

Reading *Original Sin*



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*A Study Guide to Jonathan Edwards' Classic on the Nature of Inborn  
Depravity*

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## Foreword

*Original Sin?* The very words strike most 21<sup>st</sup> century ears as horribly outdated, overly pessimistic, and grimly medieval. After all, this is the era of the computer chip and the space shuttle. And haven't the most learned psychologists and sociologists assured us that people are by nature good, having been turned to their evil ways not by some inner instinct but through the influence of a deviant culture and sub-standard education?

Opposition to the doctrine of original sin, however, is far from a modern phenomenon. There is a long-standing history of disdain for the notion, perhaps beginning most famously with Pelagius and his resistance to all things Augustinian. One of the lesser known but decidedly more vocal and strident voices in objecting to the reformed doctrine of original sin belongs to John Taylor (1694-1761) of England. His views were made explicit in a volume he wrote in 1735 entitled, *The Scripture-Doctrine of Original Sin*. Certainly, the best testimony to the influence of Taylor's work was that provided by Jonathan Edwards:

“According to my observation, no one book has done so much towards rooting out of these western parts of New England, the principles and scheme of religion maintained by our pious and excellent forefathers, the divines and Christians who first settled this country, and alienating the minds of many from what I think are evidently some of the main doctrines of the gospel, as that which Dr. Taylor has published against the doctrine of original sin.”<sup>1</sup>

Taylor's disdain for the reformed doctrine of imputation and original sin was grounded upon one foundational principle that he held to be inviolable: *sin and guilt are entirely personal*. One person's sin is his alone and cannot be reckoned or charged to the account of another. Neither can guilt in any sense be corporate apart from the voluntary consent of all persons involved. “A representative of moral action,” said Taylor, “is what I can by no means digest. A representative, the guilt of whose conduct shall be imputed to us, and whose sins shall corrupt and debauch our nature, is one of the greatest absurdities in all the system of corrupt religion.”<sup>2</sup> Concerning Adam and Eve, he insisted that as the sin “they committed was personal, done only by them; so also must the real guilt be personal, and belong only to themselves; that is, no other could, in the eye of justice and equity, be blamable and punishable for that transgression, which was their own act and deed, and not the act and deed of any other man or woman in the world.”<sup>3</sup>

Taylor argued that only the person who has a “consciousness” of sin can justly be held guilty for it. It is absurd to suppose that an infinitely righteous God would charge with a crime persons who had no hand or choice in its execution, indeed, a crime committed before they even existed. Such is possible only on the “purely imaginary”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Edwards, *Original Sin*, ed. Clyde A. Holbrook, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 3 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 102.

<sup>2</sup> John Taylor, *The Scripture-Doctrine of Original Sin, Proposed to Free and Candid Examination*, and the *Supplement* (London: M. Waugh, 1767), 108-109.

<sup>3</sup> Taylor, *Scripture-Doctrine*, 13.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

supposition that one man's consciousness, and therefore liability of guilt, is transferable to another. To charge God with such an act is "highly profane and impious."<sup>5</sup>

Finally, in a statement that fairly shook with indignation, Taylor sums up his feelings concerning the reformed doctrine of original sin:

"But that any man, without my knowledge or consent, should so represent me, that when he is guilty I am to be reputed guilty, and when he transgresses I shall be accountable and punishable for his transgression, and thereby subjected to the wrath and curse of God, nay further that his wickedness shall give me a sinful nature, and all this before I am born and consequently while I am in no capacity of knowing, helping, or hindering what he doth; surely anyone who dares use his understanding, must clearly see this is unreasonable, and altogether inconsistent with the truth and goodness of God."<sup>6</sup>

We must be honest and concede that Taylor's objections are unsettling. For many people, they are decisive in the debate over original sin. The only reasonable conclusion, or so they say, is that we must forever put to rest the notion that, in Eden, Adam stood as the representative head of the human race. Any concept of "imputed" guilt, as well as the inherent moral depravity of human nature, must be rejected as unreasonable if not patently immoral.

Is imputation immoral? Is it unjust? Is it wrong for God to hold us accountable for the sin of Adam? Are all humans conceived and brought forth in iniquity, enslaved to the corruption of nature that flowed from Adam's transgression? Many have responded to these questions, but none with more creativity and depth than Jonathan Edwards. Yet few have invested the requisite time and intellectual energy to read his magisterial treatise, written largely in response to Taylor, in which the traditional reformed notion of original sin is biblically explained and rationally defended.

This is why I am so pleased to see that Craig Biehl has provided us with a detailed and comprehensive study guide to Edwards' volume, *Original Sin*. Like much else in the Edwards corpus, this volume poses a challenge to the contemporary reader both in terms of its prose and the theological argumentation that he provides. Biehl's book, though short, will prove to be an extremely valuable aid for those who embrace the task of reading Edwards and evaluating his perspective. As best I can tell, no one has attempted anything similar to what Biehl has accomplished in this volume. Following upon his earlier study guide to the *Religious Affections*, this small book will go a long way in facilitating the study of Edwards and thus enlightening the modern mind to the reality of original sin and the importance of this doctrine to the Christian faith.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 385. For a more in-depth interaction with Taylor and Edwards' response, see C. Samuel Storms, "Is Imputation Unjust? Jonathan Edwards on the Problem of Original Sin" in *Journal of Reformation & Revival*, Volume 12, Number 3, Fall 2003.



## Author's Preface

In introducing the purpose of his treatise, Edwards states the importance of the doctrine of original sin as follows:

I look on the doctrine as of *great importance*; which everybody will doubtless own it is, if it be true. For, if the case be such indeed, that all mankind are by nature in a state of total ruin, both with respect to the moral evil they are subjects of, and the afflictive evil they are exposed to, the one as the consequence and punishment of the other, then doubtless the great salvation by Christ stands in direct relation to this ruin, as the remedy to the disease; and the whole gospel, or doctrine of salvation, must suppose it; and all real belief, or true notion of that gospel, must be built upon it.<sup>7</sup>

For Edwards, the Gospel stands on the doctrine of original sin as medicine to a disease. A misdiagnosis can lead to an ineffective, dangerous, or even fatal “cure.”

Edwards, then, was careful. He was biblical *and* systematic in his theology, uniting the mutually dependent parts to the whole of Scriptural truth. And while Bible interpreters can easily miss vital implications of doctrines they view as esoteric, technical, or unessential, Edwards excelled at viewing every doctrine as part of a comprehensive whole, inseparably linked as an expression of the coherent mind of God. His theology was consistent, a veritable tapestry of multi-colored threads, each united to form a beautiful picture of the infinite excellence of God and His works. In the history of the church, few were as mindful as Edwards to see the implications of the details of any doctrine to the whole of God's ultimate purpose in Christ.

Many, however, are not so careful. The impact of one truth on other critical truths, including the Gospel itself, are not always understood. For instance, the doctrine of original sin is sometimes denied by those who otherwise affirm the necessity of Christ's saving work and the Holy Spirit to produce saving faith. Others may accept that all people sin, while denying that people are born with the depraved tendency toward moral evil, though the inclination appears universal and infants who are not taught to behave properly grow up to be spoiled tyrants. Others are more consistent in denying original sin and the bondage of the will, while they affirm the ability of all people to accept or reject the Gospel as they please, apart from the absolute necessity of electing and saving grace. As one's view of the problem determines one's view of the solution, so the denial of original sin leads to the compromise of the absolute necessity of God's grace in every aspect of our redemption.

Yet, despite its essential connection to the necessity of the grace of the Gospel, the importance of the doctrine of original sin is too often dismissed and too little appreciated.

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<sup>7</sup> Edwards, *Original Sin*, *Yale Works*, 3:103; See also, Jonathan Edwards and Sereno Edwards Dwight, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Edward Hickman, vol. 1 (1974; reprint, Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1834), 145. All quotes from *Original Sin* within this study guide will be taken from either volume 3 of the Yale edition of *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, hereafter cited as “Yale”; or, from volume 1 of the Banner of Truth edition of *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, hereafter cited as “BT.” Citations from one edition will be cross-referenced to the other edition.

Edwards, however, saw its importance and labored with great care to defend and explain it. Many of his most prominent works bear directly or indirectly upon the doctrine and its significance, such as *Freedom of the Will*, *The Nature of True Virtue*, *Justification by Faith Alone*, and *The Religious Affections*.<sup>8</sup> For Edwards, the source and nature of depravity uphold the need of the Gospel. And while the truth of depravity may be the most empirically supported doctrine of Scripture (at least for those who have lived on earth for a while or driven on a freeway), its connection to *innate depravity* is not always understood. Edwards, however, shows us the necessary connection. For those looking to further a comprehensive Christian worldview with a coherent and consistent understanding of theology, or a better understanding of the necessity and importance of the Gospel of grace in Christ, few books will be as helpful as Edwards' *Original Sin*.

That said, reading Edwards can be a challenge. Moreover, the difficulty of reading 18<sup>th</sup> Century English can take second place to following the comprehensive and exacting nature of his arguments. Definitions and explanations are detailed, exhaustive, and weighty. Thus, his works are not for the casual reader who is unwilling to think them through. Nonetheless, Edwards often defends and clarifies the difficult doctrine of original sin with simple and helpful illustrations.

The study guide was originally developed for the classroom, to accompany the reading of the treatise. Yet it can stand alone for personal study or as a helpful resource. The format highlights the structure, logic, and flow of Edwards' arguments, providing a handle to better grasp the depth of his thought. And while some may lack the time to read and digest the fine nuances of Edwards' writing, every serious Christian should understand the doctrine of original sin and be well-acquainted with the biblical and theological evidence for it. My hope is this study guide will help meet that need and give aid to the direct study of *Original Sin* in homes, churches, colleges and seminaries. Yet, my greater hope is that God will continue to use Mr. Edwards to highlight our need of Christ, and move our hearts to a greater appreciation and love of the infinite excellence of His person and saving work.

Following Edwards' outline, the guide is divided into four main parts. Part One presents evidence of original sin in experience, Scripture, and the assertions of those who oppose the doctrine. Part Two presents scriptural proofs for original sin. Part Three gives evidence for the doctrine in the nature of the redemption of Christ. And, Part Four answers objections to the doctrine. Questions and points for reflection and discussion will follow each chapter to help teachers and students better understand the importance, relevance, and applicability of the doctrine to their own Christian life and worldview.

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<sup>8</sup> See Jonathan Edwards, *Freedom of the Will*, ed. Paul Ramsey, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 1 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957); "The Nature of True Virtue," in Jonathan Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, ed. Paul Ramsey, vol. 8 of *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 537-627; "Justification by Faith Alone," in Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1734-1738*, ed. M. X. Lesser, vol. 19 of *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 147-242; Jonathan Edwards, *Religious Affections*, ed. John Edwin Smith, vol. 2 of *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959). The above works are also found in Jonathan Edwards and Sereno Edwards Dwight, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Edward Hickman, vol. 1 (1974; reprint, Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1834). See also the paperback Jonathan Edwards, *The Religious Affections* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1986). All of the above works are easily accessed and searched online at [edwards.yale.edu](http://edwards.yale.edu), the website of The Jonathan Edwards Center at Yale University. References to *The Religious Affections* will be cited hereafter as *Affections*, Yale; *Affections*, BT, *Works*; and, *Affections*, BT, paperback, respectively.

Quotations from *Original Sin* are taken from volume three of the Yale edition and volume one of the Banner of Truth edition of *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (“Yale” and “BT” in footnotes, respectively). Citations from one edition will be cross referenced to the other, while the edition from which a quotation is taken will be listed first.<sup>9</sup>

I am grateful to Kenneth Minkema of the Jonathan Edwards Center at Yale University for his ongoing assistance with various Edwards projects, and many thanks to Sam Storms for his excellent foreword to the guide. Special thanks to my beloved wife, Angelica, without whom I could not have written this study guide. Ultimately, all thanks belong to our marvelous God and Savior, whose great power, wisdom, and love has provided for us an infinite remedy for our great infirmity. May a greater understanding of our need for Christ increase our appreciation of salvation in and through Him. To Him be all the glory.

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<sup>9</sup> The BT and Yale versions sometimes differ in small, inconsequential ways, such as slight adjustments to grammar, or in which words are italicized or written in capital letters for emphasis.



Part One: Evidence of Original Sin in Experience, Scripture, and the  
Assertions of Those Who Oppose the Doctrine

## Chapter One: Evidence of Original Sin from the Sinfulness of Mankind in General

### Section One: Historically, all people sin and, apart from God's grace, are subject to God's judgment.

#### I. Definition of Original Sin

##### A. Broadly defined

Original sin is often more broadly understood to include the imputation of Adam's sin or the participation of Adam's posterity in the judgment against Adam's sin, as well as innate sinful depravity. "So far as I know, most of those who have held one of these, have maintained the other; and most of those who have opposed one, have opposed the other."<sup>10</sup>

##### B. Narrowly defined

Edwards defines original sin as the "innate sinful depravity of the heart,"<sup>11</sup> or a natural "corrupt and evil disposition." For the purpose of the treatise, Edwards adopts the narrow definition because "the arguments which prove the one [innate depravity] establish the other [the imputation of Adam's sin], and there are no more difficulties attending the allowing of one, than the other."<sup>12</sup>

#### II. What constitutes valid evidence for original sin?<sup>13</sup>

A. "All moral qualities, all principles, either of virtue or vice, lie in the disposition of the heart." A corrupt "disposition" or "tendency" exists when corruption remains constant in "a great variety of circumstances," despite "great and various opposition" and forces to hinder it.<sup>14</sup>

B. *Objection:* Opponents of the doctrine of original sin accuse its proponents of selecting evidence from negative examples, ignoring positive examples and the far greater evidence of innate human goodness.<sup>15</sup>

"Men are apt to let their imagination run out upon all the robberies, piracies, murders, perjuries, frauds, massacres, assassinations they have either heard of, or read in history; thence concluding all mankind to be very wicked. As if a court of

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<sup>10</sup> BT, 146.1; Yale, 107.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> BT, 146.1ff.; Yale, 107ff.

<sup>14</sup> BT, 146.1-2; Yale, 108.

<sup>15</sup> BT, 146.2; Yale, 108-109.

justice were a proper place to make an estimate of the morals of mankind, or an hospital of the healthfulness of the climate. But ought they not to consider, that the number of honest citizens and farmers far surpasses that of all sorts of criminals in any state, and that the innocent and kind actions of even criminals themselves surpass their crimes in numbers; that it is the rarity of crimes, in comparison of innocent or good actions, which engages our attention to them, and makes them to be recorded in history, while honest, generous domestic actions are overlooked, only because they are so common?”<sup>16</sup>

“We must not take the measure of our health and enjoyments from a lazar-house [hospital], nor of our understanding from *Bedlam* [insane asylum], nor of our morals from a gaol [jail].”<sup>17</sup>

*Answer:*

1. The true tendency and disposition to evil is seen when considered apart from “the *interposition of divine grace*” that hinders its *expression*.<sup>18</sup>

Edwards, here, speaks of God’s common grace hindering the expression of the corrupt human heart. God hinders evil in the world through His work in the church, conscience, laws and judicial punishments, peer pressure, shame for bad behavior, and other such things. To see what people are truly like, observe them when nothing hinders or discourages bad behavior.<sup>19</sup>

2. The true tendency and disposition to evil is seen when considered apart from God’s grace reducing the “misery and destruction” that are the *effects* of moral evil.<sup>20</sup>

At issue is not whether a “destructive tendency” immediately *results* in destruction and judgment, but whether or not it *deserves* destruction and judgment according to God’s justice. God often postpones deserved punishment for sin. In any case, apart from God injecting grace, all people, “without fail,” become ruined by sin and subject to God’s condemnation.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Yale, 108-109; BT, 146.2. Edwards incorrectly attributes the quote to Turnbull, but in his entry in the “Book of Controversies,” Edwards rightly attributes it to Hutcheson from *The Nature and Conduct of the Passions* (London, 1728, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed., 1742), 185-87. See *Works of Jonathan Edwards Online, Volume 27, “Controversies” Notebook* (Jonathan Edwards Center, Yale University, 2008), 96.

<sup>17</sup> John Taylor, *The Scripture-Doctrine of Original Sin, Proposed to Free and Candid Examination* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Belfast, 1746), 353. Hereafter cited as Taylor, *Original Sin*. Quoted in BT, 146.2; Yale, 109.

<sup>18</sup> BT, 147.1-2; Yale, 109-111.

<sup>19</sup> We are all familiar with the axiom, “power corrupts.” Actually, power does not corrupt, *per se*. Rather, power removes constraints on bad behavior, allowing innate and previously constrained corruption in the heart to manifest itself without immediate negative consequences. Hitler was evil before he gained the power that allowed him to act without immediate negative consequences to himself.

<sup>20</sup> BT, 147.1-2; Yale, 109-111.

<sup>21</sup> BT, 147.2-148.1; Yale, 111-113.

III. *Objection*: God's justice is contrary to the imputation of Adam's sin and people being born corrupt.<sup>22</sup>

*Answer*:

- A. Not if people are actually born with "a tendency to sin" and under judgment for sin apart from God's grace preventing it.<sup>23</sup>
- B. If God's justice is contrary to the imputation of Adam's sin and people being born corrupt, then people could be saved according to God's justice without the need of grace. But all people need grace to be saved.<sup>24</sup>

IV. Edwards' proposition concerning original sin<sup>25</sup>

- A. All people, without exception, are subject to God's judgment and wrath.
- B. That all people are justly subject to God's wrath infers a propensity to sin.

V. Edwards' approach in proving original sin<sup>26</sup>

- A. Demonstrates that all people, without fail, sin.
- B. Demonstrates that, apart from God's grace, all people would be justly judged and condemned by God.

VI. Scriptural evidence for Edwards' proposition and approach<sup>27</sup>

- A. All people sin.<sup>28</sup>

1 Kings 8:46: "*There is no man that sinneth not.*"

Ecclesiastes 7:20: "*For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.*"

Psalms 143:2: "*And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.*"

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<sup>22</sup> BT, 147.2ff.; Yale, 111ff.

<sup>23</sup> BT, 147.2; Yale, 111.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. Here Edwards adroitly pits Taylor against Taylor, showing the inconsistency of Taylor's denial of original sin with Taylor's affirmation of the necessity of the grace of God in Christ for salvation. Edwards notes that many of Taylor's arguments concerning the Gospel depend on the "supposition" of original sin, though Taylor does not see the connection. See BT, 147.1-2, footnote; Yale, 111-112, and footnote 6.

<sup>25</sup> BT, 148.1; Yale, 113.

<sup>26</sup> BT, 148.1; Yale, 114.

<sup>27</sup> BT, 148.1ff.; Yale, 114ff.

<sup>28</sup> BT, 148.1; Yale, 114-115.



Romans 3:19-20: “Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.<sup>20</sup> Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.”

Galatians 2:16: “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”

1 John 1:7-10: “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.<sup>8</sup> If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.<sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.<sup>10</sup> If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”

Exodus 30:11-16

B. All people are subject to God’s righteous judgment and condemnation.<sup>29</sup>

Romans 4:14: “For if they which are of the law *be* heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect.”

2 Corinthians 3:6-9: “Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.<sup>7</sup> But if the ministration of death, written *and* engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which *glory* was to be done away:<sup>8</sup> How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?<sup>9</sup> For if the ministration of condemnation *be* glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.”

Galatians 3:10: “For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.”

Galatians 3:22: “But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.”

## VII. Conclusion

“I trust, none will deny, that the proposition that was laid down, is fully proved, as agreeable to the word of God, and Dr. Taylor’s own words;<sup>30</sup> viz. that mankind are all

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<sup>29</sup> BT, 148.1-149.2; Yale, 115-119.

naturally in such a state, as is attended, without fail, with this consequence or issue, that they universally are the subjects of that guilt and sinfulness, which is, in effect, their utter and eternal ruin, being cast wholly out of the favor of God, and subjected to his everlasting wrath and curse.”<sup>31</sup>

## Section Two: Universal sin proves a sinful propensity.

### I. All people sin and therefore have a propensity to sin.<sup>32</sup>

A. A propensity to sin can exist even if one’s good works outweigh one’s sin (hypothetically; whether goods works can actually outweigh sin will be addressed later).<sup>33</sup>

“If all mankind in all nations and ages, were at least one day in their lives deprived of the use of their reason, and raving mad; or that all, even every individual person, once cut their own throats, or put out their own eyes; it might be an evidence of some tendency in the nature or natural state of mankind to such an event; though they might exercise reason many more days.”<sup>34</sup>

B. The nature and extent of the cause is seen from the nature and extent of the effect.<sup>35</sup>

“If a die be once thrown, and it falls on a particular side, we do not argue...that that side is heaviest; but if it be thrown without skill or care, many...millions of times, and it constantly falls on the same side, we have not the least doubt in our minds, but that here is something of propensity in the case.”<sup>36</sup>

“A steady effect argues a steady cause.”<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Edwards provides a litany of quotes from Taylor’s *Key to the Apostolic Writings, with a Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistle to the Romans* (Dublin, 1746), hereafter referred to as *Key*, where Taylor affirms that the moral law is still in effect, that it requires perfect obedience, that it subjects “every transgression to the penalty of death,” and that it supplies “neither help nor hope to the sinner; but leaveth him under the power of sin, and sentence of death” (p. 207). See Yale 116-18; BT, 148.2-149.1. Edwards demonstrates that in numerous instances Taylor clearly affirms in his *Key* what he denies in his treatise on *Original Sin*. Edwards notes, “I am sensible these things are quite inconsistent with what he says elsewhere, of sufficient power in all mankind constantly to do the whole duty which God requires of ‘em, without a necessity of breaking God’s law in any degree (pp. 339, 340, 344, 348). But I hope, the reader will not think me accountable for his inconsistencies.” Yale, 117, fn 7; BT, 149.1-2, fn. The page references are to Taylor’s *Original Sin*.

<sup>31</sup> Yale, 119; BT, 149.2.

<sup>32</sup> BT, 149.2ff.; Yale, 120ff.

<sup>33</sup> BT, 149.2; Yale, 120-121.

<sup>34</sup> BT, 149.2; Yale, 120.

<sup>35</sup> BT, 149.2-150.1; Yale, 121-122.

<sup>36</sup> BT, 150.1; Yale, 121-122.

<sup>37</sup> BT, 150.1; Yale, 121.

- C. Dr. Taylor's own words concerning sin, the law, and the necessity of God's grace in Christ for salvation, apart from whom none can be saved, affirms that all people are prone to sin. For example, Edwards quotes Taylor's *Original Sin*:<sup>38</sup>

“Man, who drinketh in iniquity like water; who is attended with so many sensual appetites, and so apt to indulge them.”

“We are very apt, in a world full of temptation, to be deceived, & drawn into sin by bodily appetites.”

Speaking of Taylor's view of the law, Edwards writes: “Our author speaks of it as impossible for the law requiring sinless obedience, to give life, not that the law was weak in itself, but through the weakness of our flesh. Therefore, he says, he conceives the law not to be a dispensation suitable to the infirmity of the human nature in its present state. These things amount to a full confession, that the proneness of men to sin, and to a demerit of and just exposedness to eternal ruin by sin, is universally invincible...the highest kind of tendency, or propensity.”<sup>39</sup>

- D. The same sinful effect among the various and differing circumstances and influences upon the minds of people point to an internal rather than external cause.<sup>40</sup>

All people have a propensity to sin, given that all people are sinners and subject to God's judgment for sin, “of all constitutions, capacities, conditions, manners, opinions, and educations; in all countries, climates, nations, and ages; and through all the mighty changes and revolutions, which have come to pass in the inherited world.”<sup>41</sup>

- II. *Objection*: Mankind's propensity is toward good, but “the general constitution and frame of this world,” with its “strong temptations everywhere,” leads people to sin.<sup>42</sup>

*Answer*:

- A. “If any creature be of such a nature that it proves evil in its proper place, or in the situation which God has assigned it in the universe, it is of an evil nature.”<sup>43</sup>

“If mankind are of such a nature, that they have an universal effectual tendency to sin and ruin in this world, where God has made and placed them, this is to be looked upon as a pernicious tendency belonging to their nature.”<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> BT, 150.1-2; Yale, 123-124. Here again, as throughout the treatise, Edwards skillfully uses Dr. Taylor's own doctrine to prove the doctrine of original sin.

<sup>39</sup> Yale, 124; BT, 150.2.

<sup>40</sup> BT, 150.2-151.1; Yale, 124-125.

<sup>41</sup> BT, 150.2; Yale, 124.

<sup>42</sup> BT, 151.1ff.; Yale, 125ff.

<sup>43</sup> Yale, 125; BT, 151.1.

<sup>44</sup> Yale, 126; BT, 151.1.

- B. One of the main objections to original sin is that it makes God the author of corruption by His creating people corrupt or by Him putting an innocent soul in a corrupt body by which the soul is made corrupt. But the present objection does just that, in that it makes God the cause of sin by His placing innocent but weak people into a corrupt world that will inevitably produce corruption in all people.<sup>45</sup>

“Who placed the soul here in this world? And if the world be polluted, or so constituted as naturally and infallibly to pollute the soul with sin, who is the cause of this pollution? And, who created the world—?”<sup>46</sup>

In this Edwards also intimates the logical problem of the objection being circular reasoning, i.e., people are evil because the examples of people are evil. He will more directly address this problem with Taylor’s “bad example” objection later.

- C. God made the world good.<sup>47</sup>

### **Section Three: Man’s propensity to evil indicates a corrupt soul.**

- I. The heart is righteous or sinful as it tends toward a state of righteousness and God’s favor, or guilt and “abhorrence” before God.<sup>48</sup>

According to God’s perfect justice, “persevering sinless righteousness” is the basis of acceptance by God, while “the guilt of sin” is the basis of rejection by God. At issue is toward which of these is the “tendency” and “nature” of man’s heart?<sup>49</sup>

- II. If the heart has a prevailing tendency toward sin and guilt before God, to speak of good works exceeding bad works is “wholly impertinent.”<sup>50</sup>

- A. An evil inclination and its consequences of eternal ruin outweigh the evil and consequences of any amount of good works.<sup>51</sup>

“Let never so many thousands, or millions of acts of honesty, good nature, etc. be supposed; yet, by the supposition, there is an unfailing propensity to such moral evil, as in its dreadful consequences infinitely outweighs all effects or consequences of any supposed good. Surely that tendency, which, in effect, is an infallible tendency to eternal destruction, is an infinitely dreadful and pernicious tendency.”<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Yale, 126-127; BT, 151.1-2.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Yale, 127; BT, 151.2.

<sup>48</sup> BT, 151.2ff.; Yale, 128ff.

<sup>49</sup> BT, 151.2; Yale, 128.

<sup>50</sup> BT, 151.2ff.; Yale, 128ff.

<sup>51</sup> BT, 151.2-152.1; Yale, 128-129.

<sup>52</sup> Yale, 128; BT, 152.1.

“It would be much more absurd, to suppose that such a state of nature is good, or not bad, under a notion of men’s doing more honest and kind things, than evil ones; than to say, the state of that ship is good, to cross the Atlantick Ocean in, that is such as cannot hold together through the voyage, but will infallibly founder and sink by the way; under a notion that it may probably go great part of the way before it sinks, or that it will proceed and sail above water more hours than it will be sinking.”<sup>53</sup>

B. The evil inclination that results in the “natural evil” of sorrow and destruction is also “moral evil” that makes one “odious in the sight of God, and liable, as such, to be condemned, and utterly rejected and cursed by him.” As “opposite to that which the moral law requires and insists upon, and prone to that which the moral law utterly forbids, and eternally condemns,” it is a “corrupt tendency.”<sup>54</sup>

C. All human virtue and merit are nothing relative to mankind’s propensity to sin and guilt.<sup>55</sup> One sin is infinitely evil before God.

1. The wickedness of sin is great relative to the obligation to an infinitely worthy God.<sup>56</sup>

2. Paying what is owed is not meritorious, while refusing to pay what is owed is condemnable.<sup>57</sup>

“There is no great merit in paying a debt we owe, and by the highest possible obligations in strict justice are obliged to pay; but there is great demerit in refusing to pay it. That on such accounts as these there is an infinite demerit in all sin against God, which must therefore immensely outweigh all the merit which can be supposed to be in our virtue.”<sup>58</sup>

3. To break the law in one point is to be guilty of breaking the whole law and to come under the curse of the law.<sup>59</sup>

Thus, the value of all of one’s virtuous acts is rendered nothing in light of the evil of a single sin.

“How absurd must it be for Christians to...talk of a prevailing innocency, good nature, industry and cheerfulness of the greater part of mankind! Infinitely more absurd, that it would be to insist, that the domestic of a prince was not a bad servant, because though sometimes he contemned and affronted his

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<sup>53</sup> Yale, 129; BT, 152.1.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> BT, 152.1-153.1; Yale, 130-133.

<sup>56</sup> BT, 152.1; Yale, 130.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> BT, 152.1-2; Yale, 130.

<sup>59</sup> BT, 152.2-153.1; Yale, 130-133.

master to a great degree, yet he did not spit in his master's face so often as he performed acts of service. More absurd, that it would be to affirm, that his spouse was a good wife to him, because, although she committed adultery, and that with the slave and scoundrels sometimes, yet she did not do this so often as she did the duties of a wife. These notions would be absurd, because the crimes are too heinous to be atoned for, by many honest actions of the servant or spouse of the prince; there being a vast disproportion between the merit of the one, and the ill desert of the other: but infinitely less, than that between the demerit of our offences against God, and the value of our acts of obedience.”<sup>60</sup>

#### **Section Four: All sin as soon as they are capable of sinning.**

- I. Scripture says that “all mankind, *all flesh, all the world*, every man living, are guilty of sin.”<sup>61</sup>

1 John 1:8-10: “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. <sup>10</sup> If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”

Proverbs 20:9: “Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?”

Ecclesiastes 7:20: “For *there is* not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.”

If mankind does not have a propensity to sin, then a “great number” of people who have lived or are living would have been sinless and righteous before God.

- II. Mankind has a “prevailing propensity to be *continually* sinning against God.”<sup>62</sup>

“That same disposition of nature, which is an effectual propensity to immediate sin, amounts to a propensity to continual sin. For a being prone to continual sinning is nothing but a proneness to immediate sin continued.”<sup>63</sup>

- III. The “remaining depravity of heart in the greatest saints” requires chastening.<sup>64</sup>

Hebrews 12:6-8: “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. <sup>7</sup> If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for

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<sup>60</sup> BT, 153.1; Yale, 132-133.

<sup>61</sup> Yale, 134ff.; BT, 153.1ff.

<sup>62</sup> Yale, 136ff.; BT, 153.2ff.

<sup>63</sup> Yale, 136; BT, 153.2.

<sup>64</sup> Yale, 137ff.; BT, 154.1ff.

what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? <sup>8</sup> But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.”

**Section Five: By the standard of God’s law, man sins, in heart and practice, far more than he is righteous.**

- I. Man sins not only from doing what is forbidden, but by not doing what is required in heart and deed.<sup>65</sup>

Matthew 25:31-46

1 Corinthians 16:22: “If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.”

- II. The sum of our duty is love to God with all our heart.<sup>66</sup>

“Obedience is nothing, any otherwise than as a testimony of the respect of our hearts to God.”<sup>67</sup>

- III. *Therefore*, whoever withholds more love than gives love to God, has more sin than righteousness.<sup>68</sup>

“What considerate person is there, even among the more virtuous part of mankind, but what would be ashamed to say, and profess before God or men, that he loves God half so much as he ought to do; or that he exercises one half of that esteem, honor and gratitude towards God, which would be altogether becoming him; considering what God is, and what great manifestations he has made of his transcendent excellency and goodness, and what benefits he receives from him? And if few or none of the best of men can with reason and truth make even such a profession, how far from it must the generality of mankind be?”<sup>69</sup>

“God is in himself worthy of infinitely greater love, than any creature can exercise towards him: he is worthy of love equal to his perfections, which are infinite,” though “we are doubtless obliged to love God to the utmost of what is possible for us, with such faculties, and such opportunities and advantages to know God, as we have.”<sup>70</sup>

- IV. Examples<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> BT, 154.2ff.; Yale, 139ff.

<sup>66</sup> BT, 154.2; Yale, 140.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> BT, 154.2ff; Yale, 140ff.

<sup>69</sup> Yale, 140-141; BT, 155.1.

<sup>70</sup> Yale, 141; BT, 155.1.

<sup>71</sup> BT, 155.2ff; Yale, 142ff.

A. Gratitude for what God has done

“If we consider how various, innumerable, and vast the benefits we receive from God, how infinitely great and wonderful that grace, which is revealed and offered to them who live under the gospel--in that eternal salvation which is procured by God giving his only-begotten Son to die for sinners--and also how unworthy we are all, deserving...eternal perdition under God’s wrath and curse--how great is the *gratitude* that would become us, who are the subjects of so many and great benefits!...But ho! what poor returns!--How little the gratitude! How low, how cold and inconstant, the affection in the best, compare with the obligation! And what then shall be said of the gratitude of the generality?”<sup>72</sup>

“Man, if his heart were not depraved, might have had a disposition to *gratitude to God for his goodness*, in proportion to his disposition to *anger towards men for their injuries*.”<sup>73</sup>

B. Love to God for who He is in Himself<sup>74</sup>

“If we regard the Most High according to the infinite dignity and glory of his nature, we shall esteem and love him with all our heart and soul, and to the utmost of the capacity of our nature, on this account; and not primarily because he has promoted our interest. If God be infinitely excellent in himself, then he is infinitely lovely on that account; or in other words, infinitely worthy to be loved.”<sup>75</sup>

“How little there is of this disinterested love to God, this pure divine affection, in the world. How very little indeed in comparison of other affections altogether diverse, which perpetually urge, actuate, and govern mankind, and keep the world, through all nations and ages, in a continual agitation and commotion! This is an evidence of a horrid contempt of God. It would justly be esteemed a great instance of disrespect and contempt of a prince, if one of his subjects, when he came into his house, should set him below his meanest slave. But in setting the infinite JEHOVAH below earthly objects and enjoyments, men degrade him below those things, between which and him there is an infinitely greater distance, that between the highest earthly potentate and the most abject mortals.”<sup>76</sup>

V. *Objection*: If people sin more in heart and action than they are righteous, then sin is the predominant principle in true saints, which is contrary to Scripture.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> BT, 155.2; Yale, 142-143.

<sup>73</sup> BT, 155.2; Yale, 143.

<sup>74</sup> BT, 155.2-156.1; Yale, 144-145.

<sup>75</sup> BT, 156.1; Yale, 144. For further discussion on the nature of true love to God for his excellence, without primary consideration of self-interest, see *Affections*, Yale, 2:240-253; BT, *Works*, 1:274-278; BT, paperback, 165-179.

<sup>76</sup> BT, 156.1; Yale, 144-145.

<sup>77</sup> BT, 156.1ff.; Yale, 145ff.



*Answer:*

- A. Though saints may not love God as much as they should, the prevailing bent of their heart is love to God more than all other things of the world.<sup>78</sup>

“A person may love a father, or some great friend and benefactor, of a very excellent character, more than some other object, a thousand times less worthy of his esteem and affection, and yet love him ten times less than he ought; and so be chargeable, all things considered, with a deficiency in respect and gratitude, that is very unbecoming and hateful.... Evil affections radically consist in inordinate love to other things besides God.”<sup>79</sup>

To love God is to love Him for who He is, as “supremely excellent” and worthy of “supreme respect,” from a heart that adores and respects God “above all.”<sup>80</sup>

- B. God is faithful to His New Covenant promises to keep, strengthen, protect, and perfect His people, to maintain the dominant principle of holiness in the heart of a saint.<sup>81</sup>

### **Section Six: Innate depravity is displayed by a high degree of foolishness in religion.**

- I. Mankind is prone to idolatry.<sup>82</sup>

- A. History displays that all people are prone to idolatry.<sup>83</sup>

“All nations, in all parts of the world, ages after ages, continued without the knowledge and worship of the true God, and overwhelmed in gross idolatry, without the least appearance or prospect of its recovering itself from so great blindness, or returning from its brutish principles and customs, till delivered by divine grace.”<sup>84</sup>

Left to their own tendency and contrary to clear evidence, all nations and peoples revert to idolatry, including Israel and the greatest and most learned Gentile nations, such as Greece, Egypt, and Rome. Deliverance from idolatry is only and always by God’s intervening grace.<sup>85</sup> And even when Israel was delivered from idolatry by God’s power and grace, they soon relapsed “into the notions and ways

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<sup>78</sup> BT, 156.1; Yale, 145.

<sup>79</sup> Yale, 145-146; BT, 156.1-2.

<sup>80</sup> Yale, 146; BT, 156.2.

<sup>81</sup> BT, 156.2; Yale, 146.

<sup>82</sup> BT, 156.2-158.1; Yale, 148-152.

<sup>83</sup> BT, 156.2-157.1; Yale, 147-148.

<sup>84</sup> BT, 156.2; Yale, 147.

<sup>85</sup> BT, 156.2-157.2; Yale, 147-151.

of the heathen,” and “never were recovered, but by divine gracious interposition.”<sup>86</sup>

The great variety and number of “countries, nations and climates...through successive changes, revolutions and ages,” are a “sufficient trial” of the inclination of mankind.<sup>87</sup> History provides sufficient evidence.

B. Scripture declares that all people are prone to idolatry.<sup>88</sup>

Jeremiah 2:12-13: “Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the LORD. <sup>13</sup> For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, *and* hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.”

Romans 1:28: “And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.”

C. The foolishness and universality of idolatry, as contrary to the better knowledge of people in the face of clear and compelling evidence of the true God in the world, indicates a universal disposition to idolatry.<sup>89</sup>

“The universality of the effect shows that the cause was universal, and not any thing belonging to the particular circumstances of one, or only some nations or ages, but something belonging to that nature which is common to all nations, and which remains the same through all ages.”<sup>90</sup>

D. Even the opponents of the doctrine of original sin agree that idolatry is foolish as contrary to better knowledge and the clear evidence for the existence of God, indicating a corrupt disposition to idolatry.<sup>91</sup>

“And what other cause could this great effect possibly arise from, but a depraved disposition, natural to all mankind? It could not arise from want of a sufficient capacity or means of knowledge. This is in effect confessed on all hands.”<sup>92</sup>

Citing Romans 1:20, John Locke writes, “Our own existence, and the sensible parts of the universe, offer the proofs of a Deity so clearly and cogently to our thoughts, that I deem it impossible for a considerate man to withstand them. For I

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<sup>86</sup> Yale, 147; BT, 156.2-157.1.

<sup>87</sup> Yale, 148; BT, 157.1.

<sup>88</sup> BT, 157.1; Yale, 148.

<sup>89</sup> BT, 157.1-158.1; Yale, 148-152.

<sup>90</sup> BT, 157.1; Yale, 148.

<sup>91</sup> Edwards cites Taylor, Turnbull, and Locke, three opponents of the doctrine of original sin, as unwittingly affirming original sin by acknowledging the foolishness of idolatry in the face of the clear evidence for God.

<sup>92</sup> Yale, 148; BT, 157.1.

judge it as certain and clear a truth, as can anywhere be delivered, that the invisible things of God are clearly seen from the creation of the world, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead.”<sup>93</sup>

E. History has provided evidence and proof of the universal depravity of the human heart to “the utmost degree.”

History has provided sufficient trial, evidence, and proof of mankind’s depraved heart and universal tendency toward idolatry. This pervasive bent is contrary, “in the utmost degree,” to “the highest end, the main business and chief happiness of mankind, consisting in the knowledge, service and enjoyment of the living God, the Creator and Governor of the world,” to the advantage given by God to man’s understanding, as vastly superior to the animals, that we might know God, and to “the first and greatest commandment of the moral law, that we should have no other gods before Jehovah, and that we should love and adore him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.”<sup>94</sup>

II. People unreasonably disregard their own eternal interest,<sup>95</sup> and “that disposition of mind which is a propensity to act contrary to reason, is a depraved disposition.”<sup>96</sup>

A. People are prudent, reasonable, and diligent regarding temporal interests.<sup>97</sup>

1. They provide for the future as well as the present.
  - They lay up money for the future.
  - They provide for their children’s future.
  - They take care in summer to provide for winter.
2. They understand the uncertainty of their own life and the lives of others and take care to protect their earthly interests.
3. They are quick to see and take advantage of opportunities that further their self-interest.
  - The farmer sows seed in the proper season for a crop.
  - The merchant takes advantage of opportunities to profit.
4. They protect their interests and are alarmed at threats to them.

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<sup>93</sup> John Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1<sup>st</sup> Ed., 1690), hereafter referred to as Lock, *Essay*. Quoted by Edwards in BT, 157.1; Yale, 149. Edwards similarly cites Turnbull and Taylor as acknowledging the inexcusableness of idolatry, even though they deny its universal cause--original sin. See BT, 157.1-158.1; Yale, 148-151.

<sup>94</sup> Yale, 151-152; BT, 158.1.

<sup>95</sup> BT, 158.1ff.; Yale, 152ff.

<sup>96</sup> Yale, 153; BT, 158.1.

<sup>97</sup> BT, 158.2; Yale, 153-154.

5. They clearly understand the tradeoff of short-term gain versus long-term loss, or vice versa, or the tradeoff of something of lesser value for something of greater value.
- B. In matters of infinite importance, with eternal consequences (compared to the few years in this life), people are disinterested and act contrary to reason.<sup>98</sup>
1. People act contrary to what is obviously in their self-interest.

“When infinite happiness is put in one scale, against infinite misery in the other; if the worst that comes to the pious man, if he mistakes, be the best that the wicked man can attain to, if he be in the right; who can, without madness, run the venture: who in his wits would choose to come within a possibility of infinite misery? Which if he miss, there is yet nothing to be got by that hazard: whereas, on the other side, the sober man ventures nothing, against infinite happiness to be got, if his expectations come to pass.”<sup>99</sup>

“Agreeable to what has been cited from Mr. Locke, though eternal things were considered in their bare possibility, if men acted rationally, they would infinitely outweigh all temporal things in their influence on their hearts.”<sup>100</sup>

Reason easily understands that one or a hundred years of “the greatest worldly prosperity” is nothing compared to “salvation from exquisite eternal misery, and the enjoyment of everlasting glory and felicity.”<sup>101</sup>

“Men act as great enemies to themselves, as though they loved their own ruin.”<sup>102</sup>

Psalm 49:11: “Their inward thought *is, that* their houses *shall continue* for ever, *and* their dwelling places to all generations; they call *their* lands after their own names.”

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<sup>98</sup> BT, 158.2-159.2; Yale, 154-157. Note, in the present argument Edwards uses “reason” and “reasonable” to refer to how people normally think with respect to their temporal interests. As evidenced by the arguments of this treatise, Edwards does not believe that fallen people think or reason in a “neutral” or “innocent” fashion, for the fallen understanding and will (heart, mind) are corrupt and hostile to God.

<sup>99</sup> Locke, *Essay*, quoted by Edwards in Yale, 153; BT, 158.1.

<sup>100</sup> Yale, 156-157; BT, 159.2. Locke, quoted by Edwards in Yale, 153; BT, 158.1. Edwards, again, uses an opponent of original sin to prove the existence of original sin. Locke acknowledges that in the same way people reject the clear evidence for God, so they act contrary to the obvious risks involved in their choice to not seek God by virtuous living. According to Edwards, that people act contrary to this understanding is evidence of a “depraved disposition.” The Locke passage is reminiscent of “Pascal’s Wager,” though Locke used the argument as an impetus to virtuous living in pursuit of God, while Pascal’s argument was directed at unbelievers to pursue the means of grace that they might come to faith in Christ.

<sup>101</sup> Yale, 153; BT, 158.1-2.

<sup>102</sup> BT, 159.1; Yale, 156.

Jeremiah 8:7: “Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the LORD.”

Proverbs 8:36: “But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death.”

2. People act contrary to admonition.

“What need of a constant repetition of admonitions and counsels, to keep the heart from falling asleep! How many objections are made! How are difficulties magnified! And how soon is the mind discouraged! How many arguments, often renewed, variously and elaborately enforced, do men stand in need of, to convince them of things that are almost self-evident! As that things which are eternal, are infinitely more important than things temporal....though it be an *endless* futurity, and though it be their own *personal* infinitely important good, that is to be cared for.”<sup>103</sup>

3. People act contrary to clear evidence.

“In these things, men who are prudent for their temporal interest, act as if they were bereft of reason: ‘they have eyes, and see not; ears, and hear not; neither do they understand: they are like the horse and mule, that have no understanding.’”<sup>104</sup>

God created people with an overriding eternal purpose. “Eternal things are in effect their all, their whole concern; to understand and know which, it chiefly was, that they had understanding given them; therefore we may undoubtedly conclude, that if men have not respect to them as real and certain things, it cannot be for want of sufficient evidence of their truth: but it must be from a dreadful stupidity of mind, occasioning a sottish insensibility to their truth and importance, when manifested by the clearest evidence.”<sup>105</sup>

4. Conclusion: “How can these things be accounted for, but by supposing a most wretched depravity of nature? Why otherwise would not men be as wise for themselves in spiritual and eternal things, as in temporal?”<sup>106</sup>

## **Section Seven: Throughout the ages, most people have been wicked.**

### **I. Most people in the Gospel era are depraved.**

<sup>103</sup> BT, 158.2-159.1; Yale, 154-155.

<sup>104</sup> BT, 159.1; Yale, 155.

<sup>105</sup> BT, 159.2; Yale, 157.

<sup>106</sup> Yale, 156; BT, 159.1.

- A. Taylor claims, contrary to his own arguments against original sin, that the great majority of Christians are depraved.<sup>107</sup>

“This is infallibly the character of true Christians, and what is essential to such, that they have really mortified the flesh, with its lusts; they are dead to sin, and live no longer therein; the old man is crucified, and the body of sin destroyed: they yield themselves to God, as those that are alive from the dead, and their members as instruments of righteousness to God, and as servants of righteousness to holiness.”<sup>108</sup>

Yet, Taylor, “after declaring the things which belong to the character of a true Christian, he judges of the generality of Christians, that they have cast off these things, that they are a people that do err in their hearts, and have not known God’s ways.”<sup>109</sup> Edwards adds, “he judges, that the generality of Christians are the most wicked of all mankind—when he thinks it will throw some disgrace on the opinion of such as he opposes.”<sup>110</sup>

- B. Christ taught that by the terms of the Gospel, few people will be saved.

“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat; because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth to life, and few there be that find it.” (Matthew 7:13-14). That only a few find the saving way indicates a general inclination contrary to it.<sup>111</sup>

The “few” are chosen out of a “whole world” that “lieth in wickedness.”<sup>112</sup>

- II. The Old Testament testifies that good people are exceptionally rare.<sup>113</sup>

Proverbs 20:6: Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?”

Ecclesiastes 4:1-3: “So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun: and behold the tears of *such as were* oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors *there was* power; but they had no comforter. Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive. Yea, better *is he* than both they, which hath not yet been, who hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun.”

<sup>107</sup> Yale, 158-162; BT, 159.1-160.2.

<sup>108</sup> Taylor, quoted by Edwards, Yale, 158-159; BT, 159.2.

<sup>109</sup> Taylor, *Key*, 147; quoted by Edwards in Yale, 160-161; BT 160.1-2.

<sup>110</sup> Edwards cites *Key*, 259. Yale, 161; BT, 160.2. Here, again, as throughout the treatise, Edwards gives compelling evidence for the truth of the doctrine of original sin by using the arguments that Taylor and Turnbull use to deny it, showing the inconsistent and self-contradictory nature of their arguments.

<sup>111</sup> Yale, 161; BT, 160.2.

<sup>112</sup> Yale, 161-162; BT, 160.2.

<sup>113</sup> BT, 160.2; Yale, 162-164.

Ecclesiastes 7:25-29: “I applied mine heart to know, and to search, and to seek out wisdom, and the reason *of things*, and to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness *and* madness: And I find more bitter than death the woman, whose heart *is* snares and nets, *and* her hands *as* bands: whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her; but the sinner shall be taken by her. Behold, this have I found, saith the preacher, *counting* one by one, to find out the account: Which yet my soul seeketh, but I find not: one man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found. Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.”

Ecclesiastes 9:3: “The heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness *is* in their heart while they live, and after that *they go* to the dead.”

*Objection:* According to Taylor, Solomon’s inspired description of corruption in people only applied to Solomon’s time and context.

*Answer:*

- A. “The subject and argument of the whole book shew it to be otherwise; but also the declared design of the book in the first chapter; where the world is represented as very much the same, as to the vanity and evil it is full of, from age to age, making little or no progress, after all its revolutions and restless motions, labors and pursuits.”<sup>114</sup>
- B. If corruption prevailed in Solomon’s day, “a day of the greatest smiles of heaven on that nation, that ever had been on any nation from the foundation of the world,” what about other times?<sup>115</sup>

“There never was any time from Joshua to the captivity, wherein wickedness was more restrained, and virtue and religion more encouraged and promoted, than in David’s and Solomon’s times. And if there was so little true piety in that nation that was the only people of God under heaven, even in their very best times, what may we suppose concerning the world in general, take one time with another?”<sup>116</sup>

- III. History, from Adam to the present age, displays “that by far the greater part of mankind have, in all ages, been of a wicked character.”<sup>117</sup>

Genesis 6:5: “And GOD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually.”

Genesis 6:12: “And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.”

<sup>114</sup> Yale, 162; BT, 160.2-161.1.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Yale, 163; BT, 161.1.

<sup>117</sup> BT, 161.1ff.; Yale, 164ff.

1 Samuel 8:7-8: “And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. <sup>8</sup> According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee.”

Jeremiah 32:30-31: “For the children of Israel and the children of Judah have only done evil before me from their youth: for the children of Israel have only provoked me to anger with the work of their hands, saith the LORD. <sup>31</sup> For this city hath been to me *as* a provocation of mine anger and of my fury from the day that they built it even unto this day; that I should remove it from before my face.” (See also 5:21,23; 7:25-27).

Ezekiel 2:3-4: “And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, *even* unto this very day. <sup>4</sup> For *they are* impudent children and stiffhearted. I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD.”

Matthew 10:16-17: “Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. <sup>17</sup> But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues.”

Acts 7:51-53: “Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers *did*, so *do* ye. <sup>52</sup> Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: <sup>53</sup> Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept *it*.”

1 John 5:19: “*And* we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.”

“One would think the experience of so many ages as have elapsed since the beginning of the world, and the trial as it were made by hundreds of different nations together, for so long a time, should be sufficient to convince all, that wickedness is agreeable to the nature of mankind in its present state.”<sup>118</sup>

On the one hand, Taylor agrees. He says, from “the call of Abraham to the coming of Christ,” the Gentile nations “lived in idolatry, great ignorance, and wickedness.”<sup>119</sup> “The moral circumstances of mankind, since the time Adam first turned into the way of transgression, have been very different from a state of innocence. So far as we can judge from history, or what we know at present, the greatest part of mankind, have

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<sup>118</sup> Yale, 167-168; BT, 162.1-2.

<sup>119</sup> Taylor, *Key*, 190. Quoted by Edwards in Yale, 165; BT, 161.1.



been, and still are very corrupt; though not equally so in every age and place.”<sup>120</sup> On the other hand, Taylor blames the belief in and teaching of original sin for corruption in Christians from Christ until today: “The generality of Christians have embraced this persuasion concerning original sin; and the consequence has been, that the generality of Christians have been the most wicked, lewd, bloody and treacherous of all mankind.”<sup>121</sup>

IV. The “height” and “degree” of human wickedness has been great.<sup>122</sup>

“Many kinds of brute animals are esteemed very noxious and destructive, many of them very fierce, voracious, and many very poisonous, and the destroying of them has always been looked upon as a public benefit: but have not mankind been a thousand times as hurtful and destructive as any one of them, yea, as all the noxious beasts, birds, fishes and reptiles in the earth, air and water, put together, at least of all kinds of animals that are visible? And no creature can be found anywhere so destructive of its own kind, as man is.”<sup>123</sup>

**Section Eight: Great efforts to oppose wickedness and promote virtue have had little success.**

“The evidence of the native corruption of mankind appears much more glaring, when it is considered that the world has been so generally, so constantly, and so exceedingly corrupt, notwithstanding the *various, great and continual means*, that have been used to restrain men from sin, and promote virtue and true religion among them.”<sup>124</sup>

I. God’s judgments and the threat of judgment have done little to restrain sin.<sup>125</sup>

A. Death as the penalty of Adam’s sin, or as a favor of God to restrain sin (as Taylor maintained), did little to restrain sin.<sup>126</sup>

For Taylor, death was not a punishment, but the gift of a “benevolent father” to His children to restrain vice and promote holiness. By this view, according to Edwards, God performed the favor of removing man from the happiness and blessings of paradise to live in “sorrow and toil,” in “languishing and lingering

<sup>120</sup> Taylor, *Original Sin*, 168. Quoted by Edwards in Yale, 167; BT, 162.1.

<sup>121</sup> Taylor, *Original Sin*, 259. Quoted by Edwards in Yale, 167; BT, 162.1. Taylor notes further (though not quoted here by Edwards): “What can be more destructive of Virtue than to have a Notion that you must, in some Degree or other, be necessarily vicious? And hath not the common Doctrine of *Original Sin* a manifest Tendency to propagate such a Notion? And is it not to be feared so many Children of good Parents have degenerated, because in the Forms of religious Instruction they have imbibed ill Principles, and such as really are contrary to Holiness?” Taylor, *Original Sin*, 259. Edwards will respond to the accusation that the doctrine promotes sin later.

<sup>122</sup> BT, 162.2; Yale, 168.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Yale, 169; BT, 162.2.

<sup>125</sup> BT, 162.2ff.; Yale, 169ff.

<sup>126</sup> BT, 162.2-163.1; Yale, 169-170.

decay, or severe pain and acute disease, to expire and turn to putrefaction and dust.” Such are “sharp medicines indeed,” says Edwards.<sup>127</sup>

Such measures “should be very effectual, if the subject had no depravity, no evil and contrary bias, to resist and hinder a proper effect; especially in the old world, when the thing which was the first occasion of this terrible alteration, this severity of means, was fresh in memory; Adam continuing alive near two thirds of the time that passed before the flood.” Yet Adam’s contemporaries and generations following immediately thereafter, who should have known of the consequences of Adam’s sin, lapsed into great wickedness prior to the flood.<sup>128</sup>

After the fall, according to Taylor, “mankind were universally debauched into lust, sensuality, rapine and injustice.”<sup>129</sup>

- B. Noah’s warnings of God’s impending judgment had little effect.<sup>130</sup>
- C. In addition to the painful consequences of Adam’s sin, the terrible loss of life and destruction of the flood, with its lingering effects, were clearly displayed and known, yet subsequent generations again lapsed into wickedness.<sup>131</sup>

God’s purpose in shortening man’s lifespan after the flood, according to Taylor, was “that the wild range of ambition and lust might be brought into narrower bounds, and have less opportunity of doing mischief; and that death, being still nearer to our view, might be a more powerful motive to regard less the things of a transitory world, and to attend to the rules of truth and wisdom.”<sup>132</sup>

D. The result

“The new world degenerated, and became corrupt, by such swift degrees, that, as Dr. Taylor observes, mankind in general were sunk into idolatry, in about 400 years after the flood, and so in about 50 years after Noah’s death: they became so wicked and brutish, as to forsake the true God, and turn to the worship of inanimate creatures.”<sup>133</sup>

II. God chose to dwell among Israel and make them a holy light to the Gentile nations.<sup>134</sup>

“There he manifested himself, and thence to the world, by a course of miraculous operations and effects, for many ages; that the people might be holy to God, as a kingdom of priests, and might stand as a city on a hill, to be a light to the world.”<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Yale, 169; BT, 162.2.

<sup>128</sup> Yale, 170; BT, 163.1.

<sup>129</sup> Taylor, *Original Sin*, 122. Quoted by Edwards in Yale, 170; BT 163.1.

<sup>130</sup> BT, 163.1; Yale, 170.

<sup>131</sup> BT, 163.1; Yale, 170-171.

<sup>132</sup> Taylor, *Original Sin*, 68. Quote by Edwards in Yale, 171; BT, 163.1.

<sup>133</sup> Yale, 171; BT, 163.1.

<sup>134</sup> BT, 163.1ff.; Yale, 171ff.

- A. Israel as God’s light to the Gentile nations produced little lasting knowledge of God and obedience among the nations.<sup>136</sup>
1. Abraham’s renown in Egypt and the East, acknowledged by Melchizedek, and connected with the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, availed little knowledge and obedience to God among the nations. To the contrary, many of Abraham’s descendents, and the land most familiar with Abraham, degenerated into “heathenism.”<sup>137</sup>
  2. God’s great works during the time of Jacob and Joseph in preserving Egypt and the nations of the world during the famine availed little.<sup>138</sup>
  3. During the time of Moses and Joshua, God’s great miracles to display of His power and superiority over the false gods of the nations did not turn the nations from their stubborn opposition to God.<sup>139</sup>

Exodus 9:16: “And in very deed for this *cause* have I raised thee up, for to shew *in* thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.”

Numbers 14:21-22: “But *as truly as* I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD. <sup>22</sup> Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice.”

Joshua 4:23-24: “For the LORD your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over: <sup>24</sup> That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the LORD, that it *is* mighty: that ye might fear the LORD your God for ever.”

4. No reformation followed God’s miracles during the time of the judges, including Deborah, Gideon, Samson, Barak, and Jephthah.<sup>140</sup>
5. No “abiding” reformation followed the success, power, wisdom, and renown of the kingdoms of David and Solomon.<sup>141</sup>

1 Chronicles 22:5: “And David said, Solomon my son *is* young and tender, and the house *that is* to be builded for the LORD *must be* exceeding

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<sup>135</sup> BT, 163.1-2; Yale, 172.

<sup>136</sup> BT, 163.1-164.2; Yale, 171-176.

<sup>137</sup> BT, 163.2; Yale, 172-173.

<sup>138</sup> BT, 163.2; Yale, 173.

<sup>139</sup> BT, 163.2-164.1; Yale, 173.

<sup>140</sup> BT, 164.1; Yale, 173-174.

<sup>141</sup> BT, 164.1; Yale, 174.

magnifical, of fame and of glory throughout all countries: I will *therefore* now make preparation for it. So David prepared abundantly before his death.”

1 Kings 4:34: “And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom.”

1 Kings 8:41-43: “Moreover concerning a stranger, that *is* not of thy people Israel, but cometh out of a far country for thy name's sake; <sup>42</sup> (For they shall hear of thy great name, and of thy strong hand, and of thy stretched out arm;) when he shall come and pray toward this house; <sup>43</sup> Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for: that all people of the earth may know thy name, to fear thee, as *do* thy people Israel; and that they may know that this house, which I have builded, is called by thy name.”

1 Kings 8:60: “That all the people of the earth may know that the LORD *is* God, *and that there is* none else.”

1 Kings 10:24: “And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart.”

6. The miracles and ministries of Elijah, Elisha, and Jonah produced no lasting change among the Gentile nations.<sup>142</sup>
7. The Babylonian captivity, including God’s writings and the witness of such captives as Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, along with God’s miracles through them and Cyrus, as well as the dispersion of God’s people and their worship among the nations, produced no great change from idolatry to true worship of God.<sup>143</sup>

Ezra 1:2-3: “Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which *is* in Judah. <sup>3</sup> Who *is there* among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which *is* in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he *is* the God,) which *is* in Jerusalem.”

Isaiah 45

8. The dispersion of the Jews and the Scriptures among the nations did little to stem idolatry.

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<sup>142</sup> BT, 164.1; Yale, 174-175.

<sup>143</sup> BT, 164.1-2; Yale, 175-176.

*Conclusion:* “The inveterate absurdities of pagan idolatry continued without remedy, and increased as arts and learning increased; and paganism prevailed in all its height of absurdity, when pagan nations were polished to the height.”<sup>144</sup>

- B. God’s great works toward Israel produced little lasting knowledge of God and obedience among the Israelites.<sup>145</sup>

“The means used with the heathen nations were great; but they were small, if compared with those used with the *Israelites*.”<sup>146</sup>

1. Approximately 200 years following God’s great works toward Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to deliver them from idolatry, most of Israel had fallen into idolatry.<sup>147</sup>
2. Following God’s remarkable display of His power in delivering them from Egypt, His appearing to them with “astonishing” power at Sinai, and His giving of the Ten commandments, the people murmured, longed to return to Egypt, and engaged in gross idolatry.<sup>148</sup>

Exodus 16:28: “And the LORD said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?”

Exodus 19:9: “And the LORD said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever. And Moses told the words of the people unto the LORD.”

Deuteronomy 4:32-34: “For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and *ask* from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been *any such thing* as this great thing *is*, or hath been heard like it? <sup>33</sup> Did *ever* people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live? <sup>34</sup> Or hath God assayed to go *and* take him a nation from the midst of *another* nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?”

3. God raised up prophets and judges, including the highly influential prophet Samuel, and the great kings David and Solomon. David was “eminent for wisdom, piety and fortitude,” through whom God made “a more full

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<sup>144</sup> Dr. Winder, quoted by Edwards; BT, 164.2; Yale, 176. Taylor apparently agrees. Speaking of the time of the Gospel’s advent, he says, “The moral and religious state of the heathen was very deplorable, being generally sunk into great ignorance, gross idolatry, & abominable vice.” *Key*, p. 151, no. 257, quoted by Edwards in Yale, 176; BT, 164.2.

<sup>145</sup> BT, 164.2-166.1; Yale, 176-181.

<sup>146</sup> BT, 164.2; Yale, 177.

<sup>147</sup> BT, 165.1; Yale, 177.

<sup>148</sup> BT, 165.1; Yale, 177-178.

revelation of the great salvation, and future glorious kingdom of the Messiah.” Solomon was the wisest king ever, who built the great temple as the center focus of Israel’s life and worship of God. Yet, Israel, including Solomon himself, fell into idolatry.<sup>149</sup>

4. God divided Israel in judgment for their sin, yet Israel ignored God’s judgment and warning by pursuing even greater idolatry.<sup>150</sup>

2 Kings 17:18-19: “Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only.<sup>19</sup> Also Judah kept not the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made.”

2 Kings 21:13: “And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab: and I will wipe Jerusalem as *a man* wipeth a dish, wiping *it*, and turning *it* upside down.”

Ezekiel 16:51: “Neither hath Samaria committed half of thy sins; but thou hast multiplied thine abominations more than they, and hast justified thy sisters in all thine abominations which thou hast done.”

Ezekiel 24

5. Despite the pleadings of many prophets, including Elijah, Elisha, Jeremiah, and Isaiah, the Kings and people of Israel and Judah were generally and exceedingly corrupt, such that God destroyed the city and temple and sent them into exile.<sup>151</sup>
6. The Jews, from the exile to the time of Christ, were steeped in idolatry. When Christ spoke of the Jews of His day, in light of their great privileges as the chosen people of God, He spoke of them as “having much greater guilt than the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon, or even Sodom and Gomorrah.”<sup>152</sup>

Ezekiel 5:5-10

Ezekiel 16:47-48: “Yet hast thou not walked after their ways, nor done after their abominations: but, as *if that were* a very little *thing*, thou wast corrupted more than they in all thy ways.<sup>48</sup> As I live, saith the Lord GOD, Sodom thy sister hath not done, she nor her daughters, as thou hast done, thou and thy daughters.”

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<sup>149</sup> BT, 165.1-2; Yale, 178-180.

<sup>150</sup> BT, 165.2; Yale, 180.

<sup>151</sup> BT, 165.2-166.1; Yale, 170.

<sup>152</sup> Yale, 181; BT, 166.1.

III. The Gospel of Christ is “the greatest scheme for the suppressing and restraining iniquity among mankind, that ever infinite wisdom and mercy contrived,” yet the great majority of people reject it.<sup>153</sup>

A. Christ’s coming increased the wickedness of mankind.<sup>154</sup>

“Christ’s coming, his doctrine and miracles, the preaching of his followers, and the glorious things that attended the same, were the occasion...of an infinite increase of their wickedness. They crucified the Lord of glory, with the utmost malice and cruelty, and persecuted his followers; they pleased not God, and were contrary to all men, they went on to grow worse and worse.”<sup>155</sup>

B. From the time of Christ and the Apostles, the church degenerated into apostasy.<sup>156</sup>

“And the greater part of the ages which have now elapsed, have been spent in the duration of that grand and general apostacy, under which the Christian world, as it is called, has been transformed into that which has been vastly more deformed, more dishonorable and hateful to God, and repugnant to true virtue, than the state of the heathen world before.”<sup>157</sup>

C. Following the Protestant Reformation, the church again has descended into corruption.<sup>158</sup>

“But how is the gold soon become dim! To what a pass are things come in Protestant countries at this day, and in our nation in particular! To what a prodigious height has a deluge of infidelity, profaneness, luxury, debauchery and wickedness of every kind, arisen! The poor savage Americans are mere babes and fools (if I may so speak) as to proficiency in wickedness, in comparison of multitudes that the Christian world throngs with.”<sup>159</sup>

D. Great advances in philosophical understanding have not increased the virtue of mankind.<sup>160</sup>

E. The history of mankind’s response to the Gospel and God’s many and various means to suppress evil and promote virtue display mankind’s corrupt disposition.

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<sup>153</sup> BT, 166.1ff.; Yale, 181ff. Edwards quotes Taylor in support. Speaking of Christ, Taylor writes, “never were motives so divine and powerful proposed, to induce us to the practice of all virtue and goodness.” Quoted by Edwards in Yale, 182; BT, 166.1-2.

<sup>154</sup> BT, 166.2; Yale, 182-183.

<sup>155</sup> BT, 166.2; Yale, 182.

<sup>156</sup> BT, 166.2; Yale, 183.

<sup>157</sup> Yale, 183; BT, 166.2.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> BT, 166.2-167.1; Yale, 183-184.

Taylor acknowledged “that God has from the beginning exercised wonderful and infinite wisdom, in the methods he has, from age to age, made use of to oppose vice, cure corruption, and promote virtue in the world; and introduced several schemes to that end,” with little effect. To which Edwards sarcastically responds, “And yet all these things, according to him, without any natural bias to the contrary; no stream of natural inclination or propensity at all, to oppose inducements to goodness; no native opposition of heart, to withstand those gracious means, which God has ever used with mankind, from the beginning of the world to this day; any more than there was in the heart of Adam, the moment God created him in perfect innocence.”<sup>161</sup>

“Surely Dr. Taylor’s scheme is attended with strange paradoxes.” While the best of God’s means have failed to produce righteous people, yet every person of the world, “even the heathen in all parts of the world...has ability, light, and means sufficient, to do their whole duty; yea (as many passages in his writings plainly suppose) to perform perfect obedience to God’s law, without the least degree of vice or iniquity.”<sup>162</sup>

*Objection:* The Gospel exhibits “the clearest and most glorious light, to deliver the world from darkness,” but is rejected because corrupted teachers have not made it understandable.<sup>163</sup>

*Answer:* “But how came the whole Christian world, without any blinding depravity, to hearken to these ignorant foolish men, rather than unto wiser and better teachers? Especially, when the latter had *plain gospel* on their side, and the doctrines of the other were (as our author supposes) so very contrary not only to the plain gospel, but to men’s reason and common sense! Or were all the teachers of the Christian church nothing but a parcel of *ignorant dreamers*?”<sup>164</sup>

#### IV. Conclusion<sup>165</sup>

“He that won’t be convinced by a thousand good witnesses, ‘tis not likely that he would be convinced by a thousand thousand. The proofs that have been extant in the world, from trial and fact, of the depravity of men’s nature, are inexpressible.”<sup>166</sup>

“If there were a piece of ground, which abounded with briars and thorns, or some poisonous plant, and all mankind had used their endeavors, for a thousand years together, to suppress that evil growth, and to bring that ground by manure and cultivation, planting and sowing, to produce better fruit, but all in vain, it would still be overrun with the same noxious growth; it would not be a proof, that such a

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<sup>161</sup> Yale, 184; BT, 167.1.

<sup>162</sup> Yale, 184-185; BT, 167.1.

<sup>163</sup> Taylor, quoted by Edwards in Yale, 185; BT, 167.1.

<sup>164</sup> Yale, 186; BT, 167.2.

<sup>165</sup> BT, 167.2-168.1; Yale, 187-188.

<sup>166</sup> Yale, 187; BT, 168.1.



produce was agreeable to the nature of that soil, in any wise to be compared to that which is given in divine providence, that wickedness is a produce agreeable to the nature of the field of the world of mankind; which has had means used with it, that have been so various, great and wonderful, contrived by the unsearchable and boundless wisdom of God; medicines procured with infinite expense, exhibited with so vast an apparatus; so marvelous a succession of dispensations, introduced one after another, displaying an incomprehensible length and breadth, depth and height, of divine wisdom, love and power, and every perfection of the Godhead, to the eternal admiration of the principalities and powers in heavenly places.”<sup>167</sup>

### Section Nine: Several arguments against original sin considered

- I. *Objection:* Adam’s nature was not sinful, yet he sinned. So, his posterity, having the same “appetites and passions” as Adam, are born without corruption, yet sin. In contrast, the doctrine of original sin implies that Adam must have been created corrupt, given that it teaches that all his descendents are born corrupt.<sup>168</sup>

*Answer:*

- A. That Adam did not have a fixed inclination to sin prior to his first sin does not prove that his descendants did not have a fixed inclination to sin after Adam sinned.<sup>169</sup>

“Suppose a person, through the deceitful persuasions of a pretended friend, once takes a poisonous draught of a liquor to which he had before no inclination; but after has once taken of it, he is observed to act as one that has an insatiable, incurable thirst after more of the same, in his constant practice, obstinately continued in as long as he lives, against all possible arguments and endeavors used to dissuade him from it. And suppose we should from hence argue a fixed inclination, and begin to suspect that this is the nature and operation of the poison, to produce such an inclination, or that this strong propensity is some way the consequence of the first draught...could it be said with good reason, that a fixed propensity can no more be argued from his consequent *constant* practice, than from his *first* draught?”<sup>170</sup>

It is unreasonable to claim that “nothing more can be argued concerning the cause, from its happening constantly, and in the most steady manner, than from its happening but once.”<sup>171</sup>

- B. A fixed effect indicates a fixed cause.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Yale, 187-188; BT, 168.1.

<sup>168</sup> BT, 168.1; Yale, 189.

<sup>169</sup> BT, 168.1-2; Yale, 190-191.

<sup>170</sup> BT, 168.2; Yale, 190.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

1. While single, temporary, or random effects do not indicate a fixed and unchanging cause, a fixed and unchanging effect does.<sup>173</sup>

“It is agreeable to reason...to argue fixed principles, tempers, and prevailing inclinations, from repeated and continued actions--though the actions are voluntary and performed of choice.”<sup>174</sup>

If a tree, or batch of trees produce bad fruit in one season, “this alone don’t prove the nature of the tree to be bad. But, if a kind of tree, regardless of age, where it is planted, and the conditions under which it grows, always produces bad fruit, then it “proves the nature of the tree to be very bad.” Similarly, “the universal sinfulness of mankind, and their all sinning immediately, as soon as capable of it, and all sinning continually, and generally being of a wicked character, at all times, in all ages, and all places, and under all possible circumstances, against means and motives inexpressibly manifold and great, and in the utmost conceivable variety,” indicate “a permanent internal great cause.”<sup>175</sup>

2. A cause is fixed and internal if the effect is fixed through every conceivable and differing circumstance, whereas the sin of Adam and angels was a single circumstance.<sup>176</sup>

The cause is *internal* “because the circumstances are so various—including a variety of means and motives—and they are such circumstances as cannot possibly cause the effect, being most opposite to it in their tendency.” The cause is *powerful* given “the means which have opposed its influence, have been so great, and yet have been stately overcome.”<sup>177</sup>

II. *Objection*: Mankind’s own *free will* is sufficient cause.<sup>178</sup>

*Answer*:

- A. If the effect is caused merely by the free will of individuals apart from original sin, why do all people, of all ages and circumstances, sin as soon as they are capable, and continue sinning constantly as long as they live?<sup>179</sup>
- B. How can free will, if perfectly free from a previous inclination, undetermined, and unfixed, “account for an effect, in such a manner, and to such a degree,

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<sup>172</sup> BT, 168.2-169.2; Yale, 191-193.

<sup>173</sup> BT, 168.2-169.1; Yale, 191-192.

<sup>174</sup> BT, 169.1; Yale, 191-192.

<sup>175</sup> Yale, 191; BT, 168.2-169.1.

<sup>176</sup> BT, 169.1-2; Yale, 192-193.

<sup>177</sup> BT, 169.1; Yale, 193.

<sup>178</sup> BT, 169.2; Yale, 194.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*

permanent, fixed, and constant,” in every age, country, among all people in any condition, without consultation and without knowing how others in different countries and ages act?<sup>180</sup>

III. *Objection*: Mankind’s corruption is the result of bad examples.<sup>181</sup>

*Answer*: “It is accounting for the corruption of the world by the corruption of the world.”<sup>182</sup>

“If mankind are naturally no more inclined to evil than good, then how come there to be so many more bad examples than good ones, in all ages? And if there are not, how come the bad examples that are set, to be so much more followed than the good?”<sup>183</sup>

A. Corruption prevails despite good examples.<sup>184</sup>

1. Adam and Eve’s posterity had their parents as examples, who apparently had repented and given their “expressions of faith and hope in God’s revealed mercy.” Yet, the world soon became so wicked that God destroyed it with a flood.<sup>185</sup>
2. God destroyed the entire world except for “righteous” Noah and his family, who were examples of piety to their posterity.<sup>186</sup> Yet, “in about fifty years after Noah’s death the world in general was overrun with dreadful corruption; so that all virtue and goodness was like soon to perish from among mankind, unless something extraordinary should be done to prevent it.”<sup>187</sup>
3. “God separated Abraham and his family from all the rest of the world, that they might be delivered from the influence of bad example, that in his posterity he might have a holy seed. Thus God again planted a noble vine; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob being eminently pious. But how soon did their posterity degenerate, till true religion was like to be swallowed up? We see how desperately and almost universally corrupt they were, when God brought ‘em out of Egypt, and led them in the wilderness.”<sup>188</sup>
4. Joshua and the people who entered Canaan were “an excellent generation,” but soon became “the degenerate plant of a strange vine.”<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> BT, 169.2; Yale, 194-195.

<sup>181</sup> BT, 170.1; Yale, 195.

<sup>182</sup> BT, 170.1; Yale, 196.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

<sup>184</sup> BT, 170.1; Yale, 196.

<sup>185</sup> BT, 170.1; Yale, 196-197.

<sup>186</sup> BT, 170.1-2; Yale, 197.

<sup>187</sup> Yale, 197; BT, 170.2.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> Yale, 197-198; BT, 170.2.

5. “The Christian church was planted by a glorious outpouring of the spirit of God, causing true virtue and piety to be exemplified in the first age of the church of Christ, far beyond whatever had been on earth before,” but apostasy soon followed.<sup>190</sup>
6. God gave us good examples in the Reformers, and later brought pious people to New England. But, “How greatly have we forsaken the pious examples of our fathers!”<sup>191</sup>

B. God has given the world the greatest example of virtue in Jesus Christ.<sup>192</sup>

No greater, more worthy or compelling example of excellence, authority, love, and virtue, displayed in the most glorious act of willfully and cheerfully suffering infinite wrath for our salvation and infinite benefit, has ever been given to mankind.<sup>193</sup>

“Surely if it were not for an extreme corruption of the heart of men, such an example would have that strong influence on the heart, that would as it were swallow up the power of all the evil and hateful examples of a generation of vipers.”<sup>194</sup>

C. Bad examples do not account for the propensity of children to sin as soon as they are capable, or for bad children of pious parents.<sup>195</sup>

D. Bad examples do not explain the consistent idolatry and wickedness of succeeding generations of heathen nations if, according to Taylor, they were not disposed to sin, or if they possessed the ability to recover from the idolatry of previous generations.<sup>196</sup> According to Taylor, “to suppose men’s temptations to be superior to their powers, will impeach the goodness and justice of God, who appoints every man’s trial.”<sup>197</sup>

IV. *Objection*: From birth, natural, animal passions prevail until reason is learned and cultivated.<sup>198</sup>

According to Turnbull, “Though some few may, through the influence of virtuous example, be said to be sanctified from the womb, so liberal, so generous, so virtuous, so truly noble is their cast of mind; yet, generally speaking, the whole world lieth in such wickedness, that, with respect to the far greater part of mankind, the study of

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<sup>190</sup> Yale, 198; BT, 170.2.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

<sup>192</sup> BT, 171.1; Yale, 199-200.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> Yale, 200; BT, 171.1.

<sup>195</sup> BT, 171.1; Yale, 200.

<sup>196</sup> Yale, 200-201; BT, 171.1-2.

<sup>197</sup> Taylor, *Original Sin*, 348. Quoted by Edwards in Yale, 200-201; BT, 171.1-2.

<sup>198</sup> BT, 171.2; Yale, 201.

virtue is beginning to reform, and is a severe struggle against bad habits, early contracted, and deeply rooted; it is therefore putting off an old inveterate corrupt nature, and putting on a new form and temper.”<sup>199</sup>

*Answer:*

- A. This objection affirms that people are born with the disposition to sin, asserting what they are attempting to deny.<sup>200</sup>

“This scheme supposes, the Author of nature has so ordered things, that men should come into being as moral agents, that is, should first have existence in a state and capacity of moral agency, under a prevailing propensity to sin. For that strength, which sensitive appetites and animal passions come to by their habitual exercise, before persons come to the exercise of their rational powers, amounts to a strong propensity to sin.”<sup>201</sup>

- B. The effect of these “animal passions” is wickedness, moral evil.<sup>202</sup>
- C. Why is the “superior” principle of reason so unable to counter and overrule the inferior “animal passions” and “prevent such a dreadful consequence, as the moral and natural ruin, and eternal perdition of the far greater part of mankind” if mankind does not have a corrupt disposition?<sup>203</sup>

Moreover, Turnbull affirms that God ordered the faculties of mankind this way from the start, and that the imbalance or slowness of reason to counter the “animal passions” is natural and existed in Adam *before* he sinned.<sup>204</sup> In contrast, original sin, or the disposition to sin, *originates in* Adam’s sin.

- D. The objection seems to assert what Taylor calls “too gross to be admitted,” namely, “that God creates the soul pure, and puts it into a body, and into such a state in that body, that the natural consequence is a strong propensity to sin.”<sup>205</sup>
- E. If the objection is true, why did God fail to make the “superior” principle of reason sufficient “to prevent such a dreadful consequence, as the moral and natural ruin, and eternal perdition of the far greater part of mankind?”<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> Edwards cites Turnbull, *Christian Philosophy*, 282, 283. Quoted by Edwards in Yale, 201; BT, 171.2. Like Taylor, Turnbull appears to affirm what amounts to original sin, though, elsewhere, he denies that original sin is true. At the same time, he admits that some people, though few, are righteous and do not need to repent: “And how few are there in the world, who escape its pollutions, so as not to be early in that class, or to be among the righteous that need no repentance?” Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> BT, 171.2; Yale, 202.

<sup>201</sup> Yale, 202; BT, 171.1.

<sup>202</sup> BT, 172.1; Yale, 202-203.

<sup>203</sup> Yale, 203; BT, 172.1.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid. This does not deny the reality of deeper questions and mysteries surrounding the entrance of sin into the world. But it does demonstrate that the objection affirms what it intends to deny.

In claiming to defend God's justice in their denial of original sin, they, nonetheless, make God the source of the problem.

- V. *Objection*: "Seeing men in this world are in a state of trial, it is fit that their virtue should meet with trials, and consequently that it should have opposition and temptation to overcome; not only from without, but from within, in the animal passions and appetites."<sup>207</sup>

*Answer*:

A. As the effect of this "internal opposition" to be overcome is evil, with its result "that all mankind, without the exception...sin against God, to their own deserved and just eternal ruin; and...sin thus immediately, as soon as capable of it, and sin continually, and have more sin than virtue, and have guilt that infinitely outweighs the value of all the goodness any ever have," this amounts to a prevailing tendency to evil, or original sin.<sup>208</sup>

B. If the purpose of internal and external opposition to overcome is "to refine, ripen, and perfect virtue," and to "fit men for the greater eternal happiness and glory," why does it have the opposite effect of "ruin, in all generations," of "eternally destroying them"?<sup>209</sup>

C. If such a trial is necessary, why do people generally fail the trial if they have no "depravity of nature?"<sup>210</sup>

"If conflict and war be necessary, yet surely there is no necessity that there should be more cowards than good soldiers; unless it be necessary that men should be overcome and destroyed."<sup>211</sup>

D. Turnbull contradicts himself by stating that "combat with temptation is requisite to the very being of virtue," while saying elsewhere that "all virtue lies in good affection, and no actions can be virtuous, but what proceed from good affection," that "virtue must have an existence before the combat, and be the cause of it."<sup>212</sup>

In other words, Turnbull's view that the will has no innate, evil disposition behind its choices, and that virtue is the *effect* of virtuous decisions and actions,

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<sup>207</sup> BT, 172.1; Yale, 204.

<sup>208</sup> BT, 172.2; Yale, 204-205.

<sup>209</sup> Yale, 205; BT, 172.2.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid. Edwards cites Turnbull's *Christian Philosophy*, 113-115. As Edwards will make clear later, Taylor suffers from the same contradiction that stems from his view of free will. He holds that for acts of the human will to be free, they cannot be determined by a predisposition. At the same time, he holds that an action can only be virtuous if it stems from a virtuous motivation or disposition.

contradicts his assertions elsewhere that actions are only virtuous if they proceed from a good affection, or a good *cause*. Thus, he argues that virtue can only be the *effect* of an action, and also argues that virtue can only be the *cause* of a virtuous action, a contradiction.<sup>213</sup>

### Questions and Points for Discussion

1. Why did Edwards believe that a proper understanding of the doctrine of original sin was so important that he wrote an entire treatise defending the doctrine?
2. In what ways are the doctrine of original sin and the Gospel of Jesus Christ related?
3. What is God's "common grace" and why must it be considered when examining the evidence for original sin in mankind?
4. Do people behave better or worse when no negative consequences for bad behavior exist? Why?
5. Does power corrupt? What does power do that results in people behaving badly when they have it? Did power change Hitler's inclination or just allow for greater expression of what was already in his heart? How did power allow Hitler to act so wickedly?
6. If children are born with a good inclination and without an inclination to evil, why do they need to be disciplined and trained to act well, even when they have excellent examples as parents? Would always letting children have their own way be the best approach to raising them if they are born without an evil inclination?

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<sup>213</sup> Here is a pointed example of the need for a comprehensive and coherent theology where its parts are properly related to each other and to the whole. Edwards, again, shows that a denial of original sin, based upon the notion that a free will cannot be caused by a predisposition, leads to significant inconsistencies, contradictions, and is a great hindrance to a coherent scriptural theology.

7. List the many ways God has historically worked with mankind to restrain sin and promote a proper faith, reverence, and obedience to God. What were the results? How do the means utilized by God to restrain sin point to the need for Christ as savior?
  
8. If original sin were not true, would not some people exist in the world who have not sinned, are not subject to God's judgment, and therefore in no need of salvation by Christ?



## Chapter Two: Evidence from Universal Mortality, Particularly the Death of Infants

“The universal reign of *death*, over persons of all ages indiscriminately, with the awful circumstances and attendants of death, proves that men come sinful into the world.”<sup>214</sup>

### I. Evidence that death is a judgment of a righteous God against sin<sup>215</sup>

#### A. Death entered the world as judgment for sin.<sup>216</sup>

“Sin entered into the world, and death by sin, as the Apostle says. Which certainly leads us to suppose, that this affair was ordered of God, not merely by the sovereignty of a Creator, but by the righteousness of a Judge.”<sup>217</sup>

“Calamities are in Scripture so often called by the name of judgments, being what God brings on men as a Judge, executing a righteous sentence for transgression: yea, they are often called by the name of wrath, especially calamities consisting or issuing in death.”<sup>218</sup>

#### B. Scripture speaks of death as “the chief of calamities, the most extreme and terrible of all those natural evils, which come on mankind in this world.”<sup>219</sup>

1 Samuel 5:11: “So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go again to his own place, that it slay us not, and our people: for there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there.”

Isaiah 17:11: “In the day shalt thou make thy plant to grow, and in the morning shalt thou make thy seed to flourish: *but* the harvest *shall be* a heap in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow.”

Matthew 26:38: “Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.”

Philippians 2:8: “And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” This speaks of the extent to which Christ suffered for us.

#### C. Death is the fruit of the guilt of sin.<sup>220</sup>

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<sup>214</sup> Yale, 206; BT, 173.1.

<sup>215</sup> BT, 173.1ff.; Yale, 206ff.

<sup>216</sup> BT, 173.1; Yale, 206-207.

<sup>217</sup> Yale, 206; BT, 173.1.

<sup>218</sup> Yale, 207; BT, 173.1.

<sup>219</sup> BT, 173.1; Yale, 207.

Exodus 28:43: “And they shall be upon Aaron, and upon his sons, when they come in unto the tabernacle of the congregation, or when they come near unto the altar to minister in the holy *place*; that they bear not iniquity, and die: *it shall be* a statute for ever unto him and his seed after him.”

Leviticus 10:1-2: “And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. <sup>2</sup> And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.”

Leviticus 22:9: “They shall therefore keep mine ordinance, lest they bear sin for it, and die therefore, if they profane it.”

Numbers 18:22: “Neither must the children of Israel henceforth come nigh the tabernacle of the congregation, lest they bear sin, and die.”

D. Death is the expression of God’s anger for sin.<sup>221</sup>

“This universal vast destruction—by which the whole world, in all generations, is swallowed up, as by a flood that nothing can resist—must be a most glaring manifestation of God’s anger for the sinfulness of mankind.”<sup>222</sup>

Deuteronomy 29:24: “Even all nations shall say, Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this land? what *meaneth* the heat of this great anger?” This is the response to God destroying Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim.

Jeremiah 22:8-9: “And many nations shall pass by this city, and they shall say every man to his neighbour, Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this great city? <sup>9</sup> Then they shall answer, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD their God, and worshipped other gods, and served them.”

Psalm 90:3-12

E. God does not slay the innocent.<sup>223</sup>

“Certainly the righteous Judge of all the earth won’t bring death on thousands of millions, not only that are not worthy of death, but are worthy of no punishment at all.”<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> BT, 173.2; Yale, 207-208.

<sup>221</sup> BT, 173.2; Yale, 208-209.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

<sup>223</sup> BT, 173.2-174.1; Yale, 209.

<sup>224</sup> Yale, 209; BT, 174.1.

- II. *Objection*: Death was given to all as “a great benefit...to excite sober reflections, and to induce us to be moderate in gratifying the appetites of the body, and to mortify pride and ambition, etc.”<sup>225</sup>

*Answer*:

- A. That such a harsh measure is needed to restrain human nature is evidence of original sin.<sup>226</sup>

“Is it not an evidence of distemper of mind, yea strong disease, when man stands in need of such sharp medicines, such severe and terrible means to restrain his lusts, keep down his pride, and to make him willing, and obedient to God? It must be owing to a corrupt and ungrateful heart, if the riches of divine bounty, in bestowing life and prosperity, things comfortable and pleasant, will not engage the heart to God and virtue, love and obedience.”<sup>227</sup>

“It must be a mysterious thing indeed, that the sweet blessings of God’s bounty have not as powerful an influence to restrain him from sinning against God, as terrible afflictions. If anything can be proof of a perverse and vile disposition, this must a proof of it, that men should be most apt to forget and despise God, when his providence is most kind; and that they should need to have God chastise them with great severity, and even to kill them, to keep them in order.”<sup>228</sup>

“The taking away of life, and all those pleasant enjoyments man had at first, by a permanent constitution, would be no stated benefit to mankind, unless there was in them a stated disposition to abuse such blessings. The taking of them away, is supposed to be a benefit, under the notion of their tending to lead men to sin: but they would have no such tendency, at least in a *stated* manner, unless there was in men a *fixed* tendency” to abuse them.”<sup>229</sup>

To abuse God’s blessings is spoken of in Scripture as “most astonishingly vile and perverse.”<sup>230</sup>

Jeremiah 2:7: “And I brought you into a plentiful country, to eat the fruit thereof and the goodness thereof; but when ye entered, ye defiled my land, and made mine heritage an abomination.”

Jeremiah 2:12: “Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the LORD.”

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<sup>225</sup> Ibid. Edwards’ characterizing Taylor’s view. Edwards cites Taylor, *Original Sin*, 21, 67, et al.

<sup>226</sup> BT, 174.1-2; Yale, 209-211.

<sup>227</sup> BT, 174.1; Yale, 209-210.

<sup>228</sup> Yale, 210; BT, 174.1.

<sup>229</sup> BT, 174.1; Yale, 210-211.

<sup>230</sup> BT, 174.1-2; Yale, 211.

Isaiah 1:2-4: “Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.<sup>3</sup> The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib: *but* Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.<sup>4</sup> Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.”

B. Death “falls heavily on infants” who cannot avail themselves of such a “benefit.”<sup>231</sup>

C. It is contrary to the Gospel. Christ came to destroy death, His enemy.<sup>232</sup>

1 Corinthians 15:22, 25-26: “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.... For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.<sup>26</sup> The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death.”

D. Scripture does characterize God chastening His children as “the fruit of God’s goodness,” but chastening is for sin and displays God’s “displeasure” with it.<sup>233</sup> Taylor’s redefinition of death affirms that people have a bent toward evil and need chastening.

1 Corinthians 11:31-32: “For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.<sup>32</sup> But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.”

2 Samuel 7:14-15: “I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men:<sup>15</sup> But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took *it* from Saul, whom I put away before thee.”

Psalms 119:71: “*It is* good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.” (See also vv. 67, 75)

Lamentations 3:25, 39-40: “The LORD *is* good unto them that wait for him, to the soul *that* seeketh him.... Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?<sup>40</sup> Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the LORD.”

Revelation 3:19: “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.”

Job 33:16ff.

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<sup>231</sup> BT, 174.2; Yale, 211-212.

<sup>232</sup> BT, 174.2; Yale, 212.

<sup>233</sup> BT, 174.2-175.1; Yale, 212-213.

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E. If chastening implies that the recipient is not without sin, death implies it even more.<sup>234</sup>

1. Scripture represents death as more awful than chastisements.<sup>235</sup>

Psalm 13:3: “Consider *and* hear me, O LORD my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the *sleep of death*.”

Psalm 78:38: “But he, *being* full of compassion, forgave *their* iniquity, and destroyed *them* not.”

Psalm 118:17-18: “I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD. <sup>18</sup> The LORD hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death.”

2. Death is gloomy and terrible.<sup>236</sup>

“Death is a thing attended with that awful appearance, that gloomy and terrible aspect, that naturally suggests to our minds God’s awful displeasure.”<sup>237</sup>

“If death be no testimony of God’s displeasure for sin, no evidence that the subject is looked upon, by him who inflicts it, as any other than perfectly innocent, free from all manner of imputation of guilt, and treated only as an object of favor, is it not strange, that God should annex to it such affecting appearances of his hatred and anger for sin, more than to other chastisements, which yet the Scripture teaches us are always for sin?”<sup>238</sup>

3. Infants are exposed to divine wrath, such as in Sodom and Gomorrah, the flood, when the first-born in Egypt were killed, when pagan cities were destroyed, and in the destruction of Jerusalem in apostolic times. But God does not destroy the innocent.<sup>239</sup>

“Since God declared, that if there had been found but ten righteous in Sodom, he would have spared the whole city for their sake, may not well suppose, if infants are perfectly innocent, that he would have spared the old world, in which there were, without doubt, many hundred thousand infants, and in

<sup>234</sup> BT, 175.1-177.2; Yale, 214-219.

<sup>235</sup> BT, 175.1-2; Yale, 214-215. See also Psalm 30:2-3, 9; 88:9-11; 103:9, 14-15; 143:7; Job 33:22-24.

<sup>236</sup> BT, 175.2; Yale, 215.

<sup>237</sup> Yale, 215; BT, 175.2.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid.

<sup>239</sup> BT, 175.2-177.2; Yale, 215-219.

general, one in every family, whose perfect innocence pleaded for its preservation?”<sup>240</sup>

Genesis 18:25: “That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?”

Exodus 23:7: “Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked.”

Proverbs 18:5: “*It is* not good to accept the person of the wicked, to overthrow the righteous in judgment.”

### Questions and Points for Discussion

1. How and why did death enter into the world?
2. Can a perfectly righteous God subject one truly innocent to His judgment for sin?
3. Does Scripture anywhere speak of death as a benefit to unbelievers? Why is death a benefit to believers in Christ?
4. If death was given to restrain sin, as some opponents of the doctrine of original sin have maintained, does this help or hinder arguments against original sin? Why?
5. Why was death unable to keep Christ in the grave?
6. According to Edwards, why are infants not spared in great tragedies where many adults die?

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<sup>240</sup> Yale, 217; BT, 176.1.

7. According to Edwards, would death be universal if people were not born with original sin?

## Part Two: Scriptural Proofs for Original Sin



## Chapter One: Observations from Genesis 1-3

### Section One: Adam and Eve were created righteous.

- I. *Objection:* Adam was not created righteous because our righteousness is determined by our free choices. Adam, then, could not be righteous until he made righteous choices.

The objection stems from the idea that our will is not free if our choices and actions are determined by an inclination or predisposition—in this case a predisposition to righteousness—and that virtue is the result of free actions, not a disposition that determines our actions.

*Answer:*

- A. An action is virtuous or righteous according to the motive or disposition behind it. Thus, Adam’s original righteousness can precede his righteous choices.<sup>241</sup>

“This is the general notion, not that principles derive their goodness from actions, but that actions derive their goodness from the principles whence they proceed; and so that the act of choosing that which is good, is not further virtuous than it proceeds from a good principle, or virtuous disposition of mind.”<sup>242</sup>

“There can, according to our natural notions, be no virtue in a choice which proceeds from no virtuous principle, but from mere self-love, ambition, or some animal appetite. And therefore a virtuous temper of mind may be before a good act of choice, as a tree may be before the fruit, and the fountain before the stream which proceed from it.”<sup>243</sup>

- B. Taylor *also* affirms that true virtue proceeds from the disposition of *love* or *benevolence*, even though when arguing against original sin he insists that virtue only follows a “free” choice that is not determined by a disposition or inclination. Thus, he contradicts himself. If virtue only follows a choice that is not determined by a previous disposition, then virtue cannot follow the disposition or inclination of love or benevolence.<sup>244</sup> “These confused inconsistent assertions, concerning virtue and moral rectitude, arise from the absurd notions in vogue, concerning freedom of will, as if it consisted in the will’s *self-determining power*, supposed to be necessary to moral agency, virtue and vice.”<sup>245</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> Yale, 224; BT, 177.1-2.

<sup>242</sup> Yale, 224; BT, 177.1.

<sup>243</sup> Yale, 224; BT, 177.2. Edwards quotes Francis Hutcheson in support of this, and notes that Dr. Turnbull “expressly agrees with Mr. Hutcheson.” Yale, 225; BT, 177.2.

<sup>244</sup> BT, 177.2-178.1; Yale, 225-226.

<sup>245</sup> Yale, 228; BT, 178.2.

Thus, Taylor denies that Adam and Eve could have been created with a holy inclination, contradicting what he says elsewhere that the virtue of any choice lies in the disposition behind it. Edwards affirms the former and denies the latter.

“The very supposition of a *disposition* to right *action* being first obtained by repeated right action, is grossly inconsistent with itself: for it supposes a course of right action, *before* there is a disposition to perform any right action.”<sup>246</sup>

- C. According to this scheme, Adam could never become righteous, as he could not have a created disposition of love for God in his heart, as that would be original righteousness, and he could not choose to be virtuous, as his choice could not be from a disposition of love to God and therefore could not be virtuous (as the objectors maintain that the essence of true virtue is love).<sup>247</sup>

Edwards examines this notion and the absurdities it creates in great depth in his treatise on the freedom of the will.<sup>248</sup> One such example is noted above.

## II. Proofs of Adam’s original righteousness<sup>249</sup>

- A. Adam’s eating of the forbidden fruit was his first sin, therefore he was without sin, or righteous before he sinned. Therefore, he was created righteous.<sup>250</sup>

1. “In a moral agent, subject to moral obligations, it is the same thing, to be perfectly *innocent*, as to be perfectly *righteous*...there can no more be any *medium* between sin and righteousness, or between right and wrong, in a moral sense, than there can be a medium between straight and crooked, in a natural sense.”<sup>251</sup>
2. God looks at the heart, all right acts must proceed from a right disposition. Therefore, Adam’s disposition must have been righteous from the start, until he sinned.<sup>252</sup>

“He was obliged to act right from the first moment of his existence, and did do so, till he sinned in the affair of the forbidden fruit, he must have an inclination or disposition of heart to do right the first moment of his existence; and that is the same as to be created, or brought into existence, with an inclination to right action, or, which is the same thing, a virtuous and holy disposition of heart.”<sup>253</sup>

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<sup>246</sup> Yale, 229; BT, 179.1.

<sup>247</sup> BT, 178.1-2; Yale, 227-228.

<sup>248</sup> Jonathan Edwards, *Freedom of the Will*, ed. Paul Ramsey, vol. 1 of *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957).

<sup>249</sup> BT, 178.2ff.; Yale, 228ff.

<sup>250</sup> BT, 178.2-179.2; Yale, 228-231.

<sup>251</sup> BT, 178.2; Yale, 228.

<sup>252</sup> BT, 178.2-179.1; Yale, 228-229.

<sup>253</sup> Yale, 299; BT, 178.2.

3. God expected obedience from Adam, but how could Adam obey in a way acceptable to God if he had no love for God in His heart? His duties were *internal* and *external*.

“If Adam from the beginning did his duty to God, and had more respect to the will of his Creator, than to other things, and as much respect to him as he ought to have; then from the beginning he had a supreme and perfect respect and love to God: and if so, he was created with such a principle.”<sup>254</sup>

4. To be indifferent to the great blessings of God, or to not love Him supremely who was deserving of supreme love, would be sin.<sup>255</sup>
5. To be created *without* any dispositions would be to be created without a will. To be created *with* dispositions, they must either conform to what is worthy of God, or not. If they conform, they are righteous; if not, they are sinful. “There can be no medium between these.”<sup>256</sup>

B. The biblical account of Adam’s life prior to the fall indicates holiness in Adam’s heart.<sup>257</sup>

1. Genesis notes that Adam enjoyed the “great favours and smiles of heaven” in innocence.<sup>258</sup>

*But*, if Taylor’s claims are true—that death and the other severe “benefits” were given to produce righteousness and all people come into the world in the same state as Adam when he was created—then Adam was in a far better state and given far greater advantages to avoid sin and serve God *after* he sinned than *before*. Indeed, all people would have greater advantages than Adam before he sinned.<sup>259</sup> Adam lacked the numerous “inducements to righteousness” that their posterity would have, such as shortened lives, hard labor, briars and thorns, pain, disease, decay, death, etc. But, Genesis presents “a happy state of peculiar favours and blessings before the fall, and the curse coming afterwards; but according to this scheme, the curse was before the fall.”<sup>260</sup>

Taylor again contradicts his own testimony “that in the dispensation our first parents were under, before the fall, they were placed in a condition proper to engage their gratitude, love and obedience.”<sup>261</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> BT, 179.1; Yale, 230.

<sup>255</sup> BT, 179.1-2; Yale, 230-231.

<sup>256</sup> BT, 179.1-2; Yale, 231.

<sup>257</sup> BT, 179.2-180.2; Yale, 231-236.

<sup>258</sup> BT, 179.2-180.1; Yale, 231-233.

<sup>259</sup> BT, 179.2; Yale, 232.

<sup>260</sup> BT, 179.2; Yale, 233.

<sup>261</sup> Taylor, *Original Sin*, 252. Quoted by Edwards in Yale, 231-232; BT, 179.2.

2. Ecclesiastes 7:29: “Lo, this only have I found, that God made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.”<sup>262</sup>

a. “Man” (“adam” in the Hebrew) often refers to mankind at his creation.

Deuteronomy 4:32: “Since the day that God created man upon the earth.”

Job 20:4: “Knowest thou *not* this of old, since man was placed upon earth.”

Isaiah 45:12: “I have made the earth, and created man upon it.”

Jeremiah 27:5: “I have made the earth, the man and the beast that *are* upon the ground.”

b. In the local context, and throughout the Old Testament, the Hebrew word “jashar,” translated here as “upright,” refers to moral uprightness, while “inventions” applies to moral evil.<sup>263</sup>

## **Section Two: The death threatened to Adam and Eve was eternal death.**

I. *Objection:* The death threatened to Adam was the opposite of the life Adam was given when created—physical life.<sup>264</sup>

*Answer:*

A. “The life Adam had, was truly a happy life; happy in perfect innocency, in the favor of his Maker, surrounded with the happy fruits and testimonies of his love: and I think it has been proved, that he also was happy in a state of perfect righteousness. And nothing is more manifest, than that it is agreeable to a very common acceptance of the word “life” in Scripture, that it be understood as signifying a state of excellent and happy existence. Now that which is most opposite to that life and state Adam was created in, is a state of total confirmed wickedness, and perfect hopeless misery, under the divine displeasure and curse; not excluding temporal death or the destruction of the body, as an introduction to it.”<sup>265</sup>

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<sup>262</sup> BT, 180.1-2; Yale, 233-236.

<sup>263</sup> BT, 180.1-2; Yale, 234-236. Edwards notes that of 110 times *jashar* appears in Scripture, approximately 100 times it refers to “virtue” or “moral rectitude.”

<sup>264</sup> Ibid.

<sup>265</sup> Yale, 237; BT, 181.1.

B. The death threatened to Adam for disobedience was “opposed to that *life*, which he would have had as the *reward* of his *obedience* in case he had not sinned.”<sup>266</sup> That life was eternal life.

C. The New Testament speaks of the wages of sin as eternal death.<sup>267</sup>

John 5:24: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”

Romans 6:23: “For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Romans 7:5: “For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.”

Romans 8:13: “For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”

1 Corinthians 15:56: “The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law.”

2 Corinthians 3:7: “But if the ministration of death, written *and* engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which *glory* was to be done away.”

James 1:15: “Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”

Revelation 2:11: “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.”

Revelation 20:6, 14: “Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power.... And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.”

Revelation 21:8: “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”

D. Christ speaks of death as contrasted with eternal life.<sup>268</sup>

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<sup>266</sup> BT, 181.1; Yale, 238.

<sup>267</sup> BT, 181.1-2; Yale, 239.

<sup>268</sup> BT, 181.2; Yale, 239.

John 6:50: “This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.”

John 8:51: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.”

John 11:26: “And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?”

Matthew 10:28: “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”

F. The Old Testament speaks of eternal death.

In the same context where the wicked are promised death as punishment for their sin, the righteous are promised they will not die the death promised to the wicked. Solomon speaks of death as punishment for the sin of the wicked and life for the righteous, while he also speaks of both the wicked and righteous as subject to physical death. Thus, Solomon appears to speak of a kind of death for the wicked that does not apply to the righteous, i.e., eternal death.<sup>269</sup>

Ezekiel 3:18: “When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.” (The expression used here was also spoken to Adam.)

Ezekiel 18:4: “Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.”

Ezekiel 18:9: “Hath walked in my statutes, and hath kept my judgments, to deal truly; he *is* just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord GOD.” (See also 18:17-21, 24, 26, 28.)

Jeremiah 31:30: “But every one shall die for his own iniquity.”

Isaiah 11:4: “He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.”

Psalms 34:21: “Evil shall slay the wicked: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.”

Psalms 69:28: “Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.”

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<sup>269</sup> BT, 181.2-182.1; Yale, 240-243.

Proverbs 11:19: “As righteousness *tendeth* to life: so he that pursueth evil *pursueth it* to his own death.”

Proverbs 14:12: “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death.”

Proverbs 19:16: “He that keepeth the commandment keepeth his own soul; *but* he that despiseth his ways shall die.” (See also 1:32, 5:5-6, 23; 7:22, 26-27; 9:18, 10:21, 15:10, 18:21, 21:16, 23:13-14.)

Proverbs 12:28: “In the way of righteousness *is* life; and *in* the pathway *thereof* *there is* no death.”

Proverbs 10:2: “Treasures of wickedness profit nothing: but righteousness delivereth from death.”

Proverbs 11:4 “Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death.” (See also 13:14, 14:27).

Ecclesiastes 7:15: “All *things* have I seen in the days of my vanity: there is a just *man* that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a wicked *man* that prolongeth *his life* in his wickedness.” (See also 2:14-16, 9:2-3.)

F. Disobedience to the Law of Moses brings eternal death.<sup>270</sup>

Leviticus 18:5: “Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I *am* the LORD.”

Deuteronomy 30:15: “See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil.”

Deuteronomy 30:19: “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.”

Romans 10:5: “For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.”

Galatians 3:12: “And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.”

II. *Objection:* To interpret the death threatened to Adam as eternal death is to take “death” in a figurative sense when “death” is used elsewhere in a non-figurative sense.<sup>271</sup>

<sup>270</sup> BT, 181.2-182.1; Yale, 241. Taylor agrees, Edwards cites Taylor, *Key*, 371, 373, 374, 376.

<sup>271</sup> BT, 182.1; Yale, 241.

*Answer:*

- A. Even if we grant that “death” is used figuratively, Genesis 1-3 is “full of figures.” “Why might not God deliver threatenings to our first parents in figurative expressions, as well as promises?”<sup>272</sup> For example, “God rested,” Adam and Eve’s “eyes were opened” to see their shame, “seed of the woman,” the “serpent’s head” will be “bruised” or “crushed,” and the Savior’s “heel” will be “bruised,” et al.
- B. There is no need to grant that “death” is used figuratively in Genesis 2-3. Many words in Scripture apply to spiritual realities that are also used of things “external and visible,” such as “heart,” “light,” “view,” et al. Speaking of “death,” “this word, in its true and proper meaning, might signify perfect misery, and sensible destruction; though the word was also applied to signify something more external and visible.”<sup>273</sup>

In Hebrew, “the same word that signifies something external, does no less properly and usually signify something more spiritual,” such as “Neshama” as both “breath” and “soul,” “ruach” for “wind” and “spirit,” or “lebh” for “heart” and “soul,” et al.<sup>274</sup> Many words in Scripture are used as having both a reference to something physical, as well as to something intangible, depending on the context in which the word is used.

- III. *Objection:* The phrase “dying thou shalt die” is often “used in the books of Moses to signify temporal death.”<sup>275</sup>

*Answer:*

- A. Yes, but as noted earlier, “the same phrase is sometimes used in Scripture to signify eternal death, in instances much more parallel with this.”<sup>276</sup>
- B. Emphasis and importance are often expressed in Hebrew by repetition.<sup>277</sup>

### **Section Three: Evidence from Genesis 1-3 that God dealt with Adam as the representative of the human race**

- I. *Objection:* “Thou shalt surely die” was said to Adam and Eve and does not apply to Adam’s posterity.

*Answer:*

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<sup>272</sup> Yale, 242; BT, 182.1.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid.

<sup>274</sup> Yale, 242; BT, 182.2.

<sup>275</sup> Yale, 243; BT, 182.2.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid.

<sup>277</sup> BT, 182.2; Yale, 243-244.



- A. In general, God’s words to Adam and Eve also apply to their posterity.<sup>278</sup>

Genesis 1:26: “Let Us make man in our image, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea.”

Genesis 1:28: “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it.”

Genesis 1:29: “Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, and every tree in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed.”

Genesis 3:19: “Unto dust shalt thou return.”

- B. The threat, “Thou shalt surely die” (2:17), as referring to Adam’s posterity, is consistent with “unto dust shalt thou return” (3:19), as referring to Adam’s posterity.<sup>279</sup>
- C. The nature of God’s threat of death as a punishment for sin is consistent with the nature of the afflictions born by Adam’s posterity—punishments, not blessings.<sup>280</sup>

Taylor denies that God’s threat of death applied to Adam’s posterity and held that death, misery, etc., were blessings of God to keep man from sin, not punishments for original sin. But he contradicts himself in numerous instances, referring to “unto dust shalt thou return” as a “*judgment of condemnation*” that is “pronounced upon mankind, in consequence of Adam’s first transgression.”<sup>281</sup>

If, according to Taylor, the curse was meant as a favor and blessing, “God’s words to Adam must be understood thus: ‘Because thou hast done so wickedly,

<sup>278</sup> BT, 183.1; Yale, 245.

<sup>279</sup> BT, 183.1; Yale, 245-247. Taylor again contradicts himself in admitting that “unto dust shalt thou return” refers to Adam’s posterity, and that it is the judgment of the threat, “Thou shalt surely die.” Edwards cites Taylor, *Original Sin*, 7, 8, 17-19, 42.

<sup>280</sup> BT, 184.2-185.1; Yale, 252.

<sup>281</sup> Yale, 247-248; BT, 183.2. Edwards cites Taylor, *Original Sin*, 20, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 40, 48, 49, and *Key*, 240. Taylor rightly affirms that God never justifies the ungodly or condemns the wicked, both are an abomination (*Original Sin*, 48, 49). But his denial of original sin places him in the untenable position of both denying that Adam’s descendants bear any guilt for Adam’s sin, but are nonetheless condemned for it. Taylor attempts to remedy the problem by applying God’s threat of death to Adam’s posterity that would not have come into existence had God executed the judgment of death on Adam immediately. By this, “Adam’s posterity fell under the threatening of the law, and into the hands of the Judge, to be disposed of as he should think fit.” Edwards cites and quotes Taylor, *Original Sin*, 95, 366, 367. Edwards responds by noting, 1. Death and “failing possible existence” are not the same thing. 2. Adam’s possible posterity have always been under God’s sovereign will and God did not gain this prerogative by Adam’s sin. 3. Many people in Scripture are judged and die, along with and their possible posterity, by God’s judgment against personal sin. But nowhere does Scripture speak of their possible posterity as guilty and condemned. 4. Taylor contradicts himself in that he believes the law was abrogated before God’s curse on Adam and his “possible posterity.” 5. Here, again, Taylor contradicts himself by both calling the sentence of death a judgment and condemnation according to law, while denying that it could be such and affirming it was given as a favor and benefit. Yale, 248-251; BT, 184.1-2.

hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, thou shalt not eat of it; therefore I will be more kind to thee than I was in thy state of innocence, and do now appoint for thee the following great favours: *Cursed be the ground for thy sake*’ etc.”<sup>282</sup>

D. God speaking in the 2nd person while referring to their descendants is common in Scripture. The following promises and blessings have implied references to their descendants.<sup>283</sup>

- God’s promises to Noah (Gen. 9)
- God’s promises to Abraham (Gen. 17)
- God’s promises to Ishmael (Gen. 17:20)
- Isaac’s “blessings” to Esau and Jacob
- Jacob blessing Ephraim, Manasseh, and his twelve sons

“Moses, who wrote the account, had no reason to doubt but that the affair would be thus understood by his readers; for such a way of speaking was well understood in those days: the history he gives us of the origin of things, abounds with it”<sup>284</sup>

E. A curse upon the ground is certainly a curse upon Adam’s descendants.<sup>285</sup>

Taylor went so far as to argue that God’s curse on the ground was “no curse upon the woman and the man,” but on the ground only.<sup>286</sup> Edwards replied, “To understand this curse otherwise than as terminating upon man, through the ground, would be as senseless as to suppose the meaning to be ‘The ground shall be punished, and shall be miserable for thy sake.’”<sup>287</sup>

“It is said (Deut. 28:17), ‘Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store’: and would he not be thought to talk very ridiculously, who should say, ‘Here is a curse upon the basket; but not a word of any curse upon the owner’: and therefore we have no reason at all to look upon it as any punishment upon him, or any testimony of God’s displeasure towards him!”<sup>288</sup>

Genesis 5:29: “And he called his name Noah, saying, This *same* shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD hath cursed.”

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<sup>282</sup> BT, 185.1; Yale, 252.

<sup>283</sup> BT, 185.1; Yale, 252.

<sup>284</sup> Yale, 253; BT, 185.1.

<sup>285</sup> BT, 185.1-2; Yale, 253-255.

<sup>286</sup> BT, 185.1; Yale, 253.

<sup>287</sup> Yale, 253-254; BT, 185.1-2.

<sup>288</sup> Yale, 254; BT, 185.2.

- F. Adam named his wife Eve after he fell and God's curse had been pronounced, on the promise of the redemption of his posterity by her seed, the Redeemer.<sup>289</sup>

Adam named his wife "Eve, or Life, on the promise or intimation of the disappointment and overthrow of the tempter in that matter, by her seed; which Adam understood to be by his procuring life; not only for themselves, but for many of their posterity, and thereby delivering them from that death and ruin which the serpent had brought upon them. Those that should be thus delivered, and obtain life, Adam calls *the living*: and because he observed, by what God had said, that deliverance and life was to be by the seed of the woman, he therefore remarks, that 'she is the mother of all living,' and thereupon gives her a new name, calls her *Chavah*, 'Life' (Genesis 3:20)."<sup>290</sup>

Psalm 69:28: "Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous."

- II. *Objection*: That God said Adam would die *on the day* that he ate of the tree means God did not refer to Adam's descendants.<sup>291</sup>

*Answer*:

- A. "*In the day*" is a Hebrew idiom that does not always refer to a twenty-four-hour period of time, or the specific timing of something.

1. The phrase is often used to signify a "*real connection*," and in this case, a real connection between sin and punishment, not necessarily indicating the specific timing of it.<sup>292</sup>

Ezekiel 33:12: "Therefore, thou son of man, say unto the children of thy people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression: as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness; neither shall the righteous be able to live for his *righteousness* in the day that he sinneth."

2. "*In the day*" also signifies "that Adam should be exposed to death for one transgression, without waiting on him to try him the second time. If he eat of that tree, he should immediately fall under condemnation, though afterwards he might abstain ever so strictly."<sup>293</sup>

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<sup>289</sup> BT, 185.2; Yale, 255.

<sup>290</sup> Yale, 255; BT, 185.2.

<sup>291</sup> BT, 186.2; Yale, 257.

<sup>292</sup> BT, 186.2; Yale, 257-258.

<sup>293</sup> Yale, 258; BT, 186.2.

1 Kings 2:37: “For it shall be, *that* on the day thou goest out, and passest over the brook Kidron, thou shalt know for certain that thou shalt surely die: thy blood shall be upon thine own head.”

B. Adam’s punishment was executed the very day he sinned, though not to its “utmost” extent.<sup>294</sup>

1. Adam died spiritually.<sup>295</sup>

- He lost his original righteousness.
- He became subject to physical, as well as spiritual corruption.
- He lost the favor of God.

2. “Grievous external calamity is called by the name of ‘death’ in Scripture.”<sup>296</sup>

Exodus 10:17: “Now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once, and intreat the LORD your God, that he may take away from me this death only.”

3. Adam “died” in falling “under the curse of the law, and condemnation to eternal perdition.”<sup>297</sup>

4. As those made alive in Christ await the “highest completion” of their life in the future, so also those who are “dead,” or under the condemnation of death.<sup>298</sup>

“When the angels sinned, their punishment was immediately executed in a degree: but their full punishment is not till the end of the world. And there is nothing in God’s threatening to Adam, that bound him to execute his full punishment at one.”<sup>299</sup>

III. *Objection:* Adam as the federal head or representative of the human race gives Adam more honor than Christ, as he would have given more people eternal life had he obeyed.<sup>300</sup>

*Answer:* The benefits of Christ’s merit far outweigh Adam’s had he obeyed, “for those that are saved by Christ, are not merely advanced to happiness by his merits, but saved from the infinitely dreadful effects of Adam’s sin, and many from immense guilt, pollution, and misery, by personal sins. They are also brought to a holy and

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<sup>294</sup> BT, 186.2-187.1; Yale, 258-259.

<sup>295</sup> BT, 186.1-2; Yale, 258-259.

<sup>296</sup> Yale, 258; BT, 186.2.

<sup>297</sup> BT, 186.2; Yale, 259.

<sup>298</sup> Yale, 259; BT, 186.2-187.1.

<sup>299</sup> Yale, 259; BT 187.1.

<sup>300</sup> Ibid.

happy state through infinite obstacles; and exalted to a far greater degree of dignity, felicity, and glory, than would have been due for Adam's obedience."<sup>301</sup>

The honor of Adam and Christ "arises not so much from what was proposed to each for his trial, as from their success, and the good actually obtained; and also the manner of obtaining: Christ obtains the benefits men have through him by proper merit of condignity,<sup>302</sup> and a true purchase by an equivalent: which would not have been the case with Adam, if he had obeyed."<sup>303</sup> Adam would have "earned" eternal life for his posterity, but only by the gracious arrangement and promise of God for his obedience, not because his obedience would have, by itself, been equal to or merited the benefits purchased for his posterity.

#### IV. Conclusion

Considering the arrangement God made with Adam and Eve, their sin and death for sin, and how obviously all of Adam's descendents were included in the penalty of death according to God's threat; and considering the subsequent curses effecting Adam and his posterity, the naming of Eve and its meaning, and the "constant and universal events" related to Adam and Eve and their descendents from then until now, God clearly treated Adam as the head of humanity, as one with them. In Genesis 1-3, and all of Scripture, we see the origins of sin and death and its remedy in the grace and mercy of God.<sup>304</sup>

#### Questions and Points for Discussion

1. For Edwards, what determines the good or evil of an act of the will?
  
2. How does Edwards show that Adam would be in sin before he ate the forbidden fruit if he was created without a righteous inclination (original righteousness)?
  
3. How does the view that a free will cannot be determined by an inclination drive opposition to the doctrine of original sin?

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<sup>301</sup> Ibid.

<sup>302</sup> Namely, merit equal to the benefits purchased.

<sup>303</sup> Yale, 260; BT, 187.1.

<sup>304</sup> Yale, 260-261; BT, 187.1-2.

4. How does Taylor's and Turnbull's view of free will lead to contradictions within their own views concerning the nature of virtue and sin?
  
5. Adam and Eve did not immediately die physically when they sinned against God. In what way did they immediately die?
  
6. Taylor was forced to deny clear teachings of Scripture to deny original sin and affirm his view of free will. What important lessons can interpreters of Scripture learn from this?

## Chapter Two: Proofs of Original Sin, Primarily from the Old Testament

- I. Wickedness is spoken of as that which belongs to the “sons of men” or the “race of mankind,” from which the redeemed are delivered.<sup>305</sup>

Job 15:14-16: “What *is* man, that he should be clean? and *he which is* born of a woman, that he should be righteous? <sup>15</sup> Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight. <sup>16</sup> How much more abominable and filthy *is* man, which drinketh iniquity like water?”

Psalm 4:2: “O ye sons of men, how long *will ye turn* my glory into shame? *how long* will ye love vanity, *and seek after leasing?*”

Psalm 14:2-3: “The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, *and seek God.* <sup>3</sup> They are all gone aside, they are *all* together become filthy: *there is* none that doeth good, no, not one.” (Cf. Psalm 53:2-3).

Psalm 57:4: “My soul *is* among lions: *and I lie even among* them that are set on fire, *even* the sons of men, whose teeth *are* spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.”

Psalm 58:1-2: “Do ye indeed speak righteousness, O congregation? do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men? <sup>2</sup> Yea, in heart ye work wickedness; ye weigh the violence of your hands in the earth.”

Proverbs 21:8: “The way of man *is* froward and strange: but *as for* the pure, his work *is* right.”

Ecclesiastes 9:3: “This *is* an evil among all *things* that are done under the sun, that *there is* one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness *is* in their heart while they live, and after that *they go* to the dead.”

Jeremiah 17:5: “Thus saith the LORD; Cursed *be* the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.”

Jeremiah 17:9: “The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”

Hosea 6:7: “But they like men have transgressed the covenant: there have they dealt treacherously against me.”

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<sup>305</sup> BT, 187.2ff.; Yale, 262ff.

Matthew 16:23: “But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.”

Romans 3:10-12: “As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: <sup>11</sup> There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. <sup>12</sup> They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.”

1 Corinthians 3:3: “For ye are yet carnal: for whereas *there is* among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?”

Matthew 7:11: “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?”

James 4:5: “Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?”

1 Peter 4:2: “That he no longer should live the rest of *his* time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.”

“Why should man be so continually spoken of as evil, carnal, perverse, deceitful, and desperately wicked, if all men are by nature as perfectly innocent, and free from any propensity to evil, as Adam was the first moment of his creation, all made right?.... Why, on the contrary, is it not said, at least as often, and with equal reason; that the heart of man is right and pure; that the way of man is innocent and holy; and that he who savors true virtue and wisdom, savors the things that be of men?”<sup>306</sup>

Note, Taylor points to verses that include references to the “pure” or “righteous” to argue that not all are corrupt. Edwards responds that some have been changed by divine grace and “afterwards made righteous.” In chapter 3 of Romans, where universal depravity is established, we are also told that wicked people can become righteous “through the righteousness and grace of God.”<sup>307</sup>

II. Man’s own wickedness is spoken of as that which belongs to the *world*, and those saved are called out from it.<sup>308</sup>

John 7:7: “The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.”

John 8:23: “And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.”

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<sup>306</sup> Yale, 264; BT, 188.1.

<sup>307</sup> Yale, 262; BT, 187.2.

<sup>308</sup> BT, 188.1ff.; Yale, 265ff.



John 14:17: “*Even* the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.”

John 15:18-19: “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before *it hated* you.<sup>19</sup> If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.”

John 17:9: “I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.”

John 17:14: “I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.”

1 John 3:13: “Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.”

1 John 4:5: “They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.”

1 John 5:19: “*And* we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.”

Revelation 14:4: “These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men.”

III. “Wickedness is often spoken of as being man’s *own*, in contradistinction from virtue and holiness.”<sup>309</sup>

“So men’s lusts are often called their own heart’s lusts, and their practicing wickedness is called walking in their own ways, walking in their own counsels, in the imagination of their own heart, and in the sight of their own eyes, according to their own devices, etc.”<sup>310</sup>

IV. Mankind is said to be wicked from his *youth*.<sup>311</sup>

Proverbs 22:15: “Foolishness *is* bound in the heart of a child; *but* the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.”

Genesis 8:21: “The LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake; for the imagination of man’s heart *is* evil from his youth.”

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<sup>309</sup> Yale, 265; BT, 188.2.

<sup>310</sup> Ibid.

<sup>311</sup> BT, 188.2ff.; Yale, 265ff.

Jeremiah 3:24-25: “For shame hath devoured the labour of our fathers from our youth; their flocks and their herds, their sons and their daughters.<sup>25</sup> We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covereth us: for we have sinned against the LORD our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even unto this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God.”

Jeremiah 32:30: “For the children of Israel and the children of Judah have only done evil before me from their youth: for the children of Israel have only provoked me to anger with the work of their hands, saith the LORD.”

Isaiah 47:12: “Stand now with thine enchantments, and with the multitude of thy sorceries, wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth; if so be thou shalt be able to profit, if so be thou mayest prevail.”

“According to the manner of the Hebrew language, when it is said, such a thing has been from youth, or the first part of existence, the phrase is to be understood as including that first time of existence.”<sup>312</sup>

V. Mankind is said to be wicked from the *womb*, from the beginning of life.<sup>313</sup>

Job 14:1, 4: “Man *that is* born of a woman *is* of few days, and full of trouble.... Who can bring a clean *thing* out of an unclean? not one.” The uncleanness here is *moral*, as in 15:14-16 and 25:4, below.<sup>314</sup>

Job 15:14-16: “What *is* man, that he should be clean? and *he which is* born of a woman, that he should be righteous? <sup>15</sup> Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight. <sup>16</sup> How much more abominable and filthy *is* man, which drinketh iniquity like water?”

Job 25:4: “How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean *that is* born of a woman?”

Psalms 51:5: “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.”<sup>315</sup>

Psalms 58:3-4: “The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies. <sup>4</sup> Their poison *is* like the poison of a serpent: *they are* like the deaf adder *that* stoppeth her ear.”

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<sup>312</sup> See Joshua 6:21, Esther 3:13, and Genesis 19:4. Yale, 267; BT, 189.1.

<sup>313</sup> BT, 189.1; Yale, 267-270.

<sup>314</sup> Taylor, aware of its implications concerning original sin, interprets the uncleanness as “common frailty,” not moral corruption. Yale, 270; BT, 189.2.

<sup>315</sup> Edwards notes that Taylor “insists, that such expressions, as being ‘born in sin,’ ‘being transgressors from the womb,’ and the like, are only phrases figuratively to denote aggravation, and high degree of wickedness,” adding that Scripture provides many instances to the contrary, and that Taylor has not shown any Scripture examples that indicate his interpretation. Yale, 270; BT, 190.1.

*Objection:* Adam is not explicitly mentioned in the above texts.<sup>316</sup>

*Answer:*

- A. That Adam is not explicitly mentioned as the cause of original sin in texts speaking of original sin is no more evidence against Adam as its source than Adam not being explicitly mentioned in the many Old Testament and Gospels texts that speak of death is evidence of Adam not being the cause of death, though Taylor affirms that death came by Adam's sin.<sup>317</sup>
- B. Romans 5:12, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin," explicitly states that sin came into the world by Adam."<sup>318</sup>
- C. Though the names of Adam and Eve are only rarely mentioned after the early chapters of Genesis, we have no reason to doubt the account of the origins of mankind.<sup>319</sup>
1. The "most visible effects of these things remain, in the view of mankind in all ages, and are often spoken of in Scripture."<sup>320</sup>
  2. In addition to Genesis being the account of the beginning and origin of mankind and all things, "the account in the three first chapters of Genesis should be taken as a plain account of the introduction of both natural and moral evil, into the world."<sup>321</sup>
- "The history of Adam's sin, with its circumstances, God's threatening, and the sentence pronounced upon him after his transgression, and the immediate consequences, consisting in so vast an alteration in his state, and the state of the world, which abides still, with respect to all his posterity, do most directly and sufficiently lead to an understanding of the rise of calamity, sin and death, in this sinful miserable world."<sup>322</sup>
- D. Doctrines revealed by God are to be accepted as true regardless of where and how frequently they are mentioned in Scripture.<sup>323</sup>
1. "It is fit we all should know, that it does not become us to tell the Most High, how often he shall particularly explain and give the reason of any doctrine which he teaches, in order to our believing what he says. If he has at all given us evidence that it is a doctrine agreeable to his mind, it becomes us to receive

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<sup>316</sup> BT, 190.1; Yale, 271.

<sup>317</sup> BT, 190.1; Yale, 271-272.

<sup>318</sup> BT, 190.1; Yale, 272.

<sup>319</sup> BT, 190.1-2; Yale, 272.

<sup>320</sup> BT, 190.2; Yale, 272.

<sup>321</sup> Ibid.

<sup>322</sup> Ibid.

<sup>323</sup> BT, 190.2; Yale, 272-273.

it with full credit and submission; and not sullenly to reject it, because our notions and humours are not suited in the manner, and number of times, of his particularly explaining it.”<sup>324</sup>

2. Many important doctrines are only explicitly stated in the New Testament.<sup>325</sup>

“Would it now become a Christian, to object and say, that if God really meant any such thing, he ought *in reason and truth* to have declared it plainly and fully; and not to have been so silent about a matter of such vast importance to all mankind, for four thousand years together?”<sup>326</sup>

### Questions and Points for Discussion

1. According to Edwards, is original sin clearly taught in the Old Testament?
2. The principle of Bible interpretation called “the analogy of Scripture” teaches that more obscure and difficult texts of Scripture are to be interpreted in light of the clearer teaching of Scripture. Does this principle apply to the objector’s argument that few Scripture texts speak explicitly about original sin? Why or why not?
3. Did Edwards view the account of Adam and Eve in Genesis 1-3 as historical? Was it important to Edwards’ overall theology that the account be viewed as historical?
4. Is the curse pronounced upon mankind and the earth in Genesis 3 consistent with the nature of reality in all of history and as we experience it today?
5. Read Psalm 51:5. How might this verse be interpreted by those who oppose the doctrine of original sin? Are those alternative interpretations reasonable in light of the other passages Edwards lists as teaching original sin in the Old Testament?

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<sup>324</sup> BT, 190.2; Yale, 272.

<sup>325</sup> BT, 190.2; Yale, 272-273.

<sup>326</sup> BT, 190.2; Yale, 273.

6. What important doctrines are explicitly taught in the New Testament that are not explicitly taught in the Old Testament or only implied in the Old Testament?

## Chapter Three: Proofs of Original Sin, Primarily from the New Testament

### Section One: John 3:6 in relation to other passages

*“That which is born of the flesh, is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”*

I. *Flesh* refers to the “human nature in a debased and corrupt state.”<sup>327</sup>

A. *Flesh* (σὰρξ) is often set in contrast and opposition to *spirit* (πνεῦμα).<sup>328</sup>

Romans 7:14, 18: “For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.... For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not.”

Romans 8:1-3: “*There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. <sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. <sup>3</sup> For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.”

Romans 8:4-9: “That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. <sup>5</sup> For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> For to be carnally minded *is* death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. <sup>7</sup> Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. <sup>8</sup> So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. <sup>9</sup> But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”

“By the flesh here the Apostle means some nature that is corrupt, and of an evil tendency, and directly opposite to the law, and holy nature of God; so that to be and walk according to it, and to have a mind conformed to it, is to be an utter enemy to God and his law, in a perfect inconsistency with being subject to God, and pleasing God; and in a sure and infallible tendency to death, and utter destruction.”<sup>329</sup>

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<sup>327</sup> Yale, 274ff.; BT, 190.2ff. In contrast, Taylor interprets “that which is born of the flesh, is flesh” without reference to man’s fallen and corrupt state: “that which is born by natural descent and propagation, is a man consisting of body and soul, or the mere constitution and powers of a man, in their natural state.” Yale, 274; BT, 190.2.

<sup>328</sup> BT, 191.1; Yale, 274-275.

<sup>329</sup> Yale, 275; BT, 191.1.

“To be *carnally* minded, is the same as being viciously and corruptly minded; to be *spiritually* minded, is to be of a virtuous and holy disposition.” To bolster his argument in contrast to Taylor’s interpretation of “flesh,”—that it refers to “the mere constitution and powers of a man, in their natural state,”—Edwards substitutes Taylor’s interpretation in the above Romans passages, by which Taylor’s view is shown to be untenable. For instance, ““There is no condemnation to them that walk not according to the powers of a man’ etc.”<sup>330</sup>

B. “Man, as in his whole nature corrupt, is called *flesh*”<sup>331</sup>

1. “That which is born of the flesh, is flesh” (John 3:6), does not represent *flesh* “merely as a quality; for it would be incongruous to speak of a quality as a thing born. Therefore man, as in his whole nature corrupt, is call *flesh*.”<sup>332</sup>
2. *Flesh*, figuratively called a person and often spoken of as the agent of action, is “in itself corrupt and sinful” and opposed to the *spirit*, the agent of action of the “holy renewed nature.”<sup>333</sup>

Romans 7:18: “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not.”

Romans 8:3: “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.”

Romans 8:6-7: “For to be carnally minded *is* death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. <sup>7</sup> Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.”

Romans 8:27: “And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what *is* the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to *the will of God*.”

1 Corinthians 5:5: “To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”

Colossians 2:18: “Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.”

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<sup>330</sup> BT, 190.2-191.1; Yale, 274-275. Edwards cites Taylor, *Original Sin*, 144.

<sup>331</sup> BT, 191.1-2; Yale, 275-276.

<sup>332</sup> BT, 191.1; Yale, 275-276.

<sup>333</sup> BT, 191.1-2; Yale, 276-277.

Galatians 5:16-24: “*This* I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. <sup>17</sup> For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. <sup>18</sup> But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. <sup>19</sup> Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, <sup>20</sup> Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, <sup>21</sup> Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. <sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, <sup>23</sup> Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. <sup>24</sup> And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.”

Romans 6-8

- C. “The *spirit* means...a new, divine, and holy nature, exerting itself in a principle of divine love, which is the sum of all christian holiness.”<sup>334</sup>

1 John 3:23-24: “And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. <sup>24</sup> And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.”

1 John 4:12-13: “No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. <sup>13</sup> Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.”

- D. To be *spiritual* is to be holy.<sup>335</sup>

Galatians 6:1: “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”

Romans 7:14: “For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.”

- E. *Flesh* includes sins of the heart, such as pride, envy, malice, and idolatry, *et al.*<sup>336</sup>

Galatians 5:19-21: “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, <sup>20</sup> Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, <sup>21</sup> Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have

<sup>334</sup> BT, 191.2-192.1; Yale, 278.

<sup>335</sup> BT, 192.1; Yale, 278.

<sup>336</sup> Ibid.



also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

Colossians 2:18: “Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.”

1 Corinthians 3:3-4: “For ye are yet carnal: for whereas *there is* among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? <sup>4</sup> For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I *am* of Apollos; are ye not carnal?” (“Carnal” = “fleshly”).

“Such kind of lusts don’t depend on the body, or external senses; for the devil himself has them in the highest degree, who has not, nor ever had, any body or external senses to gratify.”<sup>337</sup>

## II. How did man as sinful and corrupt come to be called *flesh*?<sup>338</sup>

“Because a corrupt and sinful nature is what properly belongs to mankind, or the race of Adam, as they are in themselves, and as they are by nature. The word ‘flesh’ is a word often used in both Old Testament and New to signify mankind in their present state.”<sup>339</sup>

Matthew 24:22: “And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.”

Luke 3:6: “And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”

John 17:2: “As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.”

Acts 2:17: “And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh.”

Romans 3:20: “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.”

Galatians 2:16: “By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”

1 Corinthians 1:29: “That no flesh should glory in his presence.”

“What is born in the first birth of man, is nothing but man as he is of himself, without anything divine in him; depraved, debased, sinful, ruined man, utterly unfit to enter

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<sup>337</sup> Yale, 278; BT, 192.1.

<sup>338</sup> BT, 192.1ff.; Yale, 279ff.

<sup>339</sup> Yale, 279; BT, 192.1.

into the kingdom of God, and incapable of the spiritual divine happiness of that kingdom: but that which is born in the new birth, of the Spirit of God, is a spiritual principle, and holy and divine nature, meet for the divine and heavenly kingdom.” Such is why people need to be born again.<sup>340</sup>

III. Corollary: Man is not just corrupt, he is *wholly corrupt*.<sup>341</sup>

A. Nothing good dwells in his flesh.<sup>342</sup>

Romans 7:18: “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not.”

B. He opposes holiness, and cannot and will not submit to God.<sup>343</sup>

Romans 8:7-8: “Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. <sup>8</sup> So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.”

Galatians 5:17: “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”

C. His corrupt state cannot be improved; he must be delivered from it and be made new.<sup>344</sup>

2 Corinthians 5:17: “Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

D. The *natural man* and the *spiritual man* are opposites in the same manner as *carnal* and *spiritual*. As carnal refers to sinful, so the “natural man” of 1 Corinthians 2:14 refers to man in his “native corrupt state.”<sup>345</sup>

1 Corinthians 2:14-15: “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned. <sup>15</sup> But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.”

1 Corinthians 3:1, 3-4: “And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, *even* as unto babes in Christ.... For ye are yet carnal: for whereas *there is* among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not

<sup>340</sup> Yale, 279-280; BT, 192.1-2.

<sup>341</sup> BT, 192.2ff.; Yale, 280ff.

<sup>342</sup> BT, 192.2; Yale, 280.

<sup>343</sup> Ibid.

<sup>344</sup> Ibid.

<sup>345</sup> BT, 192.2-193.1; Yale, 280-282.

carnal, and walk as men? <sup>4</sup> For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I *am* of Apollos; are ye not carnal?”

James 3:14-15: “But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. <sup>15</sup> This wisdom descendeth not from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, devilish.”

Jude 16, 19: “These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling *words*, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.... These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.”

E. The natural man must be born again to discern the “*things of the Spirit of God*.”<sup>346</sup>

John 14:16-17: “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; <sup>17</sup> *Even* the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.”

## Section Two: Romans 3:9-24

“*What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;*<sup>10</sup> *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:* <sup>11</sup> *There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.* <sup>12</sup> *They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.* <sup>13</sup> *Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips:* <sup>14</sup> *Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:* <sup>15</sup> *Their feet are swift to shed blood:* <sup>16</sup> *Destruction and misery are in their ways:* <sup>17</sup> *And the way of peace have they not known:* <sup>18</sup> *There is no fear of God before their eyes.* <sup>19</sup> *Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.* <sup>20</sup> *Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.* <sup>21</sup> *But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;* <sup>22</sup> *Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:* <sup>23</sup> *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;* <sup>24</sup> *Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*”

I. Depravity is *universal*.<sup>347</sup>

A. The immediate context indicates that depravity is universal.<sup>348</sup>

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<sup>346</sup> BT, 193.1; Yale, 282.

<sup>347</sup> BT, 193.1ff.; Yale, 283.

<sup>348</sup> BT, 193.1-2; Yale, 283-284.

1. Romans 1:16-17 establishes that none are saved apart from faith in Christ.
2. Romans 1:18ff. establishes that all Gentiles are sinful.
3. Romans 2 establishes that all Jews are sinful.
4. Romans 3:9-24 sums up the previous arguments that none are righteous, all are depraved.

B. The terms of universality indicate that depravity is universal.<sup>349</sup>

“If here this matter be not set forth plainly, expressly, and fully, it must be because no words can do it, and it is not in the power of language, or any manner of terms and phrases, however contrived and heaped up one upon another, determinately to signify any such thing.”<sup>350</sup>

II. *Objection:* The universal expressions only apply to some of the Gentiles or the Jews to whom the expressions of corruption apply, as many were “innocent and righteous.” Or, they apply to the “strong party in Israel, in David’s and Solomon’s days and in the prophets’ days.”<sup>351</sup>

*Answer:*

A. The objection is contrary to the purpose of the passage—including numerous passages quoted from the Old Testament—and the preceding context to show that *all* Jews and Gentiles are unrighteous and under sin.<sup>352</sup>

The objection does injustice to the universal and particular language of the text, including 3:9-10, “All are under sin: as it is written, there is none righteous; no, not one.”<sup>353</sup>

B. The objection presumes that Paul sought to prove there were wicked people among the Jews of Israel, something that no Jew, including the Pharisees, neither doubted nor denied. The long, unequivocal, and universal language of Paul’s arguments are inconsistent with such a purpose.<sup>354</sup>

C. Paul’s purpose was to show the universal corruption of Jews and Gentiles, including every individual of each group.

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<sup>349</sup> BT, 193.2; Yale, 283-284.

<sup>350</sup> BT, 193.2; Yale, 284.

<sup>351</sup> Yale, 284-285; BT, 193.2.

<sup>352</sup> BT, 193.2-194.1; Yale, 285.

<sup>353</sup> Yale, 285-286; BT, 194.1.

<sup>354</sup> BT, 194.1; Yale, 286-287.

To further deny the universal and inclusive nature of the text, Taylor said the passages spoke of Jews and Gentiles as two groups collectively, without reference to individuals.<sup>355</sup>

*But:*

1. “This supposed sense disagrees extremely with the terms and language” of the text.<sup>356</sup>

“If the words which the apostle uses, do not most fully and determinably signify a universality, no words ever used in the Bible are sufficient to do it. I might challenge any man to produce any one paragraph in the Scripture, from the beginning to the end, where there is such a repetition and accumulation of terms, so strongly, and emphatically, and carefully, to express the most perfect and absolute universality; or any place to be compared to it.”<sup>357</sup>

Do people use such universal language to merely express that two things share the same characteristic? “If a man speaking of his two feet as both lame should say, ‘All my feet are lame. They are all lame. All together are become weak; none of my feet are strong, none of them are sound; no, not one,’ would not he be thought to be lame in his understanding as well as his feet? When the Apostle says, ‘That every mouth may be stopped,’ must we suppose that he speaks only of those two great collective bodies, figuratively ascribing to each of them a mouth, and mean that those two mouths are stopped!”<sup>358</sup>

2. If the text refers only to the collective guilt or sin of groups, then the immediate context only speaks of the justification of groups. But justification is of individuals.<sup>359</sup>

Romans 3:20: “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.” (Cf. Psalm 143:2).

Romans 3:26, 28: “To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.... Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.”

Romans 4:5: “But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” (Cf. Psalm 32:1-2).

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<sup>355</sup> Yale, 287; BT, 194.1.

<sup>356</sup> BT, 194.1-2; Yale, 287-288.

<sup>357</sup> BT, 194.2; Yale, 287.

<sup>358</sup> Yale, 288; BT, 194.2.

<sup>359</sup> BT, 194.2-195.1; Yale, 288-290.

Galatians 2:16: “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”<sup>360</sup>

Galatians 3:10-11: “For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. <sup>11</sup> But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, *it is* evident: for, The just shall live by faith.”

D. If the text refers only to the collective guilt or sin of groups, it renders Paul’s argument absurd.<sup>361</sup>

1. If the collective bodies of Jews and Gentiles and not all the individual Jews and Gentiles were condemned by the law and cannot be justified by works of the law, then the church is justified apart from the deeds of the law as a collective body and not as individuals. But the church is a new body and was never condemned. Individual members of the church, only, were once condemned and now justified.<sup>362</sup>
2. If the condemnation of Jews and Gentiles refers to collective guilt and not to individuals, many individuals of those groups now justified were never previously condemned, as according to Taylor’s scheme, many Jews and Gentiles were already righteous.<sup>363</sup>

III. “Native depravity” is “total and exceeding great.”<sup>364</sup>

“The expressions also are evidently chosen to denote a most extreme and desperate wickedness of heart. And exceeding depravity is ascribed to every part: to the throat, the scent of an open sepulchre; to the tongue and lips, deceit and the poison of asps; to the mouth, cursing and bitterness; of their feet it is said, they are swift to shed blood: and with regard to the whole man, ‘tis said, destruction and misery are in their ways.”<sup>365</sup>

### Section Three: Romans 5:6-10, Ephesians 2:3, and Romans 7

#### I. Romans 5:6-10

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<sup>360</sup> The Yale version cites Galatians 1:16, whereas the BT edition cites Galatians 2:16, the latter being directly applicable to the argument and thus correct.

<sup>361</sup> BT, 195.1; Yale, 289-290.

<sup>362</sup> BT, 195.1; Yale, 290.

<sup>363</sup> Ibid.

<sup>364</sup> BT, 195.1-2; Yale, 290-291.

<sup>365</sup> Yale, 291; BT, 195.2.

*“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup> For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. <sup>8</sup> But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. <sup>9</sup> Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. <sup>10</sup> For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”<sup>366</sup>*

The descriptions “without strength,” “ungodly,” “sinners,” “enemies,” “subjects of God’s wrath,” indicate that mankind was wicked prior to salvation.<sup>367</sup>

*Objection:* The negative terms of this passage, such as “sinners” and “enemies,” et al, refer to Gentiles, “collectively taken,” as distinguished from the Jews.<sup>368</sup>

*Answer:* The text refers to Jews *and* Gentiles.<sup>369</sup>

A. The Gospel is designed to eliminate self-righteous exclusivity.<sup>370</sup>

“The whole gospel-dispensation is calculated entirely to overthrow and abolish everything to which this self-distinguishing, self-exalting language of the Jews was owing. It was calculated wholly to exclude such boasting, and to destroy that pride and self-righteousness, that were the causes of it.”<sup>371</sup>

The Gospel treats all people as sinners.

B. Christ condemned the self-exalting “pharisaical spirit, practice and language” of those who did not view themselves as sinners and viewed others with contempt.<sup>372</sup>

C. The apostles were “fully indoctrinated” and “effectually taught no longer to call the Gentiles unclean, as a note of distinction from the Jews,” as stated by Peter below.<sup>373</sup>

Acts 10:28: “And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.”

D. Paul, the “Apostle of the Gentiles,” instructed others to no longer call the Gentiles unclean.<sup>374</sup>

<sup>366</sup> Quoted by Edwards in Yale, 292; BT, 195.2; emphasis mine.

<sup>367</sup> Ibid.

<sup>368</sup> Ibid.

<sup>369</sup> BT, 196.1ff.; Yale, 293ff.

<sup>370</sup> Yale, 293; BT, 196.1.

<sup>371</sup> Ibid.

<sup>372</sup> BT, 196.1; Yale, 293-294. For support, Edwards lists Matthew 8:5-13, 9:9-13, 11:19-24; Luke 7:37ff., 17:12-19, 19:1-10; Matthew 15:21-28; John 4:9ff.; et al.

<sup>373</sup> Yale, 294; BT, 196.1. Note, Yale lists Acts 10:24, whereas 10:28 is the proper reference as listed in BT.

- E. The epistle to the Romans is most emphatic that both Jews and Gentiles are under sin.<sup>375</sup>

“He makes it almost his whole business, from the beginning of the epistle, to this passage in the 5th chapter which we are upon, to convince them that there was no ground for any such distinction, and to prove that in common, both Jews and Gentiles, all were desperately wicked, and none righteous, no, not one.”<sup>376</sup>

Romans 3:9: “What then? are we better *than they*? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin.”

Romans 4-5

Romans 7:4-13

*Objection:* Paul used this language in Galatians 2:15-16, “We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ.”<sup>377</sup>

*Answer:* Paul uses this language to show disapproval of the practice in his rebuke of Peter for refusing to eat with Gentiles. He criticized Peter for separating himself from the Gentiles, for affirming the “self-exalting, self-distinguishing, separating spirit and custom of the Jews,” as also displayed by their calling Gentiles “sinners.”<sup>378</sup>

- F. Paul uses the word “sinners” in reference to the “morally evil,” including both Jews and Gentiles.<sup>379</sup>

- G. Paul speaks of “we” and “us,” including himself as one of the *sinners* in this passage and elsewhere, not as a Gentile. Paul saw himself as a *Jew* and a *sinner*.<sup>380</sup>

1. *Objection:* According to Taylor, Paul includes himself among the Gentiles because he called himself the Apostle to the Gentiles.<sup>381</sup>

*Answer:* Paul being an Apostle to the Gentiles as a remedy for heathenism did not mean Paul considered himself a Gentile any more than the sun is considered as among “darkness, or among dark things” because it is a remedy

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<sup>374</sup> BT, 196.1-2; Yale, 294-295.

<sup>375</sup> BT, 196.2; Yale, 295-296.

<sup>376</sup> Yale, 295; BT, 196.2.

<sup>377</sup> Yale, 296; BT, 196.2.

<sup>378</sup> BT, 196.2-197.1; Yale, 296.

<sup>379</sup> BT, 197.1; Yale, 296-297.

<sup>380</sup> BT, 197.1; Yale, 297-298.

<sup>381</sup> Yale, 297-298; BT, 197.1.



for darkness. Paul “expressly” identifies himself with the Jews in this Epistle. (See Romans 3:9 above.)

2. *Objection:* Peter identifies himself with the heathen in 1 Peter 4:3: “For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the gentiles; when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, reviling, banquetings, and abominable idolatries.”<sup>382</sup>

*Answer:* Peter speaks here “as one of the church of Christ in general, made up of those that had been Jews, proselytes and heathen, who now were all one body, of which body he was a member.” The same principle can be seen in Titus 3:3, “For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, *and* hating one another.”<sup>383</sup>

## II. Ephesians 2:3 teaches original sin.<sup>384</sup>

“*And were by nature children of wrath, even as others.*”

### A. In context, the passage clearly teaches original sin.<sup>385</sup>

“This doctrine is here not only plainly and fully taught, but abundantly so, if we take the words with the context; where Christians are once and again represented as being, in their first state, dead in sin, and as quickened, and raised up from such a state of death, in a most marvelous display of the free and rich grace and love, and exceeding greatness of the power of God, etc.”<sup>386</sup>

### B. It is “unnatural and unreasonable” to interpret “by nature children” (τεκνα φύσει) in other than its “proper sense.”

1. “Children” (τεκνα) refers to begotten or born children, while “nature” (φύσει), from φύω, means beget or bring forth young or grow up as a plant.<sup>387</sup> The latter does not refer to “habit contracted by custom, or an acquired nature.”<sup>388</sup>
2. Paul here uses the word “children” (τεκνα), which “more properly signifies a begotten or born child,” as compared to “sons” (υιοι) used in 2:2 (“sons of disobedience”).<sup>389</sup>

<sup>382</sup> Yale, 298; BT, 197.1.

<sup>383</sup> BT, 197.1-2; Yale, 297-298.

<sup>384</sup> BT, 197.2ff.; Yale, 299ff.

<sup>385</sup> BT, 197.2; Yale, 299.

<sup>386</sup> Yale, 299; BT, 197.2. Taylor interprets the phrase as metaphorical, meaning that we were “truly or really children of wrath.” Taylor, *Original Sin*, 112-114. Quoted by Edwards, who calls Taylor’s interpretation “arbitrary...having nothing to warrant it in the whole Bible.”

<sup>387</sup> BT, 198.1; Yale, 301.

<sup>388</sup> Yale, 300; BT, 198.1. As noted earlier, Taylor believed that a sinful nature is not something with which people are born, but is acquired through repeated acts of sin such that sin becomes habitual.

3. Paul speaks of children of wrath to counter those who exalted themselves over Gentiles because they were children of Abraham by birth.
4. “The Apostle uses the word ‘nature’ in its proper sense here, because he sets what they were by nature, in opposition to what they are by grace.”<sup>390</sup>

Ephesians 2:5, 8: “by grace ye are saved”

“Children of wrath” in context, i.e., “dead in your trespasses” (v.1), “dead in your transgressions” (v. 5), “in the lusts of our flesh” (v. 3), etc., “abundantly proves, that by nature we are *totally corrupt*, without any good thing in us.” Therefore, “that what Christians have that is good in them, or in their state, is in no part of it naturally in themselves, or from themselves, but is wholly from divine grace, all the gift of God, and his workmanship, the effect of his power, and free and wonderful love.”<sup>391</sup>

- C. *Objection*: “The Apostle speaks only of the Gentiles in their heathen state, when he speaks of those that were dead in sin, and by nature children of wrath.” He only includes himself because he is the “Apostle of the Gentiles.”<sup>392</sup>

*Answer*:

1. Earlier comments regarding sin applying equally to Jews and Gentiles apply here.<sup>393</sup>
2. In verses 1-3, Paul clearly refers to himself and other Jews in distinction from the Gentiles, including phrases such as “we also,” “even as others.”<sup>394</sup>
3. Paul often distinguishes himself from the Gentiles.<sup>395</sup>

Ephesians 2:11: “Wherefore remember, that ye *being* in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands.”

### III. Romans 7

*“Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? <sup>2</sup> For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. <sup>3</sup> So then if, while her husband*

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<sup>389</sup> Yale, 301; BT, 198.1.

<sup>390</sup> Ibid.

<sup>391</sup> Yale, 302; BT, 198.1-2.

<sup>392</sup> Yale, 302; BT, 198.2.

<sup>393</sup> BT, 198.2; Yale, 302.

<sup>394</sup> BT, 198.2; Yale, 303.

<sup>395</sup> BT, 199.1; Yale, 303-304.

*liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.* <sup>4</sup> *Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.* <sup>5</sup> *For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.* <sup>6</sup> *But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.* <sup>7</sup> *What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.* <sup>8</sup> *But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.* <sup>9</sup> *For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.* <sup>10</sup> *And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.* <sup>11</sup> *For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.* <sup>12</sup> *Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.* <sup>13</sup> *Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.* <sup>14</sup> *For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.* <sup>15</sup> *For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.* <sup>16</sup> *If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.* <sup>17</sup> *Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.* <sup>18</sup> *For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.* <sup>19</sup> *For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.* <sup>20</sup> *Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.* <sup>21</sup> *I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.* <sup>22</sup> *For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:* <sup>23</sup> *But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.* <sup>24</sup> *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? <sup>25</sup> I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.”*

*Objection:* Romans 7 speaks of the Jew under the law, not the state of a Christian.<sup>396</sup>

*Answer:* The conclusion, in 8:3, reveals that “the apostle’s design is to show the insufficiency of the law to give life to any one whatsoever,” because “*all* mankind are *in the flesh*, and are *carnal, sold under sin*, and so remain till delivered by Christ: and consequently, all mankind in their first original state are very sinful; which was the thing to be proved.”<sup>397</sup>

A. Because the law “is weak through the flesh,” it cannot give life to any Jew or Gentile.

<sup>396</sup> BT, 199.1-2; Yale, 304-305.

<sup>397</sup> Ibid.

- B. “Flesh” in Romans 8:3, in context, speaks of human sinfulness, and therefore original sin.

Romans 7:5: “For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.”

Romans 7:14: “For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.”

Romans 7:18: “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not.”

Romans 7:23-24: “But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.<sup>24</sup> O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

### Questions and Points for Discussion

1. Does Edwards make an adequate case that “flesh” in John 3:6 refers to “human nature in a debased and corrupt state”?
2. Read and compare Romans 8:5-8 and 1 Corinthians 2:14. Is the unbeliever’s willful hostility toward God related to the unbeliever’s blindness to the things of God? How and why?
3. Is Edwards arguing for a dualistic view of the physical or material as evil and the non-physical or spiritual as good? Why or why not?
4. How do Edwards’ arguments about what it means to be spiritual in his treatise *The Religious Affections* bear upon his discussion of the nature of the flesh?<sup>398</sup>

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<sup>398</sup> See *Affections*, BT, *Works*, 1:264-274; Yale, 2:197-239; BT, paperback, 124-165.

5. Following the arguments of chapters 1 and 2, is it possible that Romans 3:9-24 does not speak of universal depravity?
6. How is depravity of individuals related to how people are justified and the doctrine that no one is justified by their own righteousness? Is justification unto eternal life ever of groups of Jews or Gentiles unrelated to the status of each individual in the group?

## Chapter Four: Romans 5:12

### Section One: Responses to Dr. Taylor's explanation of Romans 5:12-21

*“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: <sup>13</sup> (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. <sup>14</sup> Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. <sup>15</sup> But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. <sup>16</sup> And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. <sup>17</sup> For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) <sup>18</sup> Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. <sup>19</sup> For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. <sup>20</sup> Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: <sup>21</sup> That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

- I. *Objection:* “Death” in verse 12 refers to physical death only, and thus it follows that verses 14, 15, and 17 refer to physical death only.<sup>399</sup>

*Answer:*

- A. In the immediate context of the argument of Romans 5, including Romans 6:23, “The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord,” death is contrasted with eternal life, signifying eternal death.<sup>400</sup>

Taylor's own words concerning Romans 6:23 support Edwards' interpretation of Romans 5:12ff.: “death in this place also is manifestly widely different from the death we now die, as it stands here opposed to eternal life through Jesus Christ, and signifies eternal death, the second death.” Further, in his *Paraphrase and Notes* on Romans, Taylor views Romans 6:23 as part of the same argument and paragraph of Romans 5:12ff.<sup>401</sup>

<sup>399</sup> BT, 199.2; Yale, 306.

<sup>400</sup> BT, 199.2-200.1; Yale, 306-309.

<sup>401</sup> Yale, 306-307; BT, 199.2. Edwards quotes Taylor, *Key*, 396. Taylor's *Paraphrase and Notes* on Romans are included in the *Key*.

Here again, Edwards enlists Taylor to refute Taylor, who necessarily contradicts himself in attempting to exegete and comment on the text while maintaining his denial of original sin.<sup>402</sup>

- B. “Death” can refer to physical or spiritual death, or both. In 5:12-21, “death” no more means physical death only than when Christ speaks of death in the following passages.<sup>403</sup>

Matthew 10:39: “He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.”

Luke 13:4-5: “Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? <sup>5</sup> I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”

John 5:24-29: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. <sup>25</sup> Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. <sup>26</sup> For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; <sup>27</sup> And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. <sup>28</sup> Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, <sup>29</sup> And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”

John 6:49-50: “Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. <sup>50</sup> This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.”

John 6:58: “This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.”

John 11:25-26: “Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: <sup>26</sup> And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?”

- C. The penalty for sin, includes “temporal, spiritual, and eternal” death.<sup>404</sup>

“That life which the Scripture speaks of as the reward of righteousness, is a whole containing several parts, viz. the life of the body, union of soul and body, and the

<sup>402</sup> Edwards has some fun with Taylor’s contention that “it must most infallibly be so” that Romans 5:12ff. must only refer to physical death, when he points out Taylor’s self-contradiction, saying, “But as infallible as this is, if we believe what Dr. Taylor elsewhere says, it must needs be otherwise,” and later pointing out that Taylor, himself, refutes his own “infallible evidence!” Ibid.

<sup>403</sup> BT, 199.2; Yale, 307. See also the footnotes, BT, 199.2-200.2; Yale, 307.

<sup>404</sup> BT, 199.2-200.1; Yale, 307-308.

most perfect sensibility, activity and felicity of both, which is the chief thing. In like manner the death, which the Scripture speaks of as the punishment of sin, is a whole including the death of the body, and the death of the soul, and the eternal, sensible, perfect destruction and misery of both.” That one or more aspect may be in view or emphasized at different times does not change the overall meaning of the word.<sup>405</sup>

D. “Is it not natural to infer, that all mankind are exposed to the whole of that death which is the proper punishment of sin, whereof temporal death is a part, and a visible image of the whole...and an introduction to the principal, and infinitely most dreadful, part?”<sup>406</sup>

II. Taylor’s scheme that the punishment of death of 5:12 was Adam’s punishment only, while death to his posterity was the “favor” of God to encourage righteous living, makes meaningless the words, “By one man sin entered into the world.”<sup>407</sup>

A. The text and its context clearly answer how sin—its existence and effects now universal—first entered into the world.<sup>408</sup>

Having “elaborately” shown in the previous chapters “how the whole world was full of sin, in all parts of it, both among Jews and Gentiles, and all exposed to death and condemnation,” the natural question becomes, how did this happen? Romans 5:12 tells us “that this sorrowful event came by one man, even the first man....If this were not plain enough in itself, the words immediately following demonstrate it, ‘And so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.’”<sup>409</sup>

B. The text and context are senseless if Adam’s sin affected himself only.<sup>410</sup>

“It would be no more proper to say, that by one man sin entered into the world, than if it should be inquired, how mankind came into America, and there had anciently been a ship of Phoenicians wrecked at sea, and a single man of the crew was driven ashore on this continent, and here died as soon as he reached the shore, and it should be said, ‘By that one man mankind came into America.’”<sup>411</sup>

C. If Taylor’s scheme were true, it would be more accurate to say sin entered the world through Eve, not Adam.<sup>412</sup>

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<sup>405</sup> Yale, 308; BT, 200.1.

<sup>406</sup> BT, 200.1; Yale, 308-309.

<sup>407</sup> Yale, 309-310; BT, 200.1-2.

<sup>408</sup> BT, 200.1-2; Yale, 309-310.

<sup>409</sup> Yale, 309; BT, 200.1.

<sup>410</sup> BT, 200.1-2; Yale, 309-310.

<sup>411</sup> Yale, 310; BT, 200.2.

<sup>412</sup> *Ibid.* Unable to avoid the clear teaching of the passage, Taylor acknowledged that God viewed Adam as a type of Christ. Nonetheless, as will be discussed below, Taylor’s view that Adam acted for himself alone renders Adam as a type of Christ meaningless, as Taylor did not view Adam as standing as the covenant head of the human race in the way that Christ stood as the covenant head of His people.



- III. The sin of Adam applying to Adam only makes the causal articles “by” and “through” and the argument of verses 13-19 nonsense.<sup>413</sup>

The articles “signify some connection and dependence, by some sort of influence of that sin of one man, or some tendency to that effect which is so often said to come *by* it. But according to Dr. Taylor, there can be no real dependence or influence in the case of any sort whatsoever.” Taylor denied a moral or legal connection between Adam’s sin and punishment and the sin and punishment of Adam’s posterity.<sup>414</sup>

Reducing Taylor’s argument to absurdity, Edwards writes, “the whole amounts to no more than this: that God is pleased, of his mere good will and pleasure, to bestow a greater favor upon us, than he did upon Adam in innocency, *after that sin* of his eating the forbidden fruit; which sin we are no more concerned in, than in the sin of the king of Pegu, or emperor of China.”<sup>415</sup>

- IV. Death as a “favor” is contrary to how verses 12-21 contrast the results of Adam’s sin with the results of “the grace and righteousness of Christ.”<sup>416</sup>

“They are set in opposition to each other, as opposite effects, arising from opposite causes, throughout the paragraph: one as the *just consequence of an offense*, the other *a free gift*, ver. 15-18.”<sup>417</sup>

In contrast, Taylor’s scheme results in the following unbiblical implications:

- A. Both death and life are free gifts of free benefits.<sup>418</sup>

But, “death that comes by Adam, is set in opposition to the life and happiness that comes by Christ, as being the fruit of *sin, and judgment for sin*; when the latter is the fruit of *divine grace*, ver. 15, 17, 20-21.”<sup>419</sup> Sin, not God’s goodness, love, and grace, is the cause of death.

Romans 7:13: “Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.”

- B. Both death and life are good, the effect of God’s favor, though one is the fruit of disobedience and one the fruit of obedience.<sup>420</sup>

<sup>413</sup> BT, 200.2ff.; Yale, 310ff.

<sup>414</sup> Yale, 310; BT, 200.2.

<sup>415</sup> Yale, 311; BT, 201.1.

<sup>416</sup> BT, 201.1ff.; Yale, 311ff.

<sup>417</sup> BT, 201.1; Yale, 311.

<sup>418</sup> Ibid.

<sup>419</sup> Ibid.

<sup>420</sup> BT, 201.1; Yale, 312.

On the contrary, death is the evil fruit of Adam's offense of disobedience, while "life and happiness" are the good fruit of Christ's righteous obedience.

- C. The distinction and opposition between the first Adam and Christ as the second Adam is meaningless.<sup>421</sup>

"This grand distinction between the two Adams, and all the other instances of opposition and difference, here insisted on, as between the effects of sin and righteousness, the consequences of obedience and disobedience, of the offense and the free gift, judgment and grace, condemnation and justification, they all come to nothing: and this whole discourse...proves nothing but a multitude of words without meaning, or rather an heap of inconsistencies."<sup>422</sup>

By Taylor's doctrine, both death and life, misery and happiness, came by Christ, "by his grace, righteousness and obedience." The sentence passed on Adam was not according to the covenant with Adam, because it was abrogated the moment Adam sinned.<sup>423</sup> Death "stands under the covenant of grace," and "is no proper and legal punishment of sin."<sup>424</sup>

- V. Taylor's doctrine contradicts his own interpretation of verses 13-14, that Adam's sin brought physical death to mankind only because no law existed from Adam to Moses that required death for sin.<sup>425</sup>

*"For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. <sup>14</sup> Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come."*

- A. Taylor's contention that "there was no law of God in being, by which men were exposed to death for personal sin, during the time from Adam to Moses, is neither true, nor agreeable to this Apostle's own doctrine."<sup>426</sup>

1. People were subject to death for sin prior to the giving of the Law of Moses, therefore the "law of nature" was already written on their hearts.<sup>427</sup>

Job 21:29-32: "Have ye not asked them that go by the way? and do ye not know their tokens,<sup>30</sup> That the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction? they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath.<sup>31</sup> Who shall declare his way to his face? and who shall repay him *what* he hath done?<sup>32</sup> Yet shall he be brought to the grave, and shall remain in the tomb."

<sup>421</sup> BT, 201.1-2; Yale, 313-314.

<sup>422</sup> Yale, 313-314; BT, 201.2.

<sup>423</sup> Yale, 313; BT, 201.1-2. "This covenant with Adam was disannulled immediately after Adam sinned. Even before God passed sentence upon Adam, grace was introduced." Taylor, *Original Sin*, 389. See also pp. 389-395.

<sup>424</sup> Taylor, *Original Sin*, 395, 396, respectively. Ibid.

<sup>425</sup> BT, 201.2ff.; Yale, 314ff.

<sup>426</sup> Yale, 314; BT, 201.2.

<sup>427</sup> Ibid.

Job 24:19-20: “Drought and heat consume the snow waters: *so doth* the grave *those which* have sinned.<sup>20</sup> The womb shall forget him; the worm shall feed sweetly on him; he shall be no more remembered; and wickedness shall be broken as a tree.”

Job 24:24: “They are exalted for a little while, but are gone and brought low; they are taken out of the way as all *other*, and cut off as the tops of the ears of corn.”

Job 36:6: “He preserveth not the life of the wicked: but giveth right to the poor.”

2. Romans 1-2 teach death for sin against the law of God written on the heart.<sup>428</sup>

Romans 2: 12-15: “For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law;<sup>13</sup> (For not the hearers of the law *are* just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.<sup>14</sup> For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:<sup>15</sup> Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and *their* thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another).”

Romans 1:32: “Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.”

Note: Taylor’s interpretation of Romans 1:32 agrees, but contradicts his view that no law existed by which people are subject to death prior to the giving of the Mosaic law. He writes concerning the “Heathens” noted in this verse, “they were not ignorant of the Rule of Right, which God has implanted in the Human Nature; and which shews that they which commit such things, are deserving of death.”<sup>429</sup>

3. Taylor’s view that no law of God existed from Adam to Moses that exposed people to death contradicts his own view that the flood was judgment for personal sins. How could God judge personal sins with the flood when no law existed that exposed people to judgment for personal sins? The correct answer is God judged people for personal sins according to their conscience, the law of God written on their heart.<sup>430</sup>

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<sup>428</sup> BT, 202.1; Yale, 315.

<sup>429</sup> *Key*, 216. Quoted by Edwards, Yale, 315; BT, 202.1. In his interpretation of Romans 4:5, Taylor also notes that Abraham, who lived prior to the giving of the Mosaic law, was justified by God’s mercy, only. *Key*, 230-231. *Ibid.*

<sup>430</sup> BT, 202.1; Yale, 316.

- B. Taylor's scheme argues that death from Adam to Moses was for Adam's sin only, not the personal sin of his descendents, and involved physical death only, and that as a benefit, not a penalty. He also held that eternal death was the penalty for personal sin after the giving of the Mosaic law. Thus, according to his scheme, people only died physically prior to the Law, for Adam's sin only, and were not threatened with death (eternal death) for personal sin until the Mosaic law. At the same time, physical death was not threatened from the Mosaic law onwards, as that was the result of Adam's sin.<sup>431</sup>

Here, again, Edwards exposes the confusion and absurdities that result from Taylor's attempts to deny original sin and eternal death in light of the many texts that teach it. Taylor often appears unaware that his arguments against original sin contradict what he often says about sin and death elsewhere in his own writings.

- C. The great argument of Romans 5:12-21 becomes pointless if one grants Taylor's contention that death was a favor bestowed as a result of Adam's sin, a favor God could bestow as He does any other favor.<sup>432</sup>

- VI. Though Taylor speaks of the Gospel benefit of the restoration of life "lost in Adam" as a gracious gift of God, it follows from his denial of original sin that it is merely an act of justice. No grace is required to remove a benefit (death) given to innocent people to restrain them from sin.<sup>433</sup>

"It is no more than a mere act of *justice*, being only a removing of what mankind suffer, being innocent." God, as a "*righteousness of the judge of all the earth*" would require it according to His justice.<sup>434</sup>

- VII. Taylor wrongly interprets the terms "judgment," "condemnation," "justification," and "righteousness" as used in this passage.<sup>435</sup>

- A. According to Taylor's scheme, "judgment" and "condemnation" are to innocent people, "viewed by the judge, even in his passing the sentence and condemning them, as having no guilt of sin." Thus, God judges "arbitrarily" and "without any law or rule of right," because the command and threat of death to Adam applied to Adam only. The condemnation of death to Adam's posterity was given as a "great favor" to restrain sin, but not as a punishment for sin.<sup>436</sup>

*But:*

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<sup>431</sup> BT, 202.1-2; Yale, 316-317.

<sup>432</sup> BT, 202.2; Yale, 317.

<sup>433</sup> BT, 202.2ff.; Yale, 317ff.

<sup>434</sup> BT, 202.2-203.1; Yale, 318.

<sup>435</sup> BT, 203.1ff.; Yale, 319ff.

<sup>436</sup> BT, 203.1; Yale, 319.

1. Taylor, himself, does not interpret “judgment” and “condemnation” in this manner elsewhere in his writings.<sup>437</sup>
2. The terms are not used elsewhere in Romans or the New Testament in the above sense.<sup>438</sup>

Romans 2:1-3: “Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.<sup>2</sup> But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.<sup>3</sup> And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?”

Romans 2:12: “For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law.”

Romans 3:7: “For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?”

Romans 5:6-11: “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.<sup>7</sup> For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.<sup>8</sup> But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.<sup>9</sup> Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.<sup>10</sup> For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.<sup>11</sup> And not only *so*, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.” Christ did not die for the innocent.

Romans 8:1, 3: “*here is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.... For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.”

Romans 14:10: “But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.”

Romans 14:22: “Hast thou faith? have *it* to thyself before God. Happy *is* he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.”

3. Here, as elsewhere, the terms refer to “*condemnation* as what *comes by sin*, a condemnation to *death*, which seems to be a most terrible evil, and capital

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<sup>437</sup> Ibid.

<sup>438</sup> BT, 203.1; Yale, 319-320.

punishment, even in what is temporal and visible; and this in the way of *judgment* and execution of justice, in opposition to *grace* or *favour*, and *gift* or a benefit coming by favour.”<sup>439</sup>

- B. Taylor wrongly interprets “justification” (v. 18) and “righteousness” (v. 19) to refer to *all men*, “good and bad, believers and unbelievers.”<sup>440</sup>
1. The terms are never used in the New Testament in the above sense. When used “as from God to men,” they always “signify a *privilege* belonging only to some,” namely, the redeemed.<sup>441</sup>
  2. Throughout the entire book of Romans, “justification” refers to “something peculiar to believers, who had been sinners; implying some reconciliation and forgiveness of sin, and special privilege in nearness to God, above the rest of the world.”<sup>442</sup>

To think that Romans 5:12-21 speaks of a different justification would do “the most absurd violence” to the passage.<sup>443</sup>

3. The benefit of righteousness is only to believers in Christ, as “*all* which are *in Christ*...have the benefit of his obedience, as *all* that are *in Adam* have the sorrowful fruit of his disobedience.”<sup>444</sup>

“Scripture speaks of believers as the seed or posterity of Christ (Gal. 3:29). They are *in Christ* by *grace*, as *Adam*’s posterity are in him by *nature*: the one are in *the first Adam* naturally, as the other are *in the second Adam* spiritually.”<sup>445</sup>

Galatians 3:29: “And if ye *be* Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

1 Corinthians 15:45-49: “And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam *was made* a quickening spirit. <sup>46</sup> Howbeit that *was* not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. <sup>47</sup> The first man *is* of the earth, earthy: the second man *is* the Lord from heaven. <sup>48</sup> As *is* the earthy, such *are* they also that are earthy: and as *is* the heavenly, such *are* they also that are heavenly. <sup>49</sup> And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.”

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<sup>439</sup> BT, 203.1; Yale, 320.

<sup>440</sup> BT, 203.2; Yale, 320.

<sup>441</sup> BT, 203.2; Yale, 320-321.

<sup>442</sup> Yale, 321; BT, 203.2. According to Edwards, Taylor himself interprets the terms properly elsewhere in Romans in his exposition of Romans in his *Key*.

<sup>443</sup> Yale, 322; BT, 203.2.

<sup>444</sup> Yale, 323; BT, 204.1.

<sup>445</sup> *Ibid.*

3. “The many” (οἱ πολλοί), referring to those “made righteous by Christ’s obedience” are the same as those spoken of elsewhere by Paul as one body in Christ.<sup>446</sup>

1 Corinthians 10:17: “For we *being* many are one bread, *and* one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.”

4. *Objection*: Does not 1 Corinthians 15:21-22 confirm that “the many made righteous” in Romans 5:19 refers to “the general *resurrection* at the last day”?<sup>447</sup>

“For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.<sup>22</sup> For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”

*Answer*: The objection is built on the two *erroneous* and *unsupportable* suppositions: 1) the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15 is of all men, the just and unjust;<sup>448</sup> and, 2) the specific benefit earned by Christ in Romans 5 is the general resurrection of all men, the just and unjust.<sup>449</sup>

- a. “Resurrection” in the New Testament usually refers to believers and is “to life and happiness.”<sup>450</sup>

Matthew 22:30: “For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.”

Luke 20:35-36: “But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage:<sup>36</sup> Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.”

John 6:39-40: “And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.<sup>40</sup> And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.”

Philippians 3:11: “If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.”

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<sup>446</sup> Ibid.

<sup>447</sup> Ibid.

<sup>448</sup> BT, 204.1-2; Yale, 323-325.

<sup>449</sup> BT, 204.2; Yale, 325-326.

<sup>450</sup> BT, 204.1; Yale, 324.

- i. The context of 1 Corinthians 15:21-22 indicates that the resurrection is to a happy state (not damnation) and is of saints (“they that are Christ’s”).<sup>451</sup>

1 Corinthians 15:19-20, 23: “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.<sup>20</sup> But now is Christ risen from the dead, *and* become the firstfruits of them that slept.... But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.”

- ii. Verse 29 to the end of the chapter speaks of the resurrection as a rising “in glory, in power, with a spiritual body, having the image of the second man, the spiritual and heavenly Adam; a resurrection, wherein this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality, and death be swallowed up in victory, and the saints shall gloriously triumph over that last enemy.”<sup>452</sup> Scripture only uses such language of saints.

- b. Though Christ’s gracious gifts of justification, righteousness, and life are related to the resurrection as remedies to the death brought by Adam’s sin, they are not the same thing. And a general resurrection of all includes the resurrection of unbelievers to damnation, a terrible calamity that cannot be equated with the great benefits of Christ in Romans 5.<sup>453</sup>

VIII. *Objection:* Paul’s references to Adam’s descendants as “sinners” or as “having sinned” only mean that all people became subject to death and suffering, though innocent, because “sin” is sometimes used for “suffering” in the Old Testament.<sup>454</sup>

*Answer:*

- A. Though words for “sin” sometimes mean “suffering,” “yet it does not appear, that these words are ever used for suffering, where that suffering is not a punishment, or a fruit of God’s anger for sin.”<sup>455</sup>
- B. “Such an use...is quite alien from the language of the *New Testament*. Where can an instance be produced of any thing like it, in any one place, besides what is pretended in this?”<sup>456</sup>
- C. Such a use of “sin” is contrary to Paul’s use of the term in all his epistles, including this passage.<sup>457</sup>

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<sup>451</sup> Ibid.

<sup>452</sup> Yale, 325; 204.2. Taylor agrees that the resurrection spoken of in 1 Corinthians 15 is of believers only.

<sup>453</sup> BT, 204.2; Yale, 325-326.

<sup>454</sup> BT, 205.1; Yale, 326.

<sup>455</sup> BT, 205.1; Yale, 326-327.

<sup>456</sup> BT, 205.2; Yale, 328.

<sup>457</sup> BT, 205.2-206.1; Yale, 330-332.



1. “Sin,” “transgression,” “disobedience,” and “offense” signify “moral evil,” and are used synonymously in 5:12-21 and elsewhere in the Pauline epistles.<sup>458</sup>
2. To justify his denial of original sin, Taylor’s forces foreign meanings on the text and creates contradictions within the passage itself.<sup>459</sup>

“The putting such a sense on the word ‘sin,’ in this place, is not only to make the Apostle greatly to disagree with himself in the language he uses everywhere else, but also to disagree with himself no less in the language he uses in this very passage.”<sup>460</sup>

“To evade a clear evidence of the doctrine of original sin, another meaning must be found out, and it must be supposed that the Apostle uses the word in a sense entirely different, signifying something that neither *implies* nor *supposes* any moral evil at all in the subject.”<sup>461</sup>

3. Sinning, in verse 12, cannot be interpreted as “falling under the suffering of death,” as here, and throughout the passage, Paul clearly “*distinguishes* between *sin* and *death*,” speaking of death as the effect of the immoral act of sin.<sup>462</sup>

D. Taylor’s interpretation renders the passage absurd.<sup>463</sup>

Edwards writes of Taylor’s view, “We are said to have sinned; by an active verb, as though we had actively sinned, yet this is not spoken truly and properly, but it is put figuratively for our becoming sinners passively, our being made or constituted sinners. Yet again, not that we do truly become sinners passively, or are really made sinners, by anything that God does; this also is only a figurative or tropical representation; and the meaning is only ‘we are condemned,’ and treated as if we were sinners. Not indeed that we are properly condemned; for God never truly condemns the innocent: but this also is only a figurative representation of the thing. It is but as it were condemning; because it is appointing to death, a terrible evil, *as if it were* a punishment. But then, in reality, here is no appointment to a terrible evil, or any evil at all; but truly to a benefit, a great benefit: and so, in representing death as a punishment or calamity condemned to, another figure or trope is made use of, and an exceeding bold one; for, as we are appointed to it, it is so far from being an evil or punishment, that it is really a favor, and that of the

<sup>458</sup> BT, 205.2-206.1; Yale, 330.

<sup>459</sup> BT, 205.2-206.1; Yale, 330-331. Here Edwards exposes Taylor’s contradictory use of principles of interpretation to serve his denial of original sin. Taylor insists that the term “death” be interpreted consistently in the passage, while conveniently giving the term “sin” different meanings within the same passage.

<sup>460</sup> Yale, 330; BT, 205.2.

<sup>461</sup> Yale, 330; BT, 206.1.

<sup>462</sup> BT, 206.1; Yale, 332.

<sup>463</sup> BT, 206.1-2; Yale, 332-334.

highest nature, appointed by mere grace and love; though it seems to be a calamity.”<sup>464</sup>

“Here we have a figure to represent a figure, even a *figure of a figure* representing some very remote figure, which most obscurely represents the thing intended; if the most terrible evil can indeed be said at all to represent the contrary good, of the highest kind. And now, what cannot be made of any place of Scripture, in such a way of managing it, as this? And is there any hope of ever deciding any controversy by the Scripture, in the way of using such a license with the Scripture, in order to force it to a compliance with our own schemes? If the Apostle indeed uses language after so strange a manner in this place ‘tis perhaps such an instance, as not only there is not the like of it in all the Bible besides, but perhaps in no writing whatsoever.”<sup>465</sup>

## Section Two: Observations concerning Romans 5:12-21 and reflections on the evidence for original sin

- I. The argument in Romans 5:12-21 is connected to and naturally follows the preceding discourse in Romans.<sup>466</sup>
  - A. Having established that both Jews and Gentiles are sinners, enemies of God, and subject to His wrath, it was fitting to explain “how this universal sin and ruin came into the world.”<sup>467</sup>
  - B. Given the Jews’ propensity to view themselves as in God’s favor by virtue of their father *Abraham*, and the Gentiles’ “ignorance” of such things, it was proper to direct them both to their father *Adam*, “the common father of mankind, equally of *Jews and Gentiles*.”<sup>468</sup>
  - C. Romans 5:12-21 follows and agrees with the main point from the beginning of Romans that man depends entirely on God’s grace for salvation, as seen by the universal depravity and ruin of mankind, versus the great benefits given by God’s grace to believers in Christ.<sup>469</sup>
  - D. The main theme of Romans and 5:12-21 is “to shew the greatness and absoluteness of the dependence of all mankind on the *redemption and righteousness of Christ*, for justification and life, that he might magnify and exalt the Redeemer.”<sup>470</sup>

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<sup>464</sup> Yale, 332-333; BT, 206.1-2.

<sup>465</sup> Yale, 333; BT, 206.2.

<sup>466</sup> BT, 207.1ff.; Yale, 335ff.

<sup>467</sup> Ibid.

<sup>468</sup> BT, 207.1; Yale, 335-336.

<sup>469</sup> BT, 207.1; Yale, 336.

<sup>470</sup> Yale, 336; BT, 207.1-2.

- E. The Jews wrongly viewed the Law of Moses “as if it were the prime, grand, and indeed only rule of God’s proceeding with mankind as their judge, both in their justification and condemnation, or from whence all, both sin and righteousness, was imputed; and had no consideration of the law of nature, written the hearts of the *Gentiles*, and of all mankind.” They viewed Gentiles as uncircumcised sinners, alienated from God and His Law.<sup>471</sup>

*But:*

1. “The law which is the original and universal rule of righteousness and judgment for all mankind, was another law, of far more ancient date, even the law of nature; which began as early as the human nature began, and was established with the first father of mankind, and in him with the whole race...of which the main rule is supreme regard to God and his will.”<sup>472</sup>
2. The law of Moses was never meant to be the means of justification. The covenant by which we are justified was established at the time of Abraham.<sup>473</sup>

Galatians 3:17-19: “And this I say, *that* the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. <sup>18</sup> For if the inheritance *be* of the law, *it is* no more of promise: but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise. <sup>19</sup> Wherefore then *serveth* the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; *and it was* ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.”

Romans 4:13-15: “For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, *was* not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. <sup>14</sup> For if they which are of the law *be* heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: <sup>15</sup> Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, *there is* no transgression.”

3. The law of Moses “was not the *highest* and universal rule or law, by which mankind...particularly the heathen world, were condemned.” Sin, guilt, condemnation, and death came upon all mankind *before* the law of Moses was given.<sup>474</sup>
4. The “native moral state” of both Jews and Gentiles is determined by their relation to Adam, *not* Abraham. Jews and Gentiles are both sinners.<sup>475</sup>

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<sup>471</sup> BT, 207.2; Yale, 337-338.

<sup>472</sup> Yale, 339; BT, 208.1.

<sup>473</sup> Yale, 340; BT, 208.1.

<sup>474</sup> BT, 208.1; Yale, 339-340.

<sup>475</sup> BT, 208.2; Yale, 340-341.

5. Since Jews and Gentiles alike are condemned as sinners by “a higher, more ancient and universal law,” God’s “method of justification” extends “equally to all mankind.”<sup>476</sup>
6. If the Jews understood that God appointed Adam the “common head” of Jews and Gentiles, they would more “easily” believe that God appointed Christ, the second Adam, as the Messiah by whom Jews and Gentiles are justified.<sup>477</sup>
7. The reference to “them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression” is to infants.<sup>478</sup>

Mankind is said to be like Adam as “begotten or born in his *image* or *likeness* (Genesis 5:3),” and as “transgressing God’s covenant or law, *like him* (Hosea 6:7).” The former applies to infants, the latter does not.<sup>479</sup> Infants are born sinners and subject to death by the imputation of Adam’s sin.

“Jews looked on all nations, besides themselves, as sinners, by virtue of their law; being made so especially by the law of circumcision, given first to Abraham, and completed by Moses, making the want of circumcision a legal pollution, utterly disqualifying for the privileges of the sanctuary. This law, the Jews supposed, made the very infants of the Gentiles sinners, polluted and hateful to God; they being uncircumcised, and born of uncircumcised parents. But the Apostle proves, against these notions of the Jews, that the nations of the world don’t become sinners by nature, and sinners from infancy, by virtue of their law, in this manner, but by Adam’s sin; inasmuch as infants were treated as sinners long before the law of circumcision was given, as well as before they had committed actual sin.”<sup>480</sup>

## II. Edwards’ paraphrase of verses 12-14:

“The things which I have largely insisted on, viz. the evil that is in the world, the general wickedness, guilt, and ruin of mankind, and the opposite good, even justification and life, as only by Christ, lead me to observe the *likeness* of the manner in which they are each of them *introduced*. For it was by one man, that the general corruption and guilt which I have spoken of, came into the world, and condemnation and death by sin: and this dreadful punishment and ruin came on all mankind, by the great *law of works*, originally established with mankind in their first father, and by his *one offense*, or breach of that law; *all* thereby becoming sinners in God’s sight, and exposed to final destruction.

It is manifest that it was in this way the world became sinful and guilty: and not in that way which the Jews suppose, viz. that their law, given by Moses, is the grand

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<sup>476</sup> Yale, 341; BT, 208.2.

<sup>477</sup> BT, 208.2; Yale, 341.

<sup>478</sup> Yale, 242-244; BT, 209.1-2.

<sup>479</sup> Yale, 343; BT, 209.1.

<sup>480</sup> Yale, 343-344; BT, 209.1-2.

universal rule of righteousness and judgment for mankind, and that it is by being Gentiles, uncircumcised and aliens from that law, that the nations of the world are constituted sinners, and unclean. For *before* the law of Moses was given, mankind were all looked upon by the great Judge as sinners, by corruption and guilt derived from Adam's violation of the original law of works; which shews, that the original, universal rule of righteousness is not the law of Moses; for if so, there would have been no sin imputed *before* that was given; because sin is not imputed, when there is no law.

But, that at that time sin was *imputed*, and men were by their judge reckoned as sinners, through guilt and corruption derived from Adam, and condemned for sin to death, the proper punishment of sin, we have a plain proof; in that it appears in fact, all mankind, during that whole time which preceded the law of Moses, were subjected to that temporal death, which is the visible introduction and image of that utter destruction which sin deserves; not excepting even infants, who could be sinners no other way than by virtue of Adam's transgression, having never in their own persons actually sinned as Adam did; nor could at that time be made polluted by the law of Moses, as being uncircumcised, or born of uncircumcised parents."<sup>481</sup>

III. Romans 5:12-21 "plainly, explicitly, and abundantly" teaches original sin.<sup>482</sup>

12a: *By one man sin entered into the world.* "The passage implies, that sin became *universal* in the world," as the previous chapters of Romans have already demonstrated.<sup>483</sup>

12b: *And death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.* "In the eye of the Judge of the world, in *Adam's* first sin, *all* sinned; not only *in some sort*, but all sinned *so* as to be exposed to the *death*, and final destruction, which is the proper *wages of sin*."<sup>484</sup>

14: *Death reigned over them which had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression.* They did not sin "by their personal act; and therefore could be exposed to death, only by deriving guilt and pollution from *Adam*, in consequence of his sin."<sup>485</sup>

14b: *Who is the figure of him that was to come.* "The resemblance lies very much in this circumstance, viz. our deriving sin, guilt, and punishment by *Adam's* sin, as we do righteousness, justification, and the reward of life, by *Christ's* obedience."<sup>486</sup>

15: *Through the offense of one, many be dead.*

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<sup>481</sup> Yale, 344-345; BT, 209.2.

<sup>482</sup> BT, 210.1-2; Yale, 345-349.

<sup>483</sup> BT, 210.1; Yale, 346.

<sup>484</sup> Ibid.

<sup>485</sup> Ibid.

<sup>486</sup> Ibid.

- 16: *It was by one that sinned...judgment was by one to condemnation.*
- 17: *By one man's offense, death reigned by one.*
- 18: *By the offense of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation.*
- 19: *By one man's disobedience, many were made sinners.*
- 20: *The law entered, that the offense might abound: but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. "His meaning can't be, that the offense of Adam, merely as his personally, should abound; but, as it exists in its derived guilt, corrupt influence, and evil fruits, in the sin of mankind in general, even as a tree in its root and branches."*<sup>487</sup>

“'Tis a thing that confirms the certainty of the *proof* of the doctrine of original sin, which this place affords, that the utmost art *cannot* pervert it to *another* sense.”<sup>488</sup>

“As this place in general is very plain and full, so the doctrine of the corruption of nature, as derived from Adam, and also the imputation of his first sin, are both clearly taught in it. The imputation of Adam's one transgression, is indeed most directly and frequently asserted. We are here assured, that 'by one man's sin, death passed on all'; all being adjudged to this punishment, as having sinned (so it is implied) in that one man's sin. And 'tis repeated over and over, that 'all are condemned,' 'many are dead,' 'many made sinners,' etc. 'by one man's offense,' 'by the disobedience of one,' and 'by one offense.' And the doctrine of original depravity is also here taught, when the Apostle says, 'By one man sin entered into the world'; having a plain respect (as hath been shown) to that universal corruption and wickedness, as well as guilt.”<sup>489</sup>

### Questions and Points for Discussion

1. Read through Romans 5:12-21 while thinking that Adam's sin affected Adam only. Does the text make sense this way? Why or why not?
2. Read through Romans 5:12-21 while thinking that death is a benefit. Does the text make sense this way? How are death and condemnation related in the passage?

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<sup>487</sup> Yale, 347; BT, 210.2.

<sup>488</sup> Yale, 348; BT, 210.2.

<sup>489</sup> Yale, 348-349; BT, 210.2.

3. How does Romans 5:12-21 fit in the context of what has been said concerning the universality of sin in the previous chapters of Romans? What questions are answered by Romans 5:12-21 that were not answered in the previous chapters?
  
4. How does Romans 5:12-21 highlight the universal necessity of redemption through Christ?
  
5. How does Romans 5:12-21 explain the relationship of Adam and Christ as the second Adam? In what way does the passage point to Christ as the second Adam? In what ways are Christ and Adam alike and in what ways are they contrasted?
  
6. Does Edwards interpretation of Romans 5:14 as referring to infants fit the context and argument of the text? Does the emphasis of the universality of sin in chapters 1-3 of Romans support Edwards' interpretation?

## Part Three: The Redemption of Christ as Evidence for Original Sin



## Chapter One: Proofs from Christ's Accomplishment of Redemption

I. Scripture clearly teaches that Jesus came to redeem sinners.<sup>490</sup>

A. Christ's name as "Savior" identifies the nature of His earthly work.<sup>491</sup>

Matthew 1:21: "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."

B. The "great doctrine of Christ's salvation" is that God displayed His love in sending Christ to suffer and die to redeem sinners.<sup>492</sup>

1 Timothy 1:15: "This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."

1 Peter 3:18: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit."

1 John 4:9-10: "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins."

C. Those without sin have no need of a savior.<sup>493</sup>

Mark 2:17: "When Jesus heard *it*, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

D. To be the recipient of God's saving mercy, one must be a sinner.<sup>494</sup>

Galatians 3:22: "But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe."

Romans 11:32: "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all."

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<sup>490</sup> BT, 211.1ff.; Yale, 353ff. "According to Dr. Taylor's scheme, a very great part of mankind are the subjects of Christ's redemption, who live and die perfectly *innocent*; who never have had, and never will have any sin charged to their account, and never are either the subjects of, or exposed to any punishment whatsoever, viz. all that die in *infancy*."

<sup>491</sup> BT, 211.1; Yale, 353.

<sup>492</sup> BT, 211.1; Yale, 353-354.

<sup>493</sup> BT, 211.1; Yale, 354.

<sup>494</sup> *Ibid.*

- E. The Old and New Testaments speak of the necessity of sacrifice for sin. The Old Testament sacrifices are a type of Christ's sacrifice for sin.<sup>495</sup>

Hebrews 9:15: "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."

Matthew 26:28: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

- II. As "the fruit of God's love to mankind," Christ redeems from "deserved" destruction and condemnation.<sup>496</sup>

John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

John 3:36: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

John 5:24: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

- III. If, according to Taylor's view, death was given as a "benefit," then "there is no evil or calamity at all for Christ to redeem us from; *unless things agreeable to the divine goodness, love, and blessing*, are things from which we need redemption."<sup>497</sup>

Those without a disease "need no medicine or remedy," especially infants.<sup>498</sup> "Even death itself, which it is supposed Christ saves them from, is only a medicine; and one of the greatest of benefits. It is ridiculous to talk of persons' needing a medicine, or a physician, to save them from an excellent medicine; or of a remedy from a happy remedy!"<sup>499</sup>

"But it is plain, that death or mortality was not at first brought on mankind as a blessing."<sup>500</sup>

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<sup>495</sup> Ibid.

<sup>496</sup> BT, 211.2; Yale, 354-355.

<sup>497</sup> BT, 211.2; Yale, 355-356. Paraphrasing Taylor, Edwards writes, "Nothing comes upon us in consequence of Adam's sin, in any sense, kind, or degree, inconsistent with the original blessing pronounced on Adam, at his creation; and nothing but what is perfectly consistent with God's blessing, love, and goodness, declared to Adam, as soon as he came out of his maker's hands." Yale, 356; BT, 212.1.

<sup>498</sup> If, according to Taylor's view, infants are born innocent and without the guilt or evil disposition of Adam's sin, no need exists for Christ to redeem them.

<sup>499</sup> BT, 211.2; Yale, 355.

<sup>500</sup> Yale, 356; BT, 211.2.

2 Corinthians 5:14: “For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.”

Luke 19:10: “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

God’s grace in Christ does not put us under death, but delivers us from it.<sup>501</sup>

- IV. If man has no sinful inclination and has sufficient ability to fully perform the requirements of God’s justice, then Christ did not need to die to redeem them.<sup>502</sup>

*Objection:* Christ’s redemption is not necessary to deliver people from initiating sin, given their ability to avoid it, but to deliver them “after they have by their own folly brought themselves under the dominion of evil appetites and passions.”<sup>503</sup>

*Answer:*

- A. If it were true that the will must be “free” or undetermined by dispositions for choices to be morally blamable, then the choices of one under the dominion of inclinations or passions would not be morally blamable and Christ’s redemption would not be necessary.<sup>504</sup>

In other words, if only those actions that are undetermined by an inclination are free and blamable, then the more one sins and develops an inclination or habit of sinning, the less morally blamable one becomes. Taken to its logical but absurd end, when one becomes a complete slave of sin, one is completely absolved from responsibility for sin and is no longer blamable. Put another way, the more one loves sin, the less responsible one is for sin.

- B. Taylor and others held that “mankind, in all parts of the world, have sufficient power to do the duty which God requires of them; and that he requires of them no more than they have sufficient powers to do.”<sup>505</sup> Therefore, “without Christ and his redemption, and without any grace at all, *mere justice* makes *sufficient provision* for our being free from sin and misery, by our own power.” Thus, “they have sufficient power to obtain righteousness by the law,” rendering Christ’s death unnecessary.<sup>506</sup>

Galatians 2:21: “I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness *come* by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.”

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<sup>501</sup> Ibid.

<sup>502</sup> BT, 212.1-2; Yale, 356-358. Such would especially be true of infants, for according to Taylor’s view, infants are born without the guilt or evil disposition of Adam’s sin. Edwards paraphrases Taylor, saying “when men have not sufficient power to do their duty, they have not duty to do.” Edwards cites Taylor, *Original Sin*, 364, 365. Yale, 356-357; BT, 212.1.

<sup>503</sup> BT, 212.2; Yale, 358.

<sup>504</sup> Ibid.

<sup>505</sup> Taylor, paraphrased by Edwards in BT, 212.1; Yale, 356-357.

<sup>506</sup> Yale, 357; BT, 212.1.

Galatians 3:21: “*Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.*”

If people could obey the law by their own power and therefore the law “could” conceivably give life, then Christ’s death was unnecessary.<sup>507</sup>

- V. If, by Taylor’s scheme, virtue only follows choices that are undetermined by a previous disposition, then the change of one’s disposition by redemption in Christ will not increase virtue. It will increase one’s ability to do good, but if duty or sin are only according to one’s ability, then duty increases with more ability, and decreases with less ability. Thus, if sin is the failure to perform one’s duty according to one’s ability, then sin is neither increased or decreased with a change in disposition and ability.

Therefore, Christ’s redemption provides no “greater advantage” to holy living than without it. Indeed, “men have no redemption from sin, and no new means of performing duty, that are valuable or worth any thing at all. And thus the great redemption by Christ in every respect comes to nothing.”<sup>508</sup>

### Questions and Points for Discussion

1. Identify the unbiblical and absurd implications of Taylor’s view that Edwards identifies in this chapter. How do they differ from what Scripture teaches concerning sin and salvation through Christ?
2. Read Romans 3:20 and Galatians 2:15-16. Some who held to the same or similar view of free will as held by Taylor attempted to avoid the implication of these verses by interpreting “law” as referring to the ceremonial aspects of the Mosaic law and not to the moral commandments of the law. Is this a legitimate interpretation of these texts in light of the contexts in which they are found?<sup>509</sup> Can you identify modern interpreters of Scripture who interpret these passages as referring to ceremonial law only?

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<sup>507</sup> BT, 212.2; Yale, 359.

<sup>508</sup> BT, 213.1; 359-360.

<sup>509</sup> N. T. Wright is one such interpreter who follows this line of interpretation. Edwards refutes the interpretation that “works of the Law” or “works of law” refer to the ceremonial aspects of the Mosaic law only. See Edwards, “Justification by Faith Alone” *Yale Works*, 19:170-183; *Banner of Truth Works*, 2:631-635. For a summary and exposition of Edwards’ arguments concerning this issue in “Justification by Faith Alone,” see Craig Biehl, “The Ceremonial or Moral Law: Jonathan Edwards’ Old Perspective on an Old Error,” *Puritan Reformed Journal* 2.1 (January 2010), 120-140.

3. Does Scripture teach that some people exist in the world for which the saving grace of Christ is not necessary? Why or why not?
  
4. Are people who do not have the indwelling Holy Spirit able to please God? Can Taylor's view of human ability and free will be reconciled with Romans 8:4-11? Is Edwards correct that Taylor's scheme implies that Christ's redemption provides no "greater advantage" to holy living than those without Christ?

## Chapter Two: Proof from the Necessity of Being Born Again

“The truth of the doctrine of original sin” is “clearly” displayed by the nature and necessity of the new birth for saving faith in Christ. The nature and necessity of the change that takes place in the new birth is understood by the various terms used to describe the necessity of what Jesus says in John 3:3.<sup>510</sup>

“*Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*”

I. The change of mind produced in *regeneration* is the same change brought about in true *repentance* and *conversion*.<sup>511</sup>

“The word *μετανοια* (repentance) signifies a change of the mind; as the word ‘conversion’ means a change or turning from sin to God. And that this is the same change with that which is called regeneration” (though the believer is passive in regeneration).<sup>512</sup>

A. They each attain what is necessary for eternal salvation, including saving faith.<sup>513</sup>

Acts 3:19: “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.”

Mark 1:15: “And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.”

John 1:12-13: “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name: <sup>13</sup> Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

Matthew 18:3: “And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

Luke 13:3: “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”

1 Peter 1:23: “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”

1 Peter 2:2: “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.”

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<sup>510</sup> BT, 213.1; Yale, 361.

<sup>511</sup> BT, 213.1ff.; Yale, 361ff.

<sup>512</sup> Yale, 362; BT, 213.1.

<sup>513</sup> BT, 213.1-2; Yale, 362.

- B. The change produced by both repentance and regeneration is expressed by *baptism*.<sup>514</sup>

Matthew 3:11: “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and *with* fire.”

Luke 3:3: “And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.”

John 3:5: “Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

Acts 2:38: “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

Acts 19:4: “Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.”

Titus 3:5: “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”

- II. The change produced in regeneration and in repentance and conversion is called *circumcision of the heart*.<sup>515</sup>

- A. Each involve a change of heart from sin to true virtue, holiness, and true Christian character.<sup>516</sup>

Romans 2:28-29: “For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: <sup>29</sup> But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise *is* not of men, but of God.”

Deuteronomy 10:16: “Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked.”

Deuteronomy 30:6: “And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.”

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<sup>514</sup> BT, 213.2; Yale, 362-363.

<sup>515</sup> BT, 213.2; Yale, 363-364.

<sup>516</sup> BT, 213.2; Yale, 363.

Leviticus 26:41: “And *that* I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity.”

Jeremiah 4:1-4: “If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the LORD, return unto me: and if thou wilt put away thine abominations out of my sight, then shalt thou not remove. <sup>2</sup> And thou shalt swear, The LORD liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness; and the nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory. <sup>3</sup> For thus saith the LORD to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns. <sup>4</sup> Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench *it*, because of the evil of your doings.”

B. Circumcision of the heart is signified by baptism.<sup>517</sup>

Colossians 2:11-13: “In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: <sup>12</sup> Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. <sup>13</sup> And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.”

III. Regeneration and circumcision of the heart are the same inward changes spoken of as *spiritual resurrection*.<sup>518</sup>

A. Each represents dying unto sin and a living unto righteousness.<sup>519</sup>

Colossians 2:11-13 (See above)

Romans 6:3-5: “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. <sup>5</sup> For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of his resurrection.”

Romans 6:11 “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

B. Scripture equates spiritual resurrection with being born again.<sup>520</sup>

<sup>517</sup> BT, 213.2; Yale, 363-364.

<sup>518</sup> BT, 213.2ff.; Yale, 364ff.

<sup>519</sup> BT, 213.2-214.1; Yale, 364.

<sup>520</sup> BT, 214.1; Yale, 364-365. In his note on Romans 1:4, Taylor agrees, noting regarding Psalm 2, “Begetting is conferring a new and happy state; a son is a person put into it. Agreeably to this, good men are said to be the sons of God, as they are the sons of the resurrection to eternal life, which is represented



Psalm 2:7: “I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou *art* my Son; this day have I begotten thee.”

Acts 13:33: “God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.” (Psalm 2:7 applied to Christ’s resurrection)

Colossians 1:18: “And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence.”

Revelation 1:5: “And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.”

1 Peter 1:3-4: “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup> To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.”

Note: “Inheritance” in 1 Peter 3:4 is the same as “the Kingdom of Heaven” obtained by those born again in John 3, and the “inheritance of them that are sanctified” obtained in true conversion in Acts 26:18.<sup>521</sup>

John 3:3: “Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

Acts 26:18: “To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.”

IV. To be given a “new heart and spirit” is the same change that takes place when someone repents, is converted, born again, circumcised in heart, and “spiritually raised from the dead.”<sup>522</sup>

Ezekiel 36:25-27: “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. <sup>26</sup> A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do *them*.” Note, Edwards saw this passage as behind Christ’s wonder

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as...being begotten or born again, regenerated.” Taylor, *Key*, 315. Quoted by Edwards, Yale, 365; BT, 214.1.

<sup>521</sup> BT, 214.1; Yale, 365.

<sup>522</sup> BT, 214.1ff.; Yale.

at Nicodemus not knowing the necessity of the new birth, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?" (John 3:10).<sup>523</sup>

Ezekiel 11:19: "And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh."

Titus 3:5: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

V. The "putting off" of the "old man" and the "putting on" of the "new man" is the same as being born again, etc.<sup>524</sup>

A. Being born *again* speaks of two births.<sup>525</sup>

1. An *old* birth of the *old* man, being born as *flesh*, bearing the image of *earthly* Adam.
2. A *new* birth of the *new* man, born as *spirit*, bearing the image of *heavenly* Christ.

B. The *old* man is crucified and buried with Christ, and rises a *new* man in a "spiritual resurrection."<sup>526</sup>

Romans 6:3-6: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. <sup>5</sup> For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of his resurrection: <sup>6</sup> Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."

C. Putting off the old man and putting on the new man is equivalent to spiritual circumcision, spiritual baptism, and spiritual resurrection.<sup>527</sup>

Colossians 2:11-12: "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: <sup>12</sup> Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead."

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<sup>523</sup> Yale, 366; BT, 214.1-2.

<sup>524</sup> BT, 214.2-215.1; Yale, 366-369.

<sup>525</sup> BT, 214.2; Yale, 367.

<sup>526</sup> Ibid.

<sup>527</sup> Ibid.

- D. Putting off the old man and putting on the new man is equivalent to putting off the body of sin.<sup>528</sup>

Ephesians 4:22-24: “That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;<sup>23</sup> And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;<sup>24</sup> And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”

Colossians 3:8-10: “But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.<sup>9</sup> Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;<sup>10</sup> And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.”

- E. Putting off the old man and putting on the new man is equivalent to making the heart and spirit new (also called the “inward” and “hidden man.”)<sup>529</sup>

Romans 7:22: “For I delight in the law of God after the inward man.”

2 Corinthians 4:16: “For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward *man* is renewed day by day.”

1 Peter 3:4: “But *let it be* the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, *even the ornament* of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.”

Ephesians 4:22-24 (See above.)

- VI. To be “created anew” or made “new creatures” is the same as being born again, etc.<sup>530</sup>

- A. As a new-born is a new creation, so one born again from spiritual death to life is a new creation.<sup>531</sup>
- B. When David asks God to “create” in him a clean heart in Psalm, the word “create” is the same word used in Genesis 1:1.<sup>532</sup>

Psalm 51:10: “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.”

- C. The new man is said to be “created,” or a “new creature.”<sup>533</sup>

<sup>528</sup> BT, 214.2-215.1; Yale, 367-368.

<sup>529</sup> BT, 215.1; Yale, 368. Taylor interprets the old and new man impersonally, as referring to the heathen and the Christian church, respectfully. Edwards grants that “collective bodies, nations, people, cities, are figuratively represented by persons,” but adds that the terms are mostly used personally, as he has presented them here. Yale, 368-369; BT, 215.1.

<sup>530</sup> BT, 215.1ff.; Yale, 369ff.

<sup>531</sup> BT, 215.1; Yale, 369.

<sup>532</sup> BT, 215.2; Yale, 369.

Ephesians 4:22-24: “That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; <sup>23</sup> And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; <sup>24</sup> And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”

Colossians 3:9-10: “Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; <sup>10</sup> And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.”

2 Corinthians 5:17: “Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

## VII. Concluding reflections<sup>534</sup>

- A. Concerning all men born of Adam, Jew or Gentile, “*unless he be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*”<sup>535</sup>

John 3:3-11: “Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. <sup>4</sup> Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? <sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. <sup>6</sup> That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>7</sup> Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. <sup>8</sup> The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. <sup>9</sup> Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? <sup>10</sup> Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? <sup>11</sup> Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.”

2 Corinthians 5:17 (See above.)

- B. One “can never have any interest in Christ, or see the kingdom of God, unless he be the subject of that change in the temper and disposition of his heart, which is made in repentance, and conversion, circumcision of his heart, spiritual baptism, dying to sin and rising to a new and holy life; and unless he has the old heart taken away, and a new heart and spirit given, and puts off the old man, and puts on the new man, and old things are passed away and all things made new.”<sup>536</sup>

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<sup>533</sup> BT, 215.2; Yale, 369-370.

<sup>534</sup> BT, 215.2; Yale, 370ff.

<sup>535</sup> Yale, 370; BT, 215.2.

<sup>536</sup> Ibid.

C. All people are born in a “state of *moral pollution*.”<sup>537</sup>

1. “*Spiritual baptism* is a cleansing from moral filthiness.”<sup>538</sup>

Ezekiel 36:25: “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.

John 3:5: “Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”<sup>539</sup>

2. “The washing of regeneration, or the new birth, is a change from a state of wickedness.”<sup>540</sup>

Titus 3:3-5: “For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, *and* hating one another. <sup>4</sup> But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, <sup>5</sup> Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”

1 Peter 1:22-23: “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently*: <sup>23</sup> Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”

1 John 2:29: “f ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.”

1 John 3:1, 3, 5: “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.... And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.... And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.”<sup>541</sup>

3. “Every man in his first or natural state is a sinner; for otherwise they would then need no repentance, no conversion, no turning from sin, to God.”<sup>542</sup>

4. “Every man in his original state has a heart of stone; for thus the Scripture calls that old heart, which is taken away, when a new heart and new spirit is given.”<sup>543</sup>

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<sup>537</sup> Ibid.

<sup>538</sup> Ibid.

<sup>539</sup> Yale lists John 3:25, BT lists John 3:5, the correct reference.

<sup>540</sup> Yale, 370; BT, 215.2.

<sup>541</sup> Yale lists 1 John 3:1, 5; BT lists 1 John 3:1, 3.

<sup>542</sup> Yale, 370; BT, 215.2.

Ezekiel 11:19: “And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh.”

Ezekiel 36:26: “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.”

5. Mankind’s nature “in his native state, is a body of sin, which must be destroyed, must die, be buried, and never rise more.”<sup>544</sup>

Colossians 3:8-10: “But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. <sup>9</sup> Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; <sup>10</sup> And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.”

Ephesians 4:22:24: “That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; <sup>23</sup> And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; <sup>24</sup> And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”

6. The “old man” is “crucified” and is the subject of “a spiritual resurrection.”

Romans 6:4-6: “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. <sup>5</sup> For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of *his* resurrection: <sup>6</sup> Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.”

7. The “body of sin” must be “spiritually renovated” by “spiritual circumcision.”

### Questions and Points for Discussion

1. Earlier we saw Edwards’ response to Taylor’s objection that Christ’s redemption is not necessary to deliver people from initiating sin, given their ability to avoid it, but to deliver them after they have become slaves of sin by their choices to sin. Could Taylor’s objection apply to the need and nature of regeneration? Why or why not?

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<sup>543</sup> BT, 215.2; Yale, 370-371.

<sup>544</sup> BT, 215.2; Yale, 371.

2. Why must *all* people be born again to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven? If Taylor's objection in the question above were true, would that not argue against the universal need of regeneration, even though Scripture says all must be born again?
  
3. If only some people need to be born again, what would be the difference between those born again and those who did not need to be born again?
  
4. Does Taylor's scheme imply that saved people exist who do not have the struggle against indwelling sin, as in Romans 7 or Galatians 5:17?
  
5. Does Taylor's scheme imply that some believers were not once dead in their sins as stated in Ephesians 2:1? If not, what does that say about the universal need of regeneration and therefore the universal sinfulness of mankind?

## Part Four: Answers to Objections to Original Sin



## Chapter One: “To be born in sin is inconsistent with the nature of sin.”

*Objection:* “If we come into the world infected with sinful and depraved dispositions, then sin must be *natural* to us; and if natural, then *necessary*; and if necessary, then *no* sin, nor anything we are blameable for, or that can in any respect be our fault, being what we can’t help.”<sup>545</sup>

*Answer:* The objection is based upon the “Arminian” and “Pelagian” notion of the freedom of the will and refers readers to his treatment of this objection in his treatise, *Freedom of the Will*. Nonetheless, Edwards answers the objection by showing its absurdity. And if this notion of view of free will were true, the above objection and all of the arguments against reformed views of “*original sin*, the *sovereignty* of grace, *election*, *redemption*, *conversion*, the *efficacious operation* of the Holy Spirit, the nature of saving *faith*, *perseverance* of the saints, and other principles of the like kind” would be true.<sup>546</sup>

Taylor’s objection, and his view of free will behind it, reduce to absurdity. On the one hand, he claims that free choices cannot be determined by a disposition, as a choice determined by a disposition is necessary and therefore cannot be free or sinful. Elsewhere he claims the virtue or sinfulness of a choice is only determined by the virtue or evil of the cause of the choice. But, if the cause cannot be a virtuous or sinful disposition, it must be another choice, which itself cannot be caused by a disposition, or it cannot be free, virtuous, or sinful. This creates the conundrum that no virtuous or sinful choice is possible, as a virtuous or sinful choice must be caused by something virtuous or sinful. But, such cannot be a virtuous or sinful disposition, for that would render the choice necessary and therefore neither virtuous nor sinful.

Thus, by Taylor’s scheme, no virtuous or sinful choice is possible, for the only possible cause of a choice is another choice, which itself must be free and uncaused by a disposition. The result would be a regress of causes, each of which cannot begin with a virtuous or sinful disposition, leading back to the original choice of Adam, whose choice would either be sinful or not sinful, depending on which of Taylor’s expressed views is applied to Adam’s choice. For instance, in *Original Sin*, Taylor states, “Adam could not sin without a sinful inclination.”<sup>547</sup> But his view of free will requires that Adam’s sin could not be caused by an inclination. If it was, it was a necessary choice for Adam and therefore could not be sin.

By comparing various statements made by Taylor on the subject, Edwards shows that Taylor’s view of free will and his above objection to original sin reduce to contradiction and absurdity. For a more concise and comprehensive treatment of the issue, it seems best to echo Edwards’ referral to his treatise, *Freedom of the Will*.<sup>548</sup>

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<sup>545</sup> BT, 216.1; Yale, 375.

<sup>546</sup> Yale, 376; BT, 216.1.

<sup>547</sup> Taylor, *Original Sin*, 442. Quoted by Edwards in Yale, 378; BT, 217.1.

<sup>548</sup> For Edwards, the “Arminian” and “Pelagian” notion that a free will is necessary for virtue or sin, and that a will cannot be free if it is determined by a previous disposition, is behind “almost all controversies

### Questions and Points for Discussion

1. On the surface, does the logic of Taylor's objection make logical sense, that "if we come into the world infected with sinful and depraved dispositions, then sin must be *natural* to us; and if natural, then *necessary*; and if necessary, then *no* sin, nor anything we are blamable for, or that can in any respect be our fault, being what we can't help"? And, if it appears to make sense logically, does the logic of the argument necessarily make it true? Why or why not?
2. Does Scripture teach that people are not responsible for their sin? Does Scripture teach that people sin against their will? Does God make people sin? Does Scripture teach that people will be judged for the choice they freely choose to make, according to their inclination?
3. How does Romans 9 speak to Taylor's objection?
4. What does Edwards mean by the Pelagian view of the freedom of the will? What was the Pelagian controversy? Why was the controversy significant with respect to the Gospel?
5. How does Taylor's notion of the freedom of the will "overthrow the doctrines of the sovereignty of grace, election, redemption, conversion, the efficacious operation of the Holy Spirit, the nature of saving faith, and perseverance"? How are all of these doctrines related to the nature of the fallen human will?

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we have with such divines." "If they can maintain their peculiar notion of *freedom*, consisting in the *self-determining power of the will*, as necessary to *moral agency*, and can thoroughly establish it in opposition to the arguments lying against it, then they have an impregnable castle, to which they may repair, and remain invincible, in all the controversies they have with the reformed divines, concerning *original sin*, the *sovereignty* of grace, *election*, *redemption*, *conversion*, the *efficacious operation* of the Holy Spirit, the nature of saving *faith*, *perseverance* of the saints, and other principles of the like kind." Yale, 376; BT, 216.1. This was a central issue of the Reformation for which Luther wrote his famous work, *Bondage of the Will*.

## Chapter Two: “If man is born sinful, then God, who formed us, is to blame.”

*Objection:* “This does in effect charge him who is the *Author* of our nature, who formed us in the womb, with being the *author* of a sinful corruption of nature; and that it is highly injurious to the *God* of our nature, whose hands have formed and fashioned us, to believe our nature to be originally corrupted.”<sup>549</sup>

*Answer:*

- I. The objection wrongly supposes original sin to imply that a sinful inclination must be “implanted” in the fetus before it is born.<sup>550</sup>
  - A. “The absence of positive good principles, and so the withholding of a special divine influence to impart and maintain those good principles--leaving the common natural principles of self-love, natural appetite, etc. to themselves, without the government of superior divine principles--will certainly be followed with the corruption; yea, the total corruption of the heart, without occasion for any *positive* influence at all.”<sup>551</sup>
    1. God created mankind with two internal principles.<sup>552</sup>
      - a. *Natural:* The inferior “principles of mere human nature; such as self-love...natural appetites and passions...what the Scriptures sometimes call *flesh*.”<sup>553</sup>
      - b. *Divine:* The “*superior* principles, that were spiritual, holy and divine, summarily comprehended in divine love; wherein consisted the spiritual image of God, and man’s righteousness and true holiness...which the Scripture sometimes calls *spirit*, in contradistinction to *flesh*.”<sup>554</sup>
    2. The relationship of the “natural” and “divine” principles<sup>555</sup>
      - a. *Prior* to Adam’s sin<sup>556</sup>

The “superior principles were given to possess the throne, and maintain an absolute dominion in the heart, the other to be wholly subordinate and subservient...thus, all was in excellent order, peace, and beautiful

<sup>549</sup> Taylor, quoted by Edwards in Yale, 380; BT, 217.1-2.

<sup>550</sup> BT, 217.2ff.; Yale, 380ff.

<sup>551</sup> BT, 217.2; Yale, 381.

<sup>552</sup> BT, 217.2-218.1; Yale, 381.

<sup>553</sup> Yale, 381; BT, 217.2.

<sup>554</sup> Yale, 381-382; BT, 217.2-218.1.

<sup>555</sup> BT, 218.1-219.1; Yale, 382-383.

<sup>556</sup> BT, 218.1; Yale, 382.

harmony, and in their proper and perfect state. These divine principles thus reigning, were the dignity, life, happiness, and glory of man's nature."<sup>557</sup>

b. *After Adam's sin*<sup>558</sup>

"When man sinned, and broke God's covenant, and fell under his curse, these superior principles left his heart: for indeed God then left him; that communion with God on which these principles depended, entirely ceased; the Holy Spirit, that divine inhabitant, forsook the house."<sup>559</sup>

"Thus man was left in a state of darkness, woeful corruption, and ruin; nothing but *flesh* without *spirit*. The inferior principles of self-love, and natural appetite, which were given only to serve, being alone, and left to themselves, *of course* became reigning principles; having no superior principles to regulate or control them, they became absolute masters of the heart."<sup>560</sup>

"Man immediately set up *himself*, and the objects of his private affections and appetites, as supreme; and so they took the place of GOD."<sup>561</sup>

"Thus 'tis easy to give an account, how total corruption of heart should follow on man's eating the forbidden fruit, though that was but one act of sin, *without God's putting* any evil into his heart, or *implanting* any bad principle, or *infusing* any corrupt taint, and so becoming the *author* of depravity. Only God's *withdrawing*, as it was highly proper and necessary that he should, from rebel-man, being as it were driven away by his abominable wickedness, and men's *natural* principles being *left to themselves*, this is sufficient to account for his becoming entirely corrupt, and bent on sinning against God."<sup>562</sup>

Note: Edwards' arguments here narrowly respond to the objection that original sin makes God guilty of implanting evil within the heart of Adam's posterity and should be understood in light of that narrow purpose. Edwards viewed every sin as a willful act of evil, and the depraved inclination as a positive inclination of the heart toward sin. For Edwards, mankind's evil inclination involves a willful and active hostility toward God and is much more than just the natural appetites without the Holy Spirit. Total corruption *follows* the active, willful, and evil sin of Adam.<sup>563</sup>

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<sup>557</sup> Ibid.

<sup>558</sup> BT, 218.1-219.1; Yale, 382-383.

<sup>559</sup> BT, 218.1-2; Yale, 382.

<sup>560</sup> BT, 218.2; Yale, 382.

<sup>561</sup> Ibid.

<sup>562</sup> Yale, 383; BT, 219.1.

<sup>563</sup> For additional discussion on this and other related points, see the editor's remarks in the footnotes of BT, 217.1-218.2. For a brief discussion of Edwards' views of the infinite evil of sin, see Craig Biehl, *The Infinite Merit of Christ* (Jackson, MS: Reformed Academic Press, 2009), 113-119. We are wise to admit

II. “As Adam’s nature became corrupt, without God’s implanting or infusing of any evil thing into it; so does the nature of his *posterity*.”<sup>564</sup>

A. God deals with Adam and his posterity as one.<sup>565</sup>

“God dealing with Adam as the head of his posterity (as has been shewn) and treating them as one, he deals with his posterity as having *all sinned in him*. And therefore, as God withdrew spiritual communion and his vital gracious influence from the common head, so he withholds the same from all the members, as they come into existence; whereby they come into the world mere flesh, and entirely under the government of natural and inferior principles; and so become wholly corrupt, as Adam did.”<sup>566</sup>

B. The sinful nature is imparted to Adam’s posterity by an “*established course of nature*.” Adam’s posterity are born into and continue in corruption just as Adam continued in his corruption once he sinned.<sup>567</sup>

“That the posterity of Adam should be born without holiness, and so with a depraved nature, comes to pass as much by the *established course of nature*, as the continuance of a corrupt disposition in a particular person, after he once has it; or as much as Adam’s continuing unholy and corrupt, after he had once lost his holiness. For Adam’s posterity are from him, and as it were in him, and belonging to him, according to an established course of nature, as much as the branches of a tree are, according to a course of nature, from the tree, in the tree, and belonging to the tree.”<sup>568</sup>

“It is as much agreeable to an established course and order of nature, that since Adam, the head of mankind, the root of that great tree with many branches springing from it, was deprived of original righteousness, the branches should come forth without it.”<sup>569</sup>

C. *Objection*: If depravity proceeds according to an established *course of nature*, then why is not holiness passed on to the descendants of the redeemed in like manner?<sup>570</sup>

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that in attempting to explain the nature of sin and the soul, especially in light of Adam having been created with a righteous inclination by a perfect God, we are bound by our human limitations. God has clearly told us the source, nature, and results of sin, but beyond what He has revealed to us in Scripture, we are necessarily faced with mystery.

<sup>564</sup> BT, 219.1ff.; Yale, 383ff.

<sup>565</sup> BT, 219.1; Yale, 383.

<sup>566</sup> Yale, 383; BT, 219.1. Nevertheless, those faculties that constitute Adam and his posterity responsible “moral agents” before God remain after Adam’s sin. See BT editor’s remarks, 217.1, fn.

<sup>567</sup> BT, 219.1; Yale, 385.

<sup>568</sup> Yale, 385; BT, 219.2.

<sup>569</sup> BT, 219.2; Yale, 386.

<sup>570</sup> BT, 219.2-220.1; Yale, 386-387.

*Answer:*

1. God, by his wisdom, establishes His manner of ordering the affairs of His creation as He pleases.<sup>571</sup>

“*Grace* is introduced among the race of man by a *new establishment*; not on the ground of God’s original establishment, as the head of the natural world, and author of the first creation; but by a constitution of a vastly higher kind; wherein *Christ* is made the root of the tree, whose branches are his spiritual *seed*, and he is the *head* of the *new creation*.”<sup>572</sup>

2. Natural depravity is not only by “the course of nature,” but by God’s righteous judgment.<sup>573</sup>

“That Adam continued destitute of holiness, when he had lost it, and would always have so continued, had it not been restored by a Redeemer, was not only a natural consequence, according to the course of things established by God, as the Author of nature; but it was also a penal consequence, or a punishment of his sin. God, in righteous judgment, continued to absent himself from Adam, after he became a rebel; and withheld from him now those influences of the Holy Spirit, which he before had. And just thus, I suppose it to be with every natural branch of mankind.”<sup>574</sup>

- III. God can no more be shown to be the cause of original sin than He can be shown to be the cause of the sin of one who, having chosen to sin, develops sinful habits.<sup>575</sup>

God as the cause of the ongoing existence of people who choose to sin and develop sinful habits does not make God the cause of their sinfulness. In the same way, God as the cause of the ongoing existence of Adam and his posterity does not make God the cause of their sinfulness.<sup>576</sup>

### Questions and Points for Discussion

1. Can the principle behind the charge that original sin makes God the author of sin in Adam’s posterity be taken to the extreme of making God the author of the first sin of Lucifer and then Adam?

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<sup>571</sup> BT, 219.2-220.1; Yale, 386.

<sup>572</sup> Ibid.

<sup>573</sup> BT, 220.1; Yale, 386.

<sup>574</sup> BT, 220.1; Yale, 386-387.

<sup>575</sup> BT, 220.1; Yale, 387-388.

<sup>576</sup> Ibid.

2. According to Edwards, what is the difference between God establishing a course of nature between Adam and his posterity and the establishment of Christ as the head of His posterity?
  
3. Did God removing the superior principle from Adam make Adam corrupt or was the removal of the superior principles because Adam sinned and had become corrupt? Why is this distinction important?
  
4. If removing the superior principle from Adam did not make Adam corrupt, what did it do?
  
5. When Edwards speaks of the superior principles that are “spiritual, holy and divine,” does he speak of the Holy Spirit indwelling Adam when he was created and the Holy Spirit departing from Adam when he sinned?
  
6. What is the relationship in Edwards’ theology between the “spiritual, holy and divine” principles he lost when he sinned and what he regained at salvation? For further insight into Edwards’ thought on this, see the first of the twelve positive signs of a gracious work of God in a believer in his treatise, *The Religious Affections*.<sup>577</sup>

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<sup>577</sup> *Affections*, BT, *Works*, 1:264-274; Yale, 2:197-239; BT, paperback, 124-165.

### Chapter Three: “The imputation of Adam’s sin to his posterity is unjust because Adam and his posterity are not the same.”

#### I. A proper statement of the doctrine of original sin

##### A. God dealt with Adam, and his posterity “as being *one with him*.”<sup>578</sup>

“It would go far towards directing us to the more clear and distinct conceiving and right stating of this affair, if we steadily bear this in mind; that God, in each step of his proceeding with Adam, in relation to the covenant or constitution established with him, looked on his posterity as being one with him.”<sup>579</sup>

“Both guilt, or exposedness to punishment, and also depravity of heart, came upon Adam’s posterity just as they came upon him, as much as if he and they had all coexisted, like a tree with many branches.”<sup>580</sup>

##### B. The *guilt* of Adam’s sinful disposition and sinful act are one and inseparable.<sup>581</sup>

“The first evil disposition or inclination of the heart of Adam to sin, was not properly distinct from his first act of sin, but was included in it. The external act he committed was no otherwise his, than as his heart was in it, or as that action proceeded from the wicked inclination of his heart.”<sup>582</sup>

“Nor was the guilt he had, double, as for two distinct sins: one, the wickedness of his heart and will in that affair; another, the wickedness of the external act, caused by his heart. His guilt was all truly from the act of his inward man.”<sup>583</sup>

##### C. The *guilt* of Adam’s sin *imputed to his posterity* consists of Adam’s sinful disposition and sinful act as one and inseparable.<sup>584</sup>

“The guilt a man has upon his soul at his first existence, is one and simple: viz. the guilt of the original apostacy, the guilt of the sin by which the species first rebelled against God. This, and the guilt arising from the first corruption or depraved disposition of the heart, are not to be looked upon as two things, distinctly imputed and charged upon men in the sight of God.”<sup>585</sup>

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<sup>578</sup> BT, 220.2; Yale, 389-390.

<sup>579</sup> Yale, 389; BT, 220.2.

<sup>580</sup> *Ibid.* For Edwards, Adam stood as both the covenantal and natural (or seminal) head of the race of mankind. For a helpful discussion of how and why reformed theologians who hold to Adam as the representative or covenantal head of the race also hold to Adam as the natural or seminal head of the race, see John Murray, *The Imputation of Adam’s Sin* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1959), 36-41.

<sup>581</sup> BT, 220.2-221.1; Yale, 390.

<sup>582</sup> Yale, 390; BT, 220.2.

<sup>583</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>584</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>585</sup> *Ibid.*



Mankind comes into the world with one guilt only, the guilt of Adam's sinful disposition and sinful act as one and inseparable. As Adam's sin consisted in both the action and inclination behind and producing it, so the sin imputed to his posterity includes the guilt of the same sinful act and inclination.<sup>586</sup>

- D. The first sinful disposition of *Adam*, as the "ground of the complete transgression," should be distinguished from the *confirmed* sinful disposition that is the punishment of God for the first sin.<sup>587</sup>

"An evil disposition of heart *continuing* afterwards, as a confirmed principle that came by God's forsaking him... was a *punishment* of his first transgression. This confirmed corruption, by its remaining and continued operation, brought additional guilt on his soul."<sup>588</sup>

- E. The first sinful disposition of *Adam's posterity*, by participating in Adam's sin by union with him, should be distinguished from the *confirmed* sinful disposition that is the punishment of God for the first sin.<sup>589</sup>

1. As Adam's posterity participated in Adam's sin, so we participated in his disposition to sin.

"The first existing of a corrupt disposition in their hearts is not to be looked upon as sin belonging to them, distinct from their participation of Adam's first sin: it is as it were the *extended pollution* of that sin, through the whole tree, by virtue of the constituted union of the branches with the root."<sup>590</sup>  
Therefore...

2. The *guilt* of Adam's posterity is the same guilt of Adam's sin and the sinful disposition that produced it. The guilt of Adam and those united to Adam is the consequence of Adam's sin.

"The derivation of the evil disposition to the hearts of Adam's posterity, or rather the *coexistence* of the evil disposition, implied in Adam's first rebellion, in the root and branches, is a consequence of the union, that the wise Author of the world has established between Adam and his posterity: but not properly a consequence of the imputation of his sin; nay, rather *antecedent* to it, as it was in Adam himself. The first depravity of heart, and the imputation of that sin, are both the consequences of that established union: but

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<sup>586</sup> In contrast to Taylor's view of the will, Edwards could not conceive of any action apart from the inclination or disposition that is its cause. All actions are the expression of the inclination behind it. Thus, the imputation of Adam's sin necessarily includes the inclination that was the inseparable cause and part of Adam's sin.

<sup>587</sup> BT, 220.2-221.1; Yale, 390.

<sup>588</sup> Ibid.

<sup>589</sup> BT, 221.1; Yale, 391.

<sup>590</sup> Yale, 391; BT, 221.1.

yet in such order, that the evil disposition is *first*, and the charge of guilt *consequent*; as it was in the case of Adam himself.”<sup>591</sup>

United to Adam as our head, our depraved disposition precedes the imputation of Adam’s guilt to us, just as Adam’s evil disposition preceded his sin and is included with it. We were not declared guilty because we were born corrupt, but we were born guilty and corrupt because we were guilty in Adam, both of his sinful act and the sinful disposition behind it.

“All things, with relation to evil disposition, guilt, pollution and depravity, would exist, in the same order and dependence, in each branch, as in the root.”<sup>592</sup> Adam is the root; we are the branches.

3. Depravity remaining as an established principle in Adam’s posterity, resulting in more sins, is a *consequence* and *punishment* for participation in Adam’s sin that brings *new* guilt.<sup>593</sup>

We are born with the guilt of Adam’s sin and the sinful disposition behind it, by virtue of our union with him. The remaining and *continued operation* of

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<sup>591</sup> Ibid. Some have incorrectly interpreted Edwards’ language that the charge of guilt is consequent to the evil disposition as teaching the *mediate* imputation of Adam’s sin to his posterity (guilt follows *confirmed* corruption in Adams’ descendants), as opposed to *immediate* imputation (guilt precedes *confirmed* corruption in Adam’s descendants). As a result of this misinterpretation of Edwards, some have viewed Edwards as the progenitor of the later New England theology that denied the immediate imputation of Adam’s sin to his posterity. If some did take Edwards as their point of departure for their denial of immediate imputation, it was by a misinterpretation of Edwards. A careful reading of the context, as well as the background of Edwards’ understanding of the relationship of the disposition of the will to the acts of the will, especially as they relate to our union with Adam in his sin, clearly indicate that Edwards taught *immediate* imputation, while also affirming *an additional guilt of confirmed, inborn corruption*. Indeed, in a footnote to this discussion, Edwards denies an abstract distinction between mediate and immediate imputation, affirming both. He writes, “Our adversaries contend with us chiefly on this account, that according to our doctrine of original sin, such an imputation of the first sin is maintained, whereby God, without any regard to universal native corruption, esteems all Adam’s posterity as guilty, and holds them as liable to condemnation, purely on account of that sinful act of their first parent; so that they, without any respect had to their own sin, and so, as innocent in themselves, are destined to eternal punishment. . . . I have therefore ever been careful to show, that they do *injuriously suppose* those things to be *separated*, in our doctrine, which are by no means to be separated. The whole of the controversy they have with us about this matter, evidently arises from this, that they suppose the *mediate* and the *immediate* imputation are distinguished one from the other, not only in the manner of conception, but in reality. And so indeed they consider imputation only as *immediate*, and abstractly from the *mediate*; when yet our divines suppose, that neither ought to be considered *separately* from the other. Therefore I chose not to use any such distinction, or to suppose any such thing, in what I’ve said on the subject; but only have endeavored to explain the thing itself, and to reconcile it with the divine attributes. And therefore I have everywhere conjoined both these conceptions concerning the imputation of the first sin, as inseparable; and judged, that one ought never to be considered without the other.” Thus, the guilt of the one act of Adam’s sin and the guilt of the corruption behind that act one are inseparable as imputed to Adam’s posterity, while the additional guilt of the corruption in Adam and his posterity as *confirmed* by God as a judicial punishment accrues an additional guilt to Adam and his posterity by its “remaining and continued operation.” Yale, 393fn; BT, 221.2fn. For additional discussion on this point in Edwards’ theology, see Murray, *The Imputation of Adam’s Sin*, 52-64.

<sup>592</sup> Yale, 392, fn; BT, 221.1, fn.

<sup>593</sup> BT, 221.1; Yale, 391.

the evil disposition brings an *additional* guilt that is added to the guilt we are born with.

4. Thus, God was no more the author of the sinful disposition in Adam's posterity than He was the author of Adam's sin.<sup>594</sup>

"The first existence of an evil disposition, amounting to a full consent to *Adam's* sin, no more infers God being the author of that evil disposition in the *child*, than in the *father*."<sup>595</sup>

"Whatever mystery may be supposed in the affair, yet no Christian will presume to say, it was not in perfect consistence with God's holiness and righteousness.... So root and branches being one, according to God's wise constitution...changes of effects through all the branches coexist with the changes in the root: consequently an evil disposition exists in the hearts of Adam's posterity, equivalent to that which was exerted in his own heart, when he eat the forbidden fruit. Which God has no hand in, any otherwise, than in *not* exerting such an influence, as might be effectual to prevent it."<sup>596</sup>

- II. *Objection*: "Adam and his posterity are *not one*, but entirely *distinct agents*."<sup>597</sup>

*Answer*: With respect to Adam's sin and its consequences, God "actually" treats all of Adam's descendants as one. "It signifies nothing, to exclaim against plain fact."<sup>598</sup>

- A. All people enter the world without the hope of satisfying God's law and therefore as "justly exposed to eternal ruin," apart from saving grace.<sup>599</sup>
- B. Either God treats all men as sinful and guilty of Adam's first sin or He subjects innocent people to the judgment of temporal and eternal death.<sup>600</sup>
- C. We must be willing to admit our limited and weak understanding in matters clearly taught, but difficult to understand.<sup>601</sup>

- III. *Objection*: It was "injurious" to Adam's posterity that he stood as their moral representative.<sup>602</sup>

*Answer*: We had a better chance of a favorable outcome with Adam than if we had stood individually.<sup>603</sup>

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<sup>594</sup> BT, 221.1-2; Yale, 391-394.

<sup>595</sup> BT, 221.1; Yale, 392-393.

<sup>596</sup> Yale, 394; BT, 221.1-2.

<sup>597</sup> BT, 221.2ff.; Yale, 394ff.

<sup>598</sup> BT, 221.2-222.1; Yale, 394-395.

<sup>599</sup> BT, 221.2-222.1; Yale, 394-395.

<sup>600</sup> BT, 222.1; Yale, 395.

<sup>601</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>602</sup> BT, 222.1ff.; Yale, 395ff.

- A. Adam was “*as likely*...to persevere in obedience, as his posterity.” And if Adam had obeyed, *all* his posterity would have reaped the benefits.<sup>604</sup>
- B. Adam had a greater incentive to obey as both his and his posterity’s welfare was at stake.<sup>605</sup>
- C. Adam stood as a mature adult, whereas his posterity would have stood as moral agents through a lengthy period of infancy and childhood.<sup>606</sup>

“If any man, notwithstanding these things, shall say, that for his own part, if the affair had been proposed to him, *he* should have *chosen* to have his eternal interest trusted in *his own hands*: it is sufficient to answer, that no man’s vain opinion of himself, as *more fit* to be trusted than others, alters the true nature and tendency of things.”<sup>607</sup>

- D. God, in perfect justice, could have required of Adam and his posterity “*perfect perpetual* obedience” without exception, with eternal judgment as the penalty for any disobedience and no reward for obedience. God is not obliged to reward that which is due to him.<sup>608</sup>

As we owe God perfect obedience, the arrangement with Adam was gracious.

- IV. *Objection*: To treat Adam and his posterity as one is a “falsehood” and therefore improper.<sup>609</sup>

*Answer*: The objection is based on a “wrong notion of what we call *sameness* or *oneness*, among created things,” and “ignorance” of the dependence of all things upon the sovereign and ongoing work of God in ordering and upholding all things at all times.<sup>610</sup>

- A. “Some things are *entirely distinct*, and *very diverse*, which yet are so united by the established law of the Creator.”<sup>611</sup>

*Examples*:

1. A tree and its sapling

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<sup>603</sup> BT, 222.1-2; Yale, 395-397.

<sup>604</sup> BT, 222.1; Yale, 396.

<sup>605</sup> Ibid.

<sup>606</sup> Ibid.

<sup>607</sup> Ibid.

<sup>608</sup> BT, 222.2; Yale, 396-397.

<sup>609</sup> BT, 222.2; Yale, 397.

<sup>610</sup> BT, 222.2ff.; Yale, 397ff.

<sup>611</sup> BT, 222.2; Yale, 397-398.

“A tree, grown great, and an hundred years old, is one plant with the little sprout, that first came out of the ground, from whence it grew, and has been continued in constant succession; though it’s now so exceeding diverse, many thousand times bigger, and of a very different form, and perhaps not one atom the very same: yet God, according to an established law of nature, has in a constant succession communicated to it many of the same qualities, and most important properties, as if it were one.”<sup>612</sup>

2. An older person who was once a child.

“The body of man at forty years of age, is one with the infant body which first came into the world, from whence it grew; though now constituted of different substance, and the greater part of the substance probably changed scores (if not hundreds) of times; and though it be now in so many respects exceeding diverse, yet God, according to the course of nature, which he has been pleased to establish, has caused, that in a certain method it should communicate with that infantile body, in the same life, the same senses, the same features, and many the same qualities, and in union with the same soul; and so, with regard to these purposes, ‘tis dealt with by him as one body.”<sup>613</sup>

3. The body and the soul of an individual

“Considered in themselves, they are exceeding different beings, of a nature as diverse as can be conceived; and yet, by a very peculiar divine constitution or law of nature, which God has been pleased to establish, they are strongly united, and become one.”<sup>614</sup>

4. Personal identity and consciousness

“The communication or continuance of the same consciousness and memory to any subject, through successive parts of duration, depends wholly on a divine establishment.... on the sovereign will and agency of God.”<sup>615</sup>

B. God created, upholds, and orders the nature and relationship of all things at all times, apart from which nothing would have continuity of existence or identity.<sup>616</sup>

1. Our existence and identity are solely determined by God. Our present existence does not depend on our past existence, because even our past existence is determined, ordered, and upheld by God’s ongoing wisdom and power.<sup>617</sup>

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<sup>612</sup> Yale, 397-398; BT, 222.2.

<sup>613</sup> Yale, 398; BT, 222.2.

<sup>614</sup> Ibid.

<sup>615</sup> Yale, 398; BT, 223.1.

<sup>616</sup> BT, 223.1ff; Yale, 400ff.

<sup>617</sup> BT, 223.1-2; Yale, 400-401.

God alone establishes the existence and course of all things. All things in and beyond the universe depend on God's ongoing power, every moment, to exist. God, alone, is self-existent and uncaused, dependent on nothing and no one for His ongoing existence.

2. All things are created new every moment. Continuity of existence is merely God's ongoing exercise of his wisdom and power in ordering and sustaining things a certain way each moment.<sup>618</sup>

"God's *preserving* of created things in being, is perfectly equivalent to a *continued creation*, or to his creating those things out of nothing at *each moment* of their existence. If the continued existence of created things be wholly dependent on God's preservation, then those things would drop into *nothing* upon the ceasing of the present moment, without a new exertion of the divine power to cause them to exist in the following moment."<sup>619</sup>

3. God determines and establishes "oneness," or the ongoing identity of things, by His ongoing ordering and sustaining them.<sup>620</sup>

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<sup>618</sup> BT, 223.2-224.1; Yale, 401-402. Edwards argues that everything is an effect that depends on a sufficient cause for its existence. That cause is either itself—its existence in the past producing its existence in the present—or God. The former is a passive thing and cannot produce itself, and "no cause can produce effects in a *time* and *place* in which itself is *not*." "Nothing can exert itself, or operate, when and where it is not existing." The past ceases to exist in the present. And as all things are moving, nothing is in the exact same place from one moment to the next. Something past could only produce an effect where it was, not in a place where it was not. And while things may exist and operate according to "the course of nature," "nature" does not exist and operate on its own, apart from the ongoing power of God. "Nature" is no more than how God orders things "according to a constitution that he has been please to establish," or how He upholds all things by the ongoing assertion of His power. God upholding all things "differs not at all from the first creation, but only *circumstantially*; as in first creation there had been no such act and effect of God's power before; whereas, his giving existence afterwards, *follows* preceding acts and effects of the same kind, in an established order." Yale, 399-402; BT, 223.1-224.1.

<sup>619</sup> BT, 223.2; Yale, 401-402. In a lengthy footnote, Edwards illustrates how "an effect which is produced, every moment, by a new action or exertion of power, must be a *new* effect in each moment, and not absolutely and numerically the same with that which existed in preceding moments." For instance, the *effect* of the "color or brightness of the moon" appears constant and permanent, but is new every moment by its *cause*—rays of sunlight. The effect is new each moment with each new and different ray of light. In the same way, an image in a mirror would cease the moment the rays of light causing the image cease. "The image that exists this moment, is not at all derived from the image which existed the last preceding moment." Rather, it is renewed each moment by each new ray of light. Similarly, the constant effect of the sound of wind is new each movement as its cause—the air—is new every moment. And the sound of a river sounds constant, though each moment new water passes and produces a new effect. If the water stopped, so would the sound. In each case, the effect is produced by "a new exertion or application of power" that is its cause. And thus with all things, "they also cannot be the same, with an absolute identity, but must be wholly renewed every moment, if the case be as has been proved, that their present existence is not, strictly speaking, at all the effect of their past existence; but is wholly, every instant, the effect of a new agency, or exertion of the power, of the cause of their existence." And that power is God, who *created* and *sustains* all things, every moment. Yale, 402-404, fn; 224.2, fn.

<sup>620</sup> BT, 224.1-225.1; Yale, 402-405.

“There is no such thing as any identity or oneness in created objects, existing at different times, but what depends on *God’s sovereign constitution*.”<sup>621</sup>

“Some things, existing in different times and places, are treated by their Creator as one in *one respect*, and others in *another*...but all according to the sovereign pleasure of the Fountain of all being and operation.” For instance, “pollution and guilt from past wickedness,” the guilt and “evil taint” remaining on someone’s soul “to the end of the world and forever” for a crime committed many years ago, “*consciousness*” of past acts, ongoing habits, and *personal identity*, all depend on God’s sovereign ordering of things this way.<sup>622</sup>

4. As the oneness and identity of all things is determined by God, so also the oneness and identity of Adam and his posterity is determined by God.<sup>623</sup>

“A *divine constitution* is what *makes truth*, in affairs of this nature. The objection supposes, there is a oneness in created beings, whence qualities and relations are derived down from past existence, distinct from, and prior to, any oneness that can be supposed to be founded on *divine constitution*. Which is demonstrably false.”<sup>624</sup>

“No solid reason can be given, why God, who constitutes all other created union or oneness, according to his pleasure, and for what purposes, communications, and effects he pleases, may not establish a constitution whereby the natural posterity of Adam, proceeding from him, much as the buds and branches from the stock or root of a tree, should be treated as one with him, for the derivation, either of righteousness and communion in rewards, or of the loss of righteousness and consequent corruption and guilt.”<sup>625</sup>

C. God’s wisdom is reflected in humanity’s moral oneness in Adam.<sup>626</sup>

1. God’s wisdom is displayed “in a beautiful *analogy* and *harmony* with *other laws* or *constitutions*.”<sup>627</sup>

God established the principle of oneness as a common principle in his ordering of the universe, that species derive their traits from their root, parents, etc.

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<sup>621</sup> BT, 224.2; Yale, 404.

<sup>622</sup> Yale, 405; BT, 225.1.

<sup>623</sup> Ibid.

<sup>624</sup> BT, 224.2; Yale, 404.

<sup>625</sup> Yale, 405; BT, 225.1.

<sup>626</sup> BT, 225.1; Yale, 405-407.

<sup>627</sup> BT, 225.1; Yale, 406-407.

2. God’s wisdom is displayed “in the good *ends* obtained, or useful *consequences* of such a constitution.”<sup>628</sup>

“Things were wisely so established, that all should naturally be in...the same *moral state*; and not in...different states...some...perfectly *innocent* and holy, but others *corrupt* and wicked; some needing a *Saviour*, but others needing none; some in a confirmed state of perfect *happiness*, but others in a state of public condemnation to perfect and eternal *misery*; some justly exposed to great calamities in this world, but others by their innocence raised above all suffering.”<sup>629</sup>

All were “*made of one blood, to dwell on all the face of the earth*, to be united and blended in society, and to partake together in the natural and common goods and evils of this lower world.”<sup>630</sup>

3. “What extreme arrogance would it be in us, to take upon us to act as judges of the beauty and wisdom of the laws and established constitutions of the supreme Lord and Creator of the universe?”<sup>631</sup>

- D. The sin of Adam’s posterity in Adam is real by God constituting them as one and “by virtue of the full *consent* of the hearts of Adam’s posterity to that first apostacy.”<sup>632</sup>

“The sin of the apostacy is not theirs, merely because God *imputes* it to them; but it is *truly* and *properly* theirs, and on that *ground* God imputes it to them.”<sup>633</sup>

- V. *Objection*: It is not proper for children to bear judgment for sins of the fathers.<sup>634</sup>

Ezekiel 18:1-20

*Answer*: The objection is true in that no “communion in the guilt and punishment of the sins of others” exists where God does not treat people as morally one and where no consent and participation in the sin of others exists, but rather a “disapproval” of those sins. But, God treated Adam and his posterity as morally one and the guilt of Adam’s posterity includes both *consent* and *participation* in Adam’s sin.<sup>635</sup>

<sup>628</sup> BT, 225.2; Yale, 406.

<sup>629</sup> BT, 225.2; Yale, 407.

<sup>630</sup> Ibid.

<sup>631</sup> BT, 225.2; Yale, 406.

<sup>632</sup> BT, 225.2; Yale, 408.

<sup>633</sup> Ibid.

<sup>634</sup> Ibid.

<sup>635</sup> BT, 226.1; Yale, 408-409. Edwards notes that the context of Ezekiel 18 is Israel’s murmuring under the judgments of the Mosaic covenant, an “external” and “carnal” covenant with “external” judgments upon the nation for sin. Thus, according to the terms of the covenant with Israel, individual Israelites not participating in the gross sins of the nation may suffer the “external” consequences of the sins of their fathers and countrymen, while their ultimate state would not be determined by the actions of others. Ezekiel 18:1-20 introduces the “gospel-dispensation,” as compared with Jeremiah 31:29-31, where God’s method



VI. *Objection:* Too much philosophy is utilized in the above arguments.<sup>636</sup>

*Answer:* “Consideration of what is apparent and undeniable in fact, with respect to the dependence of the state and course of things in this universe on the sovereign constitutions of the supreme Author and Lord of all, ‘who gives none account of any of his matters, and whose ways are past finding out,’ will be sufficient, with persons of common modesty and sobriety, to stop their mouths from making peremptory decisions against the justice of God, respecting what is so plainly and fully taught in his Holy Word, concerning the derivation of a depravity and guilt from Adam to his posterity; a thing so abundantly confirmed by what is found in the experience of all mankind in all ages.”<sup>637</sup>

As many of the opponents of original sin often appeal to “reason” to support their arguments, so Edwards often appeals to the same to show the reasonableness of the doctrine according to the opponents’ own criteria of reasonableness. Edwards’ ultimate appeal is to the fact that Scripture plainly teaches original sin, and that should be enough to silence those that oppose the doctrine.<sup>638</sup>

VII. *Objection:* Sin is imputed to infants, but such that they are exposed to temporal punishment only, not eternal punishment.<sup>639</sup>

*Answer:* If Adam and his posterity are *one*, an equivalent punishment is just. But if no union exists between Adam and his posterity, and thus no guilt imputed to Adam’s posterity for Adam’s sin, then *any* punishment of Adam’s posterity for Adam’s sin remains unjust, partial or otherwise. If your neighbor owes you money, it is unjust to demand a lesser amount from a neighbor who owes you nothing.<sup>640</sup>

VIII. *Objection:* Infants are not innocent, but God’s character would not permit Him to make the eternal existence of infants worse than nonexistence.<sup>641</sup>

*Answer:* This gives up the “grand point of the imputation of Adam’s sin, both in whole and in part.” If God is not just to judge the child, then the child is innocent. If the child is truly guilty, then God is just in His penalty.<sup>642</sup>

of judging sinners and their ultimate state will not be “according to the behavior of their particular ancestors; but every one is dealt with according to the sin of his own wicked heart, or sinful nature and practice.” Yale, 409; BT, 226.1.

<sup>636</sup> Ibid.

<sup>637</sup> Yale, 409; BT, 226.1.

<sup>638</sup> In any event, right reason for Edwards involves thinking founded on the understanding of God as the source and sustainer of all things, including knowledge, and thus involves viewing the world correctly, according to God’s explanation of things in Scripture, and according to the obvious nature of creation and reasoning as they display God’s sovereign ordering of all things.

<sup>639</sup> BT, 226.1ff.; Yale, 410ff.

<sup>640</sup> BT, 226.1-2; Yale, 410-411.

<sup>641</sup> BT, 226.2; Yale, 411.

<sup>642</sup> BT, 226.2; Yale, 411-412.

Note: Edwards is proving the doctrine of original sin, not stating the ultimate fate of infants or arguing that all infants will suffer the fate of eternal condemnation. Whether God eternally saves all, some, or no infants by the application of His grace in Christ is not addressed in this treatise. What Edwards does affirm here is that God would be just in each case. And regardless, we can take great comfort in the perfect justice, mercy, grace, and love of God displayed in the person and saving work of Christ, who suffered infinite wrath on His soul to uphold His justice and spare unworthy sinners the fate of God's judgment, to bring them to heaven to be holy and happy forever. To a God of such infinite excellence and goodness we can entrust the souls of His precious little ones.<sup>643</sup>

### Questions and Points for Discussion

1. In this notable paragraph, Edwards teaches what is sometimes called the doctrine of *continuous creation*.

“God’s *preserving* of created things in being, is perfectly equivalent to a *continued creation*, or to his creating those things out of nothing at *each moment* of their existence. If the continued existence of created things be wholly dependent on God’s preservation, then those things would drop into *nothing* upon the ceasing of the present moment, without a new exertion of the divine power to cause them to exist in the following moment.”

Do you find Edwards’ arguments and analogies in support of this doctrine convincing? Why or why not?

2. What alternatives to Edwards’ explanation of the creation and ongoing existence of the universe explanation might one propose? Are alternative explanations consistent with Scripture’s teaching that God is the source and sustainer of all things, that God spoke all things into existence from nothing? Do they posit a universe that exists and operates by its own power?
3. To what ultimate authority can objectors appeal to claim that God cannot treat Adam and his posterity as one? To what authority does Edwards appeal to answer the objection?

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<sup>643</sup> In affirming that *all* of Adam’s descendents are liable to eternal judgment, Edwards affirms the necessity of God’s grace in Christ for the salvation of any soul, while the question of whether or not God extends saving grace to those constitutionally unable to exercise faith in Christ, including infants, is not answered in this treatise.

4. Edwards' defense of the doctrine of original sin does not state that infants that die will be eternally condemned, but that all people are born under the judgment of Adam's sin and in need of salvation by God's grace in Christ. From what you have read thus far, do you think that Edwards would agree with the teaching of an "age of accountability" before which all infants who die are saved? Why or why not?
  
5. Read Ezekiel 18:1-20 and discuss Edwards' explanation that no sharing in the sin, guilt, and punishment of others exists where God does not treat people as morally one and where disapproval and no consent and participation in the sin of others exists. Is Edwards' explanation of "external judgments" of an "external and carnal covenant" helpful in reconciling original sin with Scripture's teaching that it is improper for children to bear judgment for sins of their fathers? Why or why not?
  
6. For Edwards, the question of whether, 1) the guilt of Adam's sin is imputed to sinners because they are born sinful (mediate imputation), or 2) people are born sinful because the guilt of Adam's sin was imputed to them because Adam acted on their behalf (immediate imputation), is answered by God treating Adam and his posterity as one in Adam's trial of obedience and subsequent judgment. Thus, the imputation of the guilt of Adam's sin to himself and his posterity is immediate. Moreover, Adam and his posterity bear the additional guilt of having the sinful inclination of Adam's sin confirmed in them as part of God's judgment on Adam's sin. Therefore, Adam's descendants bear a double guilt--the guilt of Adam's sin and the guilt of having a confirmed, corrupt inclination. Does Edwards' explanation help clarify this oftentimes confusing debate? Is Edwards' view that imputation is both immediate and mediate helpful? Is it biblical?
  
7. According to Edwards, would infants die *physically* if the guilt of Adam's sin were not imputed to them?

## Chapter Four: Miscellaneous Objections

- I. *Objection:* Adam's posterity do not enter the world under the curse of Adam's sin, as "God pronounced equivalent or greater blessings on Noah and his sons, than he did on Adam at his creation, when he said, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and have dominion over the fish of the sea,' etc."<sup>644</sup>

*Answer:*

- A. Eternal life, not temporal blessings, was suspended by Adam's disobedience, as eternal life was to have been the reward for his obedience. The enjoyment of temporal blessings in this life by Adam and his posterity, including "continuance of this present life for a season," are not inconsistent with God's curse.<sup>645</sup>
- B. Temporal blessings enjoyed by Adam's posterity give no more evidence of their not being involved in God's threatened judgment for Adam's sin than the temporal blessings enjoyed by Adam after his sin give evidence that he was not included in the threat of judgment for his sin.<sup>646</sup>
- C. The blessings pronounced upon Noah were based on the new foundation of the Covenant of Grace, of Christ's future sacrifice that would deliver them from the fall's curse and lead them into greater blessings than those promised to Adam.<sup>647</sup>
1. "These blessings were pronounced on Noah and his seed, on the same foundation, whereon afterwards the blessing was pronounced on Abraham and his seed, which included both spiritual and temporal benefits."<sup>648</sup>
    - a. "Noah had his name prophetically given him by his father Lamech, because by him and his seed deliverance should be obtained from the curse, which came by Adam's fall. Genesis 5:29, 'And he called his name Noah (i.e. rest), saying, this same shall comfort us concerning our work, and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed.'"<sup>649</sup>
    - b. Noah acted in faith in offering a sacrifice, and obtained grace from the Lord based upon Christ's ultimate sacrifice.<sup>650</sup>
    - c. The deliverance of Noah and his family from God's wrath was a picture of the future deliverance in Christ.<sup>651</sup>

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<sup>644</sup> BT, 227.1; Yale, 413.

<sup>645</sup> BT, 227.1; Yale, 413-414.

<sup>646</sup> BT, 227.1; Yale, 414.

<sup>647</sup> BT, 227.1-2; Yale, 414-416.

<sup>648</sup> Yale, 414; BT, 227.1.

<sup>649</sup> Yale, 414; BT, 227.1-2.

<sup>650</sup> BT, 227.2; Yale, 414-415.

2. Because of Christ's redemptive work, God exercises more patience and gives greater blessings than He would otherwise as a testimony to His grace in Christ and as an encouragement for people to seek Him.<sup>652</sup>
- D. "That men have blessings *through grace*, is no evidence of their being not justly exposed to the curse *by nature*; but it rather argues the contrary. For if they did not deserve the *curse*, they would not depend on *grace and redemption* for the removal of it, and for bringing them into a state of favour with God."<sup>653</sup>
- II. *Objection*: Original sin belittles God's goodness that gave us existence, the first fruit of God's gracious character, for which we should be thankful.<sup>654</sup>

*Answer*:

- A. This avoids the question by assuming no union of Adam and his posterity. Created in Adam and placed in paradise by God's great goodness, we fell from the state of blessing by Adam's rebellion.

We can thank God for His goodness in placing Adam and Eve in such a blessed state, with the opportunity to gain eternal life, even as we bemoan their and our sin, as Daniel and Israel confessed their sins and the sins of their fathers (See Daniel 9 and Nehemiah 9).<sup>655</sup>

- B. Given our union with Adam, it is no more contrary to God's goodness to bring us into existence under punishment than to keep Adam physically alive though in a state of punishment after he sinned. The issue is union with Adam, not God's goodness. Again, to deny union is to avoid the question.<sup>656</sup>
- C. If it is not contrary to God's goodness to bring someone into a miserable existence, then Taylor's scheme is contrary to God's goodness, for Taylor asserts that God will resurrect the lost to eternal suffering on the Day of Judgment.<sup>657</sup>
- D. We have reason to thank God that he gave us being "under so glorious a dispensation of grace through Jesus Christ: by which we have a happy opportunity to be delivered from this sin and misery, and to obtain unspeakable eternal happiness." That we neglect it is no reason to be ungrateful.<sup>658</sup>

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<sup>651</sup> BT, 227.2; Yale, 415.

<sup>652</sup> Ibid.

<sup>653</sup> BT, 227.2; Yale, 416.

<sup>654</sup> Ibid.

<sup>655</sup> BT, 227.2-228.1; Yale, 416.

<sup>656</sup> BT, 228.1; Yale, 416-417.

<sup>657</sup> BT, 228.1; Yale, 417.

<sup>658</sup> BT, 228.1-2; Yale, 417-418. Here, again, Taylor contradicts himself, "What if the whole world lies in wickedness, and few therefore shall be saved? Have men no reason to be thankful, because they are wicked

- III. *Objection*: Scripture represents God, on the Day of Judgment, “dealing with men singly and separately, rendering to every man according to his deeds, and according to the improvement he has made of the particular powers and talent God has given him personally.”<sup>659</sup>

*Answer*: The objection disappears when the purpose of God’s “public judgment” on that day is properly understood. Called “the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God,” God will use “evidences and proofs” to display the truth of people’s hearts and the righteousness of His judgments. The display of the true nature of “personal works” will highlight the difference between the works of the righteous and the wicked and between the fruit of righteousness and the fruit of wickedness.<sup>660</sup>

- A. *Primarily*, God will distinguish between the children of Christ’s kingdom (the “righteous”) and the children of Satan (the “wicked”).<sup>661</sup>

1. The evil works of the lost will show that they belong to Satan’s kingdom.<sup>662</sup>

“They will demonstrate the exceeding corruption of their nature, and full consent of their hearts to the common apostacy, and also that their hearts never relinquished the apostacy, by a cordial adherence to Christ, the great Restorer.”<sup>663</sup>

2. The good works of the righteous will show their acceptance of Christ as redeemer.<sup>664</sup>

- B. *Secondarily*, God will distinguish between the relative degree of goodness among the works of the redeemed, and the relative degree of wickedness among the works of the unredeemed.<sup>665</sup>

God will display the relative degree of goodness or wickedness among the works of the redeemed and unredeemed. Yet, the *relative* goodness or wickedness of the works of the redeemed as compared to the works of other redeemed people, and the *relative* goodness and wickedness of the works of the unredeemed as compared to other unredeemed people, will not be a basis of determining one’s *absolute* state before God as righteous (redeemed) or wicked (unredeemed). One’s absolute state before God is only determined by one’s relationship to Christ.

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and ungrateful, and abuse their being and God’s bounty?” Taylor, *Original Sin*, 349. Quoted by Edwards, Yale, 417; BT, 228.1.

<sup>659</sup> BT, 228.2; Yale, 418.

<sup>660</sup> BT, 228.2-229.1; Yale, 418-421.

<sup>661</sup> BT, 228.2-229.1; Yale, 419-420.

<sup>662</sup> Ibid.

<sup>663</sup> Yale, 420; BT, 228.2-229.1.

<sup>664</sup> BT, 229.1; Yale, 420.

<sup>665</sup> BT, 229.1; Yale, 420-421.

- IV. *Objection:* The word “impute” is only used twice in Scripture with reference to God imputing sin, and in each case it refers to personal sin, not the imputing of Adam’s sin to his posterity.”<sup>666</sup>

*Answer:* The imputation of Adam’s sin is taught using other words and phrases that mean imputation.<sup>667</sup>

“That the word *impute*, is never expressly applied to Adam’s sin, does no more argue, that it is not imputed to his posterity, than it argues, that pride, unbelief, lying, theft, oppression, persecution, fornication, adultery, sodomy, perjury, idolatry, and innumerable other particular moral evils, are never *imputed* to the persons that committed them, or in whom they are; because the word *impute*, though so often used in Scripture, is never applied to any of these kinds of wickedness.”<sup>668</sup>

“It is no argument they are not *imputed* to those who are guilty of them, that the very word *impute*, is not applied to them; for the *word* itself is *rarely* used; not one time in a hundred, and perhaps five hundred, of those wherein the *thing* meant is plainly implied, or may be certainly inferred.”<sup>669</sup>

“The thing meant by the word *impute*, may be as plainly and certainly expressed by using other words, as if *that* word were expressly used; and *more certainly*, because the words used instead of it, may amount to an *explanation* of this word.” Such is the case in Romans 5:12-19.<sup>670</sup>

- V. *Objection:* Scripture sometimes speaks of children as models of humility, meekness, and innocence.<sup>671</sup>

Matthew 18:3: “And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

1 Corinthians 14:20: “Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.”

Psalms 131:2: “Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul *is* even as a weaned child.”

*Answer:* No more can be said by these texts than little children are pattern of “innocence with respect to the *exercises* and *fruits* of sin, *harmless* as to the hurtful effects of it; and that *image* of meekness and humility arising from this, in

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<sup>666</sup> BT, 229.1; Yale, 421.

<sup>667</sup> BT, 229.1-2; Yale, 421-422.

<sup>668</sup> BT, 229.2; Yale, 422.

<sup>669</sup> Ibid.

<sup>670</sup> Ibid.

<sup>671</sup> BT, 229.2; Yale, 422-423.

conjunction with a natural tenderness of mind, fear, self-diffidence, yieldableness, and confidence in parents and others older than themselves.”<sup>672</sup>

The inability to act upon the corruption of one’s nature does not argue for the innocence of the nature. “A young viper has a malignant *nature*, though incapable of doing a malignant action, and at present appearing a harmless creature.”<sup>673</sup>

VI. *Objection*: The doctrine of original sin “pours contempt upon the human nature.”<sup>674</sup>

*Answer*:

- A. “No *contempt* is by this doctrine cast upon the noble faculties and capacities of *man’s nature*, or the exalted business, and divine and immortal happiness, of which he is made capable.”<sup>675</sup>
- B. “Shame belongs to them that are truly sinful; and to suppose, that this is not the native character of mankind, is still but meanly begging the question.”<sup>676</sup>
- C. “If we who come into the world, are truly sinful, and consequently miserable, he acts but a *friendly* part to us, who endeavors fully to discover and manifest our disease.... He acts an *unfriendly* part, who to his utmost hides it from us,” denying the remedy for “everlasting contempt” and “remediless destruction.”<sup>677</sup>

True love tells people of their fallen state that they might be delivered from it.

VII. *Objection*: The doctrine of original sin gives us “*an ill opinion of our fellow-creatures, as so to promote ill-nature and mutual hatred.*”<sup>678</sup>

*Answer*:

- A. It promotes humility.<sup>679</sup>

Convincing ourselves of our good “tends to a foolish *self-exaltation* and *pride*,” and “*pride* is the chief source of all the *contention*, mutual *hatred*, and *ill-will*” in the world.<sup>680</sup>

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<sup>672</sup> BT, 229.2; Yale, 423. Taylor’s own definition of virtue does not allow for positive virtue in young children. Edwards writes, “*his scheme* will not admit of any such thing as *positive* virtue, or virtuous disposition, in infants; he insisting (as was observed before) that virtue must be the fruit of *thought* and *reflection*. But there can be no thought and reflection, that produces positive virtue, in children not yet capable of *moral action*; and it is *such* children he speaks of.”

<sup>673</sup> Ibid.

<sup>674</sup> Ibid.

<sup>675</sup> BT, 230.1; Yale, 423.

<sup>676</sup> Yale, 423-424; BT, 230.1.

<sup>677</sup> BT, 230.1; Yale, 424.

<sup>678</sup> Ibid.

<sup>679</sup> Ibid.

<sup>680</sup> Ibid.



B. It promotes mutual compassion.<sup>681</sup>

1. It teaches us that we all suffer from the same condition and to not look at ourselves as better than others.<sup>682</sup>
2. “Nothing has a greater tendency to promote those amiable dispositions of mercy, forbearance, long-suffering, gentleness, and forgiveness, than a sense of our own extreme unworthiness and misery, and the infinite need we have of divine pity, forbearance, and forgiveness.”<sup>683</sup>

VIII. *Objection:* The doctrine of original sin “tends to *hinder comfort and joy*, and promote emotional sadness.<sup>684</sup>

*Answer:* To be enlightened to see one’s sinfulness should make one sorrowful, but “there is nothing in this doctrine, that in the least stands in the way of comfort and exceeding joy, to such as find in their hearts a sincere willingness wholly to forsake all sin, and give their hearts and whole selves to Christ.”<sup>685</sup>

IX. *Objection:* “To make men believe that wickedness belongs to their very nature, tends to encourage them in *sin*...because they are taught that sin is *natural*, and therefore *necessary and unavoidable*.”<sup>686</sup>

*Answer:*

A. Though natural, sin is still condemnable.<sup>687</sup>

B. Teaching original sin no more encourages sin than Taylor’s view that people can develop “strong habits of sin” and become “unable to help themselves” encourages sin.<sup>688</sup>

C. Does it encourage sin to tell one “of his disease, to show him that it is real and very fatal, and what *he* can never cure himself of,” while “directing him to a great *Physician*, who is sufficient for his restoration?”<sup>689</sup>

X. *Objection:* If this doctrine is true, then having children is sinful, as it brings sin into the world.<sup>690</sup>

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<sup>681</sup> Ibid.

<sup>682</sup> Ibid.

<sup>683</sup> Ibid.

<sup>684</sup> BT, 230.1; Yale, 424-425.

<sup>685</sup> BT, 230.1; Yale, 425.

<sup>686</sup> Ibid.

<sup>687</sup> BT, 230.1-2; Yale, 425.

<sup>688</sup> BT, 230.2; Yale, 425.

<sup>689</sup> Ibid. Here, again, Edwards refers his readers to his treatise, *Freedom of the Will*, for a more in-depth treatment of this objection. *Freedom of the Will*, 137-140.

*Answer:* By this line of reasoning, God is a sinner, as he is the ultimate creator and sustainer of all life that sins, including Satan, demons, and people, while God desires that we further the existence of humanity by children.<sup>691</sup>

XI. *Objection:* The doctrine is not taught very often in Scripture, and nowhere in the Gospels.<sup>692</sup>

*Answer:*

- A. The reader must judge whether or not enough evidence for the doctrine has been presented thus far. Few doctrines in Scripture are “taught more plainly or expressly.”<sup>693</sup>
- B. Even if original sin or any other doctrine were taught relatively few times in Scripture, we should believe it and not question God’s wisdom as to His manner and frequency of revealing it.<sup>694</sup>
- C. “In the four Gospels, Christ was continually saying, *those things* which plainly *implied*, that all men in their original state are sinful and miserable.”<sup>695</sup>

“‘They which are whole, need not a physician, but they which are sick’;<sup>696</sup> that ‘he came to seek and to save that which was lost’;<sup>697</sup> that it was necessary for all to be ‘born again, and to be converted, and that otherwise they could not enter into the kingdom of heaven’;<sup>698</sup> and that all were sinners, as well as those whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices, etc. and that ‘every one who did not repent, should perish’;<sup>699</sup> withal directing everyone to pray to God for forgiveness of sin,<sup>700</sup> using our necessity of forgiveness from God, as an argument with all to forgive the injuries of their neighbors;<sup>701</sup> teaching, that earthly parents, though kind to their children, are in themselves evil;<sup>702</sup> and signifying, that things carnal and corrupt are properly the things of men;<sup>703</sup> warning his disciples rather to beware of men, than of wild beasts;<sup>704</sup> often representing the world as evil, as

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<sup>690</sup> BT, 230.2; Yale, 425-426.

<sup>691</sup> BT, 230.2; Yale, 426.

<sup>692</sup> Ibid.

<sup>693</sup> BT, 230.2; Yale, 427.

<sup>694</sup> Ibid.

<sup>695</sup> BT, 231.1; Yale, 428.

<sup>696</sup> Matthew 9:12.

<sup>697</sup> Matthew 18:11; Luke 19:10.

<sup>698</sup> Matthew 18:3.

<sup>699</sup> Luke 13:1-5.

<sup>700</sup> Matthew 6:12; Luke 11:4.

<sup>701</sup> Matthew 6:14-15; 18:35.

<sup>702</sup> Matthew 7:11.

<sup>703</sup> Matthew 16:23.

<sup>704</sup> Matthew 10:16-17.

- wicked in its works, at enmity with truth and holiness, and hating him;<sup>705</sup> yea, and teaching plainly, that all men are extremely and inexpressibly sinful, owing ten thousand talents to their divine creditor.”<sup>706</sup>
- D. Christ affirmed and taught the strict requirements of the Law, “which above all things, tends to search the hearts of men, and to teach them their inbred exceeding depravity” and need of a savior.<sup>707</sup>
- E. Christ did not explain many doctrines, leaving them to the ministry of the Holy Spirit after His ascension.<sup>708</sup>
- F. Neither Christ in the Gospels, nor the entire Bible, speak of the alternative doctrines offered by Dr. Taylor, such as death as a gift of God’s grace.<sup>709</sup>

“If after all, Christ did not speak of this doctrine often enough to suit Dr. Taylor, he might be asked, why he supposes Christ did no oftener, and no more plainly teach some of his (Dr. Taylor’s) doctrines, which he so much insists on? As, that temporal death comes on all mankind by Adam; and that it comes on them by him, not as a punishment or calamity, but as a great favor, being made a rich benefit, and a fruit of God’s abundant grace, by Christ’s redemption, who came into the world as a second Adam for this end. Surely, if this were so, it was of vast importance, that it should be known to the church of God in all ages, who saw death reigning over infants, as well as others. If infants were indeed perfectly innocent, was it not needful, that the design of that which was such a melancholy and awful dispensation towards so many millions of innocent creatures, should be known, in order to prevent the worst thoughts of God from arising in the minds of the constant spectators of so mysterious and gloomy a dispensation? But why then such a total silence about it, for four thousand years together, and not one word of it in all the Old Testament; nor one word of it in all the four Gospels; and indeed not one word of it in the whole Bible, but only as forced and wrung out by Dr. Taylor’s arts of criticism and deduction, against the plainest and strongest evidence!”<sup>710</sup>

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<sup>705</sup> John 7:7; 8:23; 14:17; 15:18-19.

<sup>706</sup> Matthew 18:21ff. Yale, 428-429; BT, 231.1-2. In a lengthy footnote, Edwards provides numerous examples from ancient Rabbis and some ancient philosophers that speak of depravity as inherent to mankind. See Yale, 429-433, fn; BT, 231.1-232.2, fn.

<sup>707</sup> Yale, 429; BT, 231.2.

<sup>708</sup> BT, 232.1; Yale, 431-432.

<sup>709</sup> BT, 232.1; Yale, 432-433.

<sup>710</sup> Yale, 432-433; BT, 232.1. I have included the entire section under this heading because it both displays the brilliance of Edwards’ argumentation and the lengths Bible interpreters will go to justify their denial of an obvious doctrine of Scripture. Scripture, as the revelation of God, is a comprehensive and coherent unity. To deny or twist a single aspect of its truth invariably results in the denial or twisting of other related doctrines or, as in the present case, the invention of new and unbiblical “doctrines.” As Edwards’ theology was comprehensive and coherent, where the parts were understood in relationship to the whole, he was able to see the broader implications of the denial of a particular doctrine to the whole of theology.

- XII. *Objection*: Man appears to be born into the world with a sense of virtue, goodness, benevolence, compassion, etc.<sup>711</sup>

*Answer*: See Edwards' treatise on the nature of true virtue.

### Questions and Points for Discussion

1. According to Edwards, how and why can God give great earthly blessings to those born in sin and subject to His curse for their sin?
2. Is original sin the only basis by which sinners will be judged by God? If not, on what other bases will God judge sinners?
3. Although Edwards easily answers the objection that original sin belittles God's goodness that gave us existence, the objection is akin to the atheistic denial of God's existence by appeal to the "problem of evil," the argument that if God is good he would prevent evil and if He were all powerful He could prevent evil, therefore God cannot be both good and all-powerful. Another related objection is how God could create Lucifer and Adam knowing they would sin? Given God's ways are infinitely above our ways, an element of mystery is reasonable and to be expected with such questions. With respect to difficult theological questions, has God given us sufficient revelation of His perfect character that we can trust Him in the face of our limited understanding?
4. According to Edwards, does the doctrine of original sin encourage or discourage people from seeking salvation in Christ? How and why?
5. Using a dictionary and thesaurus, if necessary, identify terms and phrases that convey the meaning of the word "impute" without using the word itself. Is imputation an unusual biblical concept or is it a common principle of everyday existence?

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<sup>711</sup> BT, 232.1; Yale, 433.

6. Is it important to distinguish between human nature, *per se*, and *fallen* human nature? Why? What is Christ's opinion of fallen human nature? In what ways does Christ in the Gospels affirm original sin?
  
7. Is it possible to hold a high view of the ultimate authority of Scripture and deny the doctrine of original sin? Why or why not?
  
8. How can the holding of an erroneous doctrine affect one's interpretation of other doctrines? How does Taylor's view of free will affect the accuracy and objectivity of his interpretations? Is there a lesson for us here?

## Conclusion

- I. Beware of Bible interpreters who profess a high view of Scripture while offering their “new” interpretations as the corrective to “plain” and accepted interpretations of the best orthodox theologians of the church throughout the centuries. By professing admiration and respect of the genius of the apostle Paul, denials of original sin and alternative interpretations of the Pauline epistles are made more credible to “incautious” readers.<sup>712</sup>

“This Apostle being a man of no vulgar understanding, it’s nothing strange if his meaning lies very deep; and no wonder then, if the superficial discerning and observation of vulgar Christians, or indeed of the herd of common divines, such as the Westminster Assembly, etc., falls vastly short of the Apostle’s reach, and frequently don’t enter into the true spirit and design of Paul’s epistles. They must understand, that the first reformers, and preachers and expositors in general, both before and since the Reformation, for fifteen or sixteen hundred years past, were too *unlearned* and *shortsighted*, to be capable of penetrating into the sense, or fit to undertake the making comments on the writings of so great a man as this Apostle; or else had dwelt in a cave of *bigotry* and *superstition*, too gloomy to allow ‘em to use their own understandings with freedom, in reading the Scripture. But at the same time, it must be understood, that there is risen up, now at length in this happy age of light and liberty, a set of men, of a more free and generous turn of mind, a more inquisitive genius, and better discernment. By such insinuations, they seek advantage to their cause; and thus the most unreasonable and extravagant interpretations of Scripture are palliated and recommended.”<sup>713</sup>

- II. God “is able to make his own truths prevail.”<sup>714</sup>

“However mysterious they may seem to the poor, partial, narrow and extremely imperfect views of mortals, while looking through a cloudy and delusory medium; and however disagreeable they may be to the innumerable prejudices of men’s hearts: and who has promised, that the gospel of Christ, such as is really his, shall finally be victorious; and has assured us, that the Word which goeth out of this mouth, ‘shall not return to him void, but shall accomplish that which he pleaseth and shall prosper in the thing whereto he sends it.’ Let God arise, and plead his own cause, and glorify his own great name. AMEN.”<sup>715</sup>

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<sup>712</sup> BT, 232.2-233.2; Yale, 434-436.

<sup>713</sup> Yale, 435; BT, 233.1. For those familiar with contemporary perspectives and debates regarding the doctrine of justification, the applicability of this quote should be obvious. Apart from the last sentence of the quote, Edwards is being quite sarcastic.

<sup>714</sup> Yale, 437; BT, 233.2.

<sup>715</sup> Ibid.