heart, as it is 'desperately wicked,' so it is deceitful; the prophet joins them: Jer. xvii. 9, 'Deceitful above all things,' and will not be known; 'desperately wicked,' so wicked as it cannot be known; natural corruption is so great, so pregnant, there is so much wickedness, so many sins in the heart, as we may despair of knowing them. But what we are able to know we should be willing to bewail. They are deceived who think they are not cruel, unclean, because not actually so; they are inclined to all, though not equally to all.

¶ 6. Its extent. This contagion has overspread the whole man, and seized upon every part. Therefore, Heb. xii. 1, *σάρκα*, it is the old man, and some member of it is stretched forth in every faculty. It is a world of wickedness, and this little world man is full of it: 'from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot,' Isa. i. 6, man wholly corrupt, both in body, and soul, and spirit. There is an ocean of corruption in every natural man. And as the sea receives several names from several coasts, so does this from the several parts and faculties. In the mind it is enmity, Rom. viii. 7; in the thoughts, vanity, Ps. xci. 7; in the apprehension, blindness, Eph. iv. 18; in the judgment, evil good, darkness light, error truth; in the will, rebellion, 'we will not,' &c.; in the conscience, searedness; in the heart, hardness, Ezek. ii. 8, 4; in the affections, carnalness; in the memory, unfaithfulness, Jer. ii. 32; in the fancy, folly; in the appetite,

inordinancy; in the whole body, vileness. Every part, faculty, is naturally corrupted, and wholly corrupted in all acts.

The mind, in its apprehensions, blind; in its judgments, erroneous; in its reasonings, foolish; in its designs, evil; in its thoughts, vain.

The will, as to its elections, perverse, chooses evil, less good, seeming; in its consent, servile, overruled by corrupt judgment, base appetite; in its commands tyrannical, without, against all sanctified reason; in its inclination, wicked; in its intentions, obstinate; in its fruitions, furious.

The memory, apt to receive what is evil, to exclude what is good; to retain that which should be excluded, to let slip that which should be retained; to suggest that which is wicked, to smother what is good.

The conscience, corrupt in its rules and principles, in its injunctions and prescripts, in its accusations, in its absolutions, in its instigations, &c. So the affections.

The enlargement of these particulars would require many hours' discourse. I am forced to do as geographers, give a view of this world of wickedness in a small map; but, if you will seriously study it, you will see cause enough of repentance, if there were no actual sin in the world. As it is extended over the whole man, our whole life, so should the extent of our repentance be.

7. Its monstrousness—the monstrous deformity it has brought upon the soul. The mind of man was the candle of the Lord, but hereby it is become a stinking snuff. The soul, as it proceeded from God, was a clear, lightsome beam, brighter than any ray of the sun, but hereby it is become a noisome dunghill. It was one of the most excellent pieces of the creation, next unto the angelical nature, but hereby it is transformed into an ugly monster. Why do we judge anything a monster, but for want, defect, or uselessness; impotency, dislocation, or misplacing of integral parts? And, by virtue of this corruption, there is a concurrence of all this in the soul, answerable, and in some proportion to what we judge monstrous in a body.

A child born without eyes, mouth, hands, legs, we judge a monster. There is a defect of such powers in the soul as are analogical to these parts in the body: there is no eye to see God naturally, corruption has put it out, born blind; there is no arms to embrace Christ, though he offer himself to our embraces; there is no mouth to receive spiritual nourishment, no stomach to digest it; there is no feet to move towards God, he must renew these organs before any spiritual motion.

All those parts are impotent which are in the soul. Though there be something instead of eyes (an understanding), yet it sees not, perceives not the things of God; though there be something in the room of hands (the will), yet it inclines not to, it acts not for God; something in place of feet (the affections), yet they walk not in God's ways; if they move, it is backward, either like the idol, without motion, eyes and see not, &c., Ps. cxxxv. 16, or monstrous motion; if look, it is downward, grovelling; if walk, it is backward from God, &c. The soul, ever since the fall, is halt, maimed; all its parts broken or unjoined. *Cecidit è manu figuli.* Man's soul, framed by God according to his likeness, fell out of the hands of the potter, and so is all broken and shattered. Man's soul, wherein the Lord had exquisitely engraven his own image, and writ his own will and law with his own hand in divine characters, did cast itself out of God's hands, and fell, as the tables of stone, God's own workmanship, fell out of the hands of Moses, and so is broken into shivers; nothing is left but some broken,

scattered relics, some obscure sculptures covered with the mud of natural corruption, so as it is scarce visible. That which appears is woeful ruins, such as shew what a glorious creature man was, though he be now, to his spiritual constitution, a monster.

There is a dislocation. What remains in man's soul is monstrously misplaced. We count that birth monstrous where parts have not their due place, when the head is where the feet should be, or the legs in the place of the arms, &c. The soul's faculties are thus monstrously dislocated; that which should be highest is lowest; that which should rule is in subjection; that which should obey does tyrannise. Passion over-rules reason, and the will receives law from the fancy and appetite. The will was sovereign, reason its counsellor, the appetite subject to both; but now it is got above them, and often hurries both to a compliance with the dictates of sense. A spot, a blemish in the face of a beautiful child, when it comes but accidentally, does grieve the parents. How much cause then have we to bewail that natural, universal, monstrous deformity which has seized upon our souls!

8. Its irresistibleness and strength. Nothing but an infinite power can conquer it; none but the almighty arm of God can restrain it. Not the power of nature in men, for that it has wholly subdued; not the power of grace in the saints, for then Paul had never been captivated by it. He was, in all outward opposition he met with in the world, more than conqueror; but by this he was led captive. He triumphs over them, but he sighs and complains of this.

All the cords of love, all the bonds of afflictions, cannot restrain this. It is Satan's strongest champion; it breaks them all, as Samson did the new ropes, Judges xvi., it breaks them off like a thread. All mortifying exercises, moral persuasions, spiritual restraints, can never utterly quell this. See how the Lord describes leviathan, behemoth, and the warlike horse, Job xxxix.—xli., and by analogy you may collect a description of the strength and fury of untamed lust. Nor judgments, nor mercies, nor threatenings, nor promises, nor precepts, nor examples, nor resolutions, nor experiences, are, without a higher concurrence, sufficient to restrain it. What then? Nothing but that which sets bounds to the raging sea. None but he who shuts up the sea with doors; he only, who says, 'Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed,' Job xxxviii. 8—11; Isa. lvii. 20, 'The wicked is like the troubled sea;' and no wonder, since this is a raging sea of wickedness in them, which he can only bound and rule who gives decrees to the sea, and lays his commands on the waters, Prov. viii. 29; he only, whom the winds and seas obey. No limits to the rage of lust but almighty power, this bound it cannot pass, Jer. v. 22.

9. Its devilishness. There is nothing in the world that has so much of the devil in it; nothing more like him, nothing better liked by him. It is his issue, the first-born of the devil, *πρωτότοκος τοῦ διαβόλου*; he hatched it. It is the seed of the serpent, that which he begot and nourishes. It is his work, his master-piece, that wherein he applauds himself and glories, John viii. 44. Why is he the father of natural men, but because he begot corrupt nature? It owes its original to him.

It is his strumpet, is prostituted to him; if any *succubus* in the world, this is it. There is a carnal, though invisible conjunction betwixt it and Satan; the issue of it is all the sins in the world; numerous and deformed issue.

It is his image. The image of Satan succeeded the image of God. Those black, hellish characters, which are legible in the soul, are of his own impression. As face answers to face, so does man's corrupt nature answer the nature of the devil. It has all the essential parts of it. The divine image is razed out in it, so it is in him. In it there is an averseness to all spiritual good, so in him. In it a propensity to all evil, so in him. If any ask whose image and superscription is that which is now imprinted on the soul? he does not answer truly, who does not say it is Satan's.

It is his throne. By this he rules in the children of disobedience; and here is the palace, the place where Satan dwells. This keeps him up, this advances him. By this he keeps possession of the soul; so long as any of this remains, he will have some footing.

It is Satan's correspondent. It maintains secret, constant intercourse with man's mortal enemy; it is a treacherous inmate, ready upon all occasions to betray the soul to him who seeks to devour it. This encourages him to invade, make inroads into the soul; knowing he has a strong party within that will not fail him. His fiery darts would not be so dangerous, but that there is this matter to kindle on. He would in time be weary of assaulting, but that this innate domestic enemy is so ready to open to him, John xiv. 30. There was no natural corruption in Christ for Satan to work upon, no such inbred traitor to open, no secret friend of his to give entertainment; and therefore, after three or four attempts, he quite leaves Christ, desists from his enterprise, despairing of success; but he will never want encouragement to assault us so long as natural corruption continues in us.

This should be a great occasion of sorrow, that we are so near akin to hell, have such intimate correspondence with the devil; that we have so much of him within us; that which makes us so unlike him, affords him so great advantage against us.

10. Its brutishness. It hurries the soul on, in a blind fury, to such acts and motions as right reason would highly condemn, and an apprehensive soul would tremble at; and in respect hereof man is compared to irrational creatures, brute beasts—to the horse and mule, Ps. xxxii. 9; to the wild ass, Jer. ii. 23, 24; to an untamed heifer, Hos. iv. 16; nay, worse, Isa. i. 8, Jer. viii. 7, the brute beasts will know, will own and take some notice of their benefactors. But this makes men kick against God, wound Christ, expel the Spirit in its motions, bellow out reproaches against his servants, those whom he sends to feed and nourish their souls, Prov. xii. 1. They have an inclination to that which is good, which tends to preservation and continuance of health, strength, life. But this makes men averse even to their own happiness, and all the spiritual means that tend to it; a strong antipathy to holiness, the way to life, and the most opposite to those ways that are most strictly holy. They are, Jer. x. 21, afraid of what is destructive to their life and being; but this pushes men on in the ways of death, the paths that lead to destruction, makes them love death, and make haste to ruin their souls. An appetite to drink in sin, more deadly to the soul than any poison to the body, as greedily as the fish, &c., Job [xi. 28]; delight to wound, mangle their souls unto death, Ezek. xxi. 81, the reason of this desperate fury Job gives: Job xi. 12, 'Man is born as a wild ass's colt,' brings into the world a nature more wild, fierce, untamed, than any beast of the field.

11. Incurribleness, perverseness. It becomes worse by that which

should amend it. It takes occasion to grow more wicked from that which God has appointed to restrain its wickedness, Rom. vii. 8; the more sin is forbidden, the more exceeding sinful will it be; because wickedness is threatened, therefore it will be more wicked, ver. 18; even as a dunghill, the more the sun shines upon it, it sends forth greater plenty of filthy vapours, and infests the air with a more noisome smell. There is such a malignant humour in it, as when the holy law of God is applied to it, its rage and fury breaks forth with more violence. It is exasperated by that which should tame it. When the law would restrain it, it rages like a wild bull in a net, Jer.* The heathen could observe this rebellious inclination, *nstitutur in votivum*. That is a desperate evil which grows worse by that which should cure it, but such an evil is this.

12. Its vileness. Take a survey of heaven and earth, and your eyes can fix upon nothing so vile as this. There is not anything so vile, base, contemptible in the world but has some degree of worth in it, as being the work of the great God; only natural corruption, and its corrupt issue, has not the least scruple of worth in it in any sense. It is purely vile, without any mixture of worth, vileness in the abstract. The Scripture holds forth its vileness under many notions, no one being sufficient to express it. At present take notice of one, that which is its common name. It is ordinarily called flesh, Gal. v. 16, 17, 19. Hereby is held forth the vile degeneracy of man's soul since this corruption seized on it. By creation it was pure, heavenly, spiritual, akin to the angels, as like to the nature of God as a creature could be; is now as it were transformed into flesh, mind carnal, &c.; as great a debasement as if heaven should be turned into earth, an angel into a beast, or the sun into a cloud. Nor is it flesh only, there is too much worth in that to be made a resemblance of our vile natures; it is dead flesh: Rom. vii., a 'body of death;' so vile as it is ghastly. Nay, it is deformed, leprous flesh. Leprosy was but an emblem of it, it is so vile as it is loathsome. Nay, it is putrified flesh. The old man is corrupt, Eph. iv. 24, full of putrefied sores, full of loathsome vermin; that which is more loathsome to God, exhaling filthy vapours, noisome, more offensive to God than what is most to us. Therefore man, who in integrity was admitted to intimate communion and converse with God, as soon as ever he had corrupted himself, the Lord could no longer endure him: Gen. iii. 24, 'He drove out the man.' Corrupted flesh is not fit to have so near converse with God, a Spirit.

It is both *formaliter* and *effectivè* vile. As it is so in itself, so it has made man vile. No creature so debased as man, being in this respect become viler than any creature. There is no such depravation in the nature of any creature, except in the diabolical nature. No creature ever razed God's image out of its nature, but only man. There is no aversions to the will of God, no inclination to what offends him, in any creature on earth but man. Man, then, who was once the glory of the creation, is become the vilest of all creatures, for that is vilest which is most contrary to the infinite glory, but so is our nature—Ps. xlix. 12, 'Man being in honour, abideth not'—is now like the beasts that perish; nay, worse than they, if the greatest evil can make him worse. Man was made a little lower than the angels, crowned with glory, advanced to be lord and governor of all the works of his hands; and all creatures in this world were put under his feet, Ps. viii. 5, 6. But by this natural corruption he that was but a little lower than angels is now something below the beasts.

* Qu. 'Isa. li. 20'?—Ed.

He was to have dominion, but is made baser than those over whom he rules. They were put under his feet, but now he is as low as they. This is the sad issue of natural corruption. It is a lamentation, &c.

18. Its propagation. All parents do propagate their natural corruption to their children. A woeful necessity is hereby brought upon mankind, so as none can be born without it. It is a sad consideration that parents should convey such a deadly evil to their children, but so it is. If man had continued uncorrupted, he had begot children after the image of God, and with his own similitude had conveyed lovely representations of the divine nature; but being corrupted, he begets children after his own image, which is now little better than a draught of Satan's, John iii. 6, Job xiv. 4: Job xxv. 4, 'How can he be clean that is born of a woman?' An unclean nature can have no other than unclean issue. Your cursed natures makes your children cursed. You convey spiritual death to all the children that have life from you; convey to that you most love that which makes them hateful to God. They have from you lovely bodies, but monstrous souls. Even those who are renewed cannot convey renewed natures to their children.

It is a most sad consideration that this evil is so communicative, as it does not only abide in us, but will pass to all that proceed from us; that we should convey an evil so sinful, so permanent, irresistible, deadly, devilish, to children. Take a view of natural corruption as spread before you in these considerations, and it will appear as Ezekiel's roll, 'writ within and without, lamentation, mourning, and woe,' Ezek. ii. 10.