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Augustana II: Of Original Sin*

By MARTIN H. FRANZMANN

The almost passionate intensity with which our confessional writings emphasize original sin in all its tragic somberness recalls Luther's words: "All our zeal must be directed toward making our sins great and grave." One might almost say of our Confessions what Luther says of the Epistle to the Romans: "The sum of this Letter is: to destroy, uproot, and to annihilate all wisdom and righteousness of the flesh — however great these qualities may appear in the eyes of men, even in our own, and however sincerely and devotedly they may be practiced — and in their stead to establish and make great our sin — however little it may appear to be such or be accounted such." With deep and earnest indignation any attempt to minimize original sin is branded as pagan philosophy, as an "impious opinion." Because "the scholastics mingled with the Christian doctrine philosophy concerning the perfection of nature," the truth of Scripture has been lost. The Apology speaks, therefore, with the true accent of the Reformation when it says: "*Solche noetige, tapfere, klare Sprueche der Heiligen Schrift und der Vaeter, welche durch*

* The Editorial Committee plans to publish a selected number of essays read at the Lutheran Free Conferences held at Bad Boll, Germany, during the summer of 1949. The first conference, under the chairmanship of the VELKD, discussed the problem of religious education in the German school system; the second conference, under the sponsorship of the NLC, concerned itself primarily with the theme: The Lutheran Church and current theological and social trends. In the third and fourth conferences, in which the Missouri Synod served as host, the respective essayists presented essays on "The Plan of Salvation According to Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions." Professor Franzmann's essay, *Erbsuende und Erbschuld*, read at the last two conferences, is here reproduced in slightly abbreviated form.

ungeschicktes Gezaenk der Sophisten unterdrueckt gewesen, bringen wir wieder an Tag und wollten gerne die christliche Lehre rein haben" (Apology II, 32). But the Confessors are not concerned about an abstract purity of doctrine; they are concerned, not about an abstraction, but about a Person; they are concerned about the glory and honor of Christ. Luther sums up both the rejection of philosophical ideas and the zeal for the honor of Christ in the Smalcald Articles: "Such and many similar things have arisen from want of understanding and ignorance as regards both this sin and Christ, our Savior; and they are truly *heathen dogmas*, which we cannot endure. For if this teaching were right, then Christ has died in vain, since there is in man no defect nor sin for which He should have died" (III, 1). Where original sin is not considered sin in the deepest sense, where the attempt is made to deny that original depravity is sin, it is done to the dishonor of the suffering and merits of Christ (Confessio Augustana II). "For the magnitude of the grace of Christ cannot be understood unless our diseases be recognized" (Apology II, 50). The marvelous light in which the people of God walk has as its necessary background and foil the darkness out of which they have been called — and the passing from darkness into the light is, moreover, the daily experience of the Christian —; in dealing with original sin, then, we are not concerning ourselves with a topic of abstruse theological-scholastic interest; we are dealing with the heart and core of the matter. "This controversy concerning original sin is not unnecessary wrangling, but if this doctrine is rightly presented from, and according to, God's Word and separated from all Pelagian and Manichean errors, then . . . the benefits of the Lord Christ and His precious merit, also the gracious operation of the Holy Ghost, are the better known and the more extolled" (Solida Declaratio I). "Extolled" — thereunto we are called, that we should "show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9).

The very position of the article on original sin in the Augsburg Confession indicates the importance that the doctrine of original sin had for the consciousness of the Reformation. "We turn from God to man; here the peculiarity of the Lutheran Confession confronts us: we cannot speak of God without thinking also of ourselves. God and our 'I'

belong intimately together.”¹ “Over against life as it should be there is life as it ought not to be.”² And so when the Augsburg Confession speaks of man, it speaks of sin, or better, of sinners, for it speaks personally and concretely of sinful man: “*quod omnes homines nascantur . . . cum peccato.*” Our consciousness of God is inevitably linked with the consciousness of our sin: “every thought of God wakens our conscience.”³ Moreover, the Confession, when it speaks of sin and sinners, speaks at once of *original sin*, of sin as the given condition of all mankind — “*Theologus . . . disputat de homine peccatore*” (Luther).

The same tendency in emphasis is observable in the sequence of the articles in the Augsburg Confession: God — Man — Son of God — Justification. Article II is an organic part of our Confession: it looks back to God (“*und verdamme alle . . . unter ewigen Gottes Zorn*”) and forward to Christ (“Those not born again through Baptism and the Holy Ghost”). This organic connection between original sin and the whole of the Confession is apparent also in Article III (“that He might . . . be a sacrifice, not only for *original guilt* . . .”), and especially in Article IV, as is made clear by the Apology to the latter Article, in which original sin is once more taken up and earnestly emphasized. Over against the infinite power, wisdom, and goodness of God, mankind stands as an exceptionless totality of sin.

One is tempted, at the risk of appearing to play with the most serious subject in existence, to speak of a sort of dark poesy when one surveys the utterances of our Confessions concerning original sin. Repeatedly, and blow upon blow, the hammer of the Word of God is made to fall on any self-assertion of man before his God, on every claim to righteousness which man, as man, dares make. Nothing is left to the pride and conceit of man. The *whole* man is a sinner, conceived and born in sin, full of concupiscence from his mother’s womb; incapable of true fear of God, incapable of trust in God, by nature — his sin is an *angeborene Seuche*. And this sin, this plague with which he is born, is “truly sin, even now condemning and bringing eternal death” upon him. What

¹ C. Stange, “Die Bedeutung des Augsburger Bekenntnisses,” ZST. VIII, 1931, 600 ff.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

must happen, if man is to find a gracious God, is not mere alteration or improvement, but complete renovation, a creative act of God: "man's will . . . has *no power*, without the Holy Ghost, to work the righteousness of God" (CA XVIII); or, as the German of Article XVIII puts it, even more forcefully: "*ohne Gnade, Hilfe und Wirkung des Heiligen Geistes vermag der Mensch nicht Gott gefaellig werden, Gott herzlich zu fuerchten oder zu glauben oder die angeborne boese Lust aus dem Herzen zu werfen.*" For the corruption is truly a total one. It extends to all the powers of man, even the highest: "We believe, teach, and confess that original sin is not a slight, but so deep a corruption of human nature that nothing healthy or uncorrupt has remained in man's body or soul, in his inner or outward powers . . ." (Epitome I, 3). "Human nature is not merely polluted, but so deeply corrupted that nothing pure or incorrupt has remained in it . . . *isto veneno peccati originis a planta pedis usque ad verticem infecti sumus*" (Sol. Decl. I, 62). Original sin is "a horrible, deep, inexpressible corruption . . . so that man is destitute of the righteousness wherein he was originally created, and in spiritual things is dead to good and perverted to all evil; and that, because of this corruption and inborn sin . . . all actual sins flow forth from the heart" (*ibid.*, I, 2).

The inevitable consequence is that all our deeds are naught. Man can only sin, for sin is there, in man, even before the deed: "For original sin is not a sin which is committed, but it inheres in the nature, substance, and essence of man, so that though no wicked thought should arise in the heart of corrupt man, no idle word were spoken, no wicked deed were done, yet the nature is nevertheless corrupted through original sin, which is born in us . . . and is a fountainhead of all other actual sins . . ." (Epitome I, 21). "The corrupt nature . . . can do nothing in the sight of God but sin" (Sol. Decl. I, 25). Even our best deeds are sin: "*kann das Fleisch Gottes Gesetz nicht untertan sein, so suendigt wahrlich auch ein Mensch, wenn er gleich edle, schoene, koestliche, gute Werke tut, die die Welt gross achtet*" (Ap. IV, 33). Despite an honest recognition of all that is honorable and laudable in the *iustitia rationis* and the *opera civilia* (Ap. IV, 24), the final verdict nevertheless must be: "False also, and dishonoring Christ, is this, that men do not sin, who, without grace, do the *Commandments of God*" (Ap. IV, 28). Emil Brunner's

striking metaphor comes to mind here: Man is on an escalator that is going down; whether man climbs a few steps higher or lower on this escalator, makes no difference whatsoever in his *state*; he is still downward bound, still bound for the depths, still man, still a sinner.

The depth of man's corruption is marked, finally, by the fact that man is not aware of it and cannot become aware of it empirically: "This hereditary sin is so deep and horrible a corruption of nature that no reason can understand it, but it must be learned and believed from the revelation of Scripture" (Art. Smalc. III, 1). *God's Word* teaches that the corrupt nature . . . can do nothing in the sight of God but sin" (Sol. Decl. I, 25).

As the whole man is a sinner, so also *every* man is a sinner. "*Denn wir sagen, dass in allen Adamskindern eine boese Neigung und Lust sei und dass niemand ihm selbst ein Herz koenne oder vermoege zu machen, das Gott erkenne oder Gott herzlich vertraue, herzlich fuerchte*" (Ap. II, 3). Mankind and sin are coextensive. The verdict of the Law, of revelation, is: "You are all of no account, whether you be manifest sinners or saints . . . here no one is righteous, holy, godly" (Art. Smalc. III, iii, 3). Whithersoever we may turn, whatever sophistry we may devise to escape, the verdict that our Confessions, reflecting Scripture, render strikes us all. There is "no one excepted who is a man" (*ibid.*, III, iii, 34).

Since Adam's fall, then, the history of mankind outside Christ is the history of the growth and spread of sin. We read: "*post lapsum Adae*" — *post*, not merely *ex*. The fall of Adam is conceived of in our Confessions as a "real," not merely a "true" story. Only if we take the story of the Fall to be historical reality, do we do justice to the thought of our Confessions. If it be real history, then original sin is really *peccatum originis*. If it be "true" only in the sense of a typical verity, then *peccatum originis* and *Erbsuende* are mere metaphors. Since Adam, and from Adam, the whole history of mankind is the history of sin, and the lot of mankind is that of enslavement to death and the devil: "Here we must confess, as Paul says in Rom. 5:11, that *sin originated and entered the world from one man, Adam, by whose disobedience all men were made sinners* and subject to death and the devil" (*ibid.*, III, 1). "The chief office or force of the Law is that it . . . shows man how low his nature *has fallen* and *has*

become utterly corrupted" (*ibid.*, III, 2). The fact that our Confessions say but little about the manner of the transmission of sin to all men, the fact that the whole weight of the declarations of sinfulness strikes us, the children of Adam, serves only to heighten the force of these declarations. For when the *Solida Declaratio* says that "original sin is propagated from sinful seed, through carnal conception and birth from father and mother" (I, 7), it is not "explaining" the propagation of sin; rather, it is stating the community of guilt that is the lot of mankind since Adam in Biblically concrete (Psalm 51) terms. The center of gravity remains the fact of the inevitable present guilt, the present enslavement of mankind: "This history of the world shows how great is the power of the devil's kingdom. The world is full of blasphemies against God and of wicked opinions, and the devil keeps entangled in these bands those who are wise and righteous in the sight of the world" (Ap. II, 49).

According to our Confessions every man and the whole of each man is a sinner. As sinner, man is estranged from God. To be born *cum peccato* means to be, first, *sine metu Dei, sine fiducia erga Deum*; more, it means that man is incapable of true fear of God, true trust in Him: "*keine wahre Gottesfurcht, keinen wahren Glauben an Gott von Natur haben koennen*" (CA II). For to faith belongs knowledge, and we must confess "*dass in allen Adamskindern eine boese Neigung und Lust sei und dass niemand ihm selbst ein Herz koenne oder vermoege zu machen, das Gott erkenne*" (Ap. II, 3). The adversaries, with their idle disputations have suppressed the main point: "they do not mention the more serious faults of human nature, to wit, *ignorance of God . . .*" (*ibid.*, II, 8), which is our "*rechter, groesster Jammer.*" Or, as Luther puts it in the *Large Catechism*: "Formerly, before we have attained to this [membership in the Church], we were altogether of the devil, *knowing nothing* of God and of Christ." And the Formula of Concord is, if anything, more emphatic on this point than the earlier Confessions: "Scriptures deny to the intellect, heart, and will of the natural man all aptness, skill, capacity, and ability to think, to understand, to be able to do, to begin, to will to undertake, to act, to work or to concur in working anything good and right in spiritual things as of himself" (Sol. Decl. II, 12). Again, man is, to quote Luther, in spiritual and divine things "like a pillar of salt, like Lot's

wife, yea, like a log and stone, like a lifeless statue. . . . For man neither sees nor perceives the terrible and fierce wrath of God on account of sin" (*ibid.*, I, 20).

And yet our Confessions in the Formula concede to man's natural intellect that it "indeed has still a dim spark of the knowledge that there is a God, as also of the doctrine of the Law" (*ibid.*, II, 9). The question, how this dim spark of knowledge can be equated with ignorance of God is never directly answered by the Confessions, though it is hinted at in the continuation of the passage just quoted: ". . . yet it is so ignorant, blind, and perverted that when even the most ingenious and learned men upon earth read or hear the Gospel of the Son of God and the promise of eternal salvation, they cannot from their own powers perceive, apprehend, understand, or believe and regard it as true"; or in such passages as: ". . . even the heathen to a certain extent had a knowledge of God from the natural law, although they neither knew Him *aright* nor glorified Him *aright*, Rom. 1:20 f." (*ibid.*, V, 22). Schlink arrives at an answer by way of the analogy of the statements concerning the natural knowledge of the Law, as follows:

- a. Man has a "dim spark" of knowledge that there is a God (Sol. Decl. II, 9).
- b. This knowledge, however, is only a "dim spark," an indeterminate and general knowing.
- c. As soon as man seeks to deal earnestly with this knowledge, as soon as he seeks to give it concrete form, call God by name, and worship Him, he becomes involved all the more deeply in sin and arrives, not at God, but at idols.

Natural man knows, then, that God is, but does not know *who* God is, and therewith fails to recognize God, the Creator. He knows in part what is demanded of him, but he does not know who demands it of him, and does not therefore recognize the wrath of God. And so natural man recognizes neither God nor his own state; the innate impurity of human nature is not seen by him, and it can, after all, be known only from God's Word. (Ap. II, 13, cp. 34; Art. Smalc. C, I, 3; cp. Ep. I, 9; Sol. Decl. I, 8). Original sin is "the utmost evil, that we are not only to suffer the eternal wrath of God and eternal death, but that we do not even understand what we suffer" (Sol. Decl. I, 62).⁴

⁴ Edm. Schlink, *Theologie der Bekenntnisschriften*, 2d. ed., 1946, p. 85 f.

This estrangement from God, however, is no neutral or even a merely passively negative position over against God, but, since neutrality is impossible where God is concerned, it means enmity against God. "Secondly, God's Word testifies that the intellect, heart, and will of the natural, unregenerate man in divine things are not only turned entirely away from God, but also turned and perverted against God, to every evil; also, that he is not only weak, incapable, unfit, and dead to good, but also is so lamentably perverted, infected, and corrupted by original sin that he is entirely evil, perverse, and hostile to God by his disposition and nature, and that he is exceedingly strong, alive, and active with respect to everything that is displeasing and contrary to God" (Sol. Decl. II, 17). This sin, this enmity against God, is original, inherited sin: "We all by disposition and nature inherit from Adam such a heart, feeling, and thought as are, according to their highest powers and the light of reason, naturally inclined and disposed directly contrary to God and His chief Commandments, yea, that they are enmity against God" (*ibid.*, I, 12). Here, too, nothing is, ultimately, conceded to the "dim spark" of natural knowledge: "In other respects, as regards natural, external things which are subject to reason, man still has to a certain degree understanding, power, and ability, although very much weakened, all of which, however, has been so infected and contaminated by original sin that before God it is of no use (*dass es vor Gott nichts taugt*)" (*ibid.*, I, 12). All external religiosity is within the bracket which has before it the minus sign: *Sine metu Dei*.

To be born *cum concupiscentia* is to be born with the constant inclination of the whole human nature away from God and against God. "*Und ist die boese Lust nicht allein eine Verderbung oder Verrueckung der ersten reinen Leibesgesundheit Adams im Paradies, sondern auch eine boese Lust und Neigung, da wir nach den allerbesten, hoechsten Kraeften und Licht der Vernunft dennoch fleischlich wider Gott geneigt und gesinnt sind*" (Ap. II, 25). Our whole life is a contradiction to God.

Original sin is the lot or fate of man: "*quod omnes homines nascantur cum peccato*" (CA II). Being born inevitably involves being a sinner. "Here we must confess . . . that sin originated from one man, Adam, by whose disobedience all men were made sinners, subject to death and the devil"

(Art. Smalc. III, i, 1). "By reason of the disobedience of Adam and Eve we are all in God's displeasure and by nature children of wrath" (Sol. Decl. I, 9). Original sin is at the same time *poena* (and therewith a fate to be borne) and *peccatum* (Ap. II, 47).

And this sin is real sin, real guilt; the tracing back of original sin to Adam does not serve to exonerate the sinner. The line does not run backwards from us to Adam, but forward from Adam to us, "so that we are by nature the children of wrath, death, and damnation, unless we are delivered therefrom by the merit of Christ" (Sol. Decl. I, 5). Luther speaks in the first person: "For before I had no Lord nor king, but was captive under the power of the devil, condemned to death, enmeshed in sin and blindness. For when we had been created by God the Father and had received from Him all manner of good, the devil came and led us into disobedience, sin, death, and all evil, so that we fell under His wrath and displeasure" (Large Cat., II Art., 27—28). All the Confessional Writings emphasize the fact that original sin is *sin* and therefore guilt. (Cf. CA II; Ap. II, 42; Ap. IV, 62; Art. Smalc. II, iii, 2; Small Cat., II Art.; Ep. I, 11; Sol. Decl. I, 9.)

Some students of the Confessions⁵ maintain that the Confessional Writings have nothing to say on the *manner* of the connection between Adam's sin and our own, that the *imputatio culpae et poenae primorum parentum* of the elder dogmatists must be read into the Confessions. The question is not of major importance (the center of gravity being always *our* present inherited guilt, not its historical origin), but this much should be said: the thought of such an *imputatio* is certainly suggested by the express and frequent reference to Adam and Eve in our Confessions, and that writings so saturated with Biblical, and especially Pauline, thought as our Confessions should contain, at least implicitly, a thought that is certainly contained in Romans 5 should be no cause for wonder. In any case, the doctrine is not un-Lutheran, for Luther himself says: "As a son possesses the property of his father, though he himself has not acquired it, by legal right of inheritance, so he is also obligated, by the same right of inheritance to pay the debts of his father, since he pos-

⁵ Cf. Schlink, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

esses and enjoys the paternal goods. For he who has the benefit must in equity take on him the loss as well. So it is also with original sin, which our parents, not we, have committed. We must bear them and pay for them." (*Erlanger Ausgabe* 15², 50.)

However that may be, the Confessions do not attempt or even permit any sort of "rational" explanation of this awesome paradox of fate and guilt, of dependence and responsibility: "*Dieses sind Pauli helle, gewisse Sprueche; da vermag keine Glosse, kein listiges Fuendlein nichts wider; diese Sprueche werden alle Teufel, alle Menschen nicht moegen umstossen*" (Ap. II, 38). For in the light of Scripture the seemingly exclusive opposites of guilt and being powerless to do otherwise, of guilt and ignorance, of responsibility and impotence, do not mutually exclude.

This estrangement from God, this enmity toward God, this concupiscence, this being *stracks wider Gott*, this enslavement to sin and the devil that we call original sin, is of necessity the fruitful soil on which all actual sins grow: "The fruits of this sin are afterwards the evil deeds which are forbidden in the Ten Commandments, such as unbelief, false faith, idolatry, to be without the fear of God, presumption, despair, blindness, and, in short, not to know or regard God; furthermore, to lie, to swear by God's name, not to pray, not call upon God, not to regard God's Word, to be disobedient to parents, to murder, to be unchaste, to steal, to deceive, etc." (Art. Smalc. III, iii, 1). Original sin is the "root and fountainhead of all actual sins" (Sol. Decl. I, 5). Individual sins are, as it were, only eruptions of the sin that is constantly seething in the depths below.⁶

The Confessions are, and are intended to be, an interpretation of Scripture. As concerns original sin, the *Apology* characteristically designates the teaching of the Reformation as the rediscovery of a long-suppressed Scriptural truth: "In reference to original sin, we therefore hold nothing differing either from Scripture or from the Church catholic, but cleanse from corruptions and restore to light most important declarations of Scripture and of the Fathers, that had been covered over by the sophistical controversies of modern theologians." "*Und wollten gerne die christliche Lehre rein*

⁶ E. Brunner, *Roemerbrief*, in *Bibelhilfe für die Gemeinde*.

haben," as the German puts it (Ap. II, 32). Furthermore, the Confessions regard the doctrine of original sin as a "*res manifesta*," a patent Scriptural fact that needs no laborious exegetical proof nor many express citations to support it. "*Nihil opus est testimoniis*" (Ap. II, 31). In this connection the oft-repeated statement that original sin cannot be rationally or empirically apprehended, but must be believed, from Scripture, must also be given due weight. (Cf. Art. Smalc. III, i, 3; Sol. Decl. I, 8.)

Still, as interpretation of Scripture the Confessions demand and require to be continually tested anew on the basis of Scripture. And even a casual testing, if it be a candid one, must concede to the Apology that original sin is in fact a *res manifesta*. The picture drawn by our Confessions of sin as the total form of man's existence is neither too darkly nor one-sidedly drawn, and one can only marvel at the fact that men could read and proclaim Scripture for centuries without ever taking sin, original sin, really seriously.

To be sure, sin as *original sin*, as *Erbsuende*, is not often specifically treated in Scripture; in the New Testament, to which we may confine ourselves for this study, it is treated in full only by St. Paul, and by him only in Romans 5, strictly speaking. There may be difficulties of exegesis concerning details, but the essential facts are clear beyond doubt: the "*post lapsum Adae*" of our Confessions, the "*omnes homines*," the "*nascantur cum peccato*," the "*vere sit peccatum, afferens nunc quoque aeternam mortem*" — they are all here, and emphasized by the position of the passage; we see men from the vantage point of Christ, from our full atonement in Him, from the full and final revelation of God in Christ. We are not dealing here with a "which things are an allegory" (Gal. 4:24), but with naked historical fact. The sin, fate, and death of mankind in Adam are as factually real as mankind's righteousness, salvation, and life in Christ.

The line that runs from Adam to all mankind is explicitly drawn only here, although the Adam-Christ typology makes itself perceptibly felt elsewhere in the New Testament, e. g., in the genealogy of Our Lord in Luke; but the essential thing, the cardinal point, the point where the line ends in us, is common property of the whole New Testament. The sin and guilt of mankind as a given factor in the existence of mankind, the estrangement of man from God, the enmity of

man toward God, the concupiscence of man as man — these are not incidental or passing, but dominant notes of the New Testament.

Jesus Himself has drawn the dark background to all the dark facts of man's sin that Scripture gives us: "There is none good but one, that is, God" (Mark 10:18). It is Jesus again who has given us the finest expression of sin as estrangement from God, in the parable of the Prodigal Son; sin is "departure from the father's house, is Godlessness and a being distant from God, that works itself out in a life in the world, in the world's pleasures and in the world's filth."⁷ As separation from God, sin is also separation from life; it is death: "This my son was dead." We need but indicate some of the many images used to illustrate this God-estrangement of fallen man: man is "lost," a "lost sheep," with none to care or protect, he is "estranged from the life of God," he is "in darkness," far from the Light of the world, he is "darkness." Involved in this estrangement is the ignorance of man, the *ignoratio Dei*. Paul calls the pagan past, not merely as a euphemism, "the times of . . . ignorance" (Acts 17:30; cp. 1 Pet. 1:4). The Gentiles walk "in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God *through the ignorance* that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart" (Eph. 4:17-18).

This ignorance is no venial defect, but guilt; and estrangement from God is not merely man's fate, but man's sin; for it is at the same time enmity against God; man is not only "alienated," he is also an "enemy in his mind" (Col. 1:21). And this enmity is inevitable to man; it is given with the fact of his existence in the "flesh": the mind and intent of the flesh is "enmity against God; for it is not subject to the Law of God, *neither indeed can be*" (Rom. 8:7). And this state of man, in which mankind finds itself since Adam, into which every son of man is born, has demonic character. This is not a *novum* in the "theology" of sin in St. Paul, where we find sin demonically personified, but is already implied in the words of Jesus to Peter: "Get thee behind Me, *Satan*; thou art an offense unto Me; for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of *men*" (Matt. 16:23), where "human" and demonic" stand in significant parallel;

⁷ Grundmann, in Kittel, *Theologisches Woerterbuch zum NT*, I, 306.

even well-intentioned, amiable humanity is demonic in its intent. The deeds of the flesh are sin, even when they are "religious" deeds. (Matt. 7:23.) Even in the *Epistle of James*, not usually credited with a "theology" of sin, the same thought recurs in the significant juxtaposition of "earthly," "natural," and "devilish" (James 3:15). And the fact that the devil is called, both by St. John and St. Paul, the ruler of "this world" points in the same direction.

This alienation from God, this enmity towards Him, is not in the first instance an act, but is the whole bent of man, the whole set of his heart, the *perpetua naturae inclinatio* of which the Apology speaks. This *perpetua inclinatio* is then actualized in evil deeds: "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders . . ." (Mark 7:21). St. Paul speaks similarly of the "lusting" of the flesh and then of the "works" of the flesh. (Gal. 5:17, 19.) In St. James "lust" brings forth the actual sin (1:15) and the evil tongue is "set on fire of hell" (3:6). In St. John, too, the sinful impulse and the sinful act take place in an atmosphere that is already sin: "He that hateth his brother is in darkness and walketh in darkness and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes" (1 John 2:11). Sin here is a controlling reality that leads men inevitably to sinning. It is hardly necessary to pursue the proof further; the proof is everywhere, not only where sin is specifically dealt with, but also in such concepts as "rebirth" and "repentance" (*metanoia*), which presuppose a complete break with the old man, a total reversal of all that man naturally is — the follower of Jesus must deny himself. (Mark 8:34.)

Our Confessions speak of the doctrine of original sin as a "necessary article." It remains such, a necessary article, today and for today's preaching. The antithesis — man before God, and man in his striving for self-assertion and self-sufficiency — has grown no less acute since the sixteenth century; and the theology of the nineteenth century has left in its wake a blunted consciousness of sin that makes the preachment of sin in all its Biblical force necessary as never before. Moreover, grace and sin, faith and repentance, cannot be sundered. As surely as we preach *sola fide*, we must preach Article II of the Augustana, for "*wo nicht Reu ist, ist ein gemalter Glaub.*"