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978-0-521-23857-1 - The Origin and Propagation of Sin: Being the Hulsean
Lectures Delivered Before the University of Cambridge in 1901–2

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THE ORIGIN
AND
PROPAGATION OF SIN

BEING THE HULSEAN LECTURES DELIVERED
BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
IN 1901–2

BY

F. R. TENNANT, B.D. (CAMB.), B.Sc. (LOND.)

AUTHOR OF “THE SOURCES OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE FALL
AND ORIGINAL SIN”

SECOND EDITION.

CAMBRIDGE:
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
1906

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Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Tokyo, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521238571

First published 1906
First paperback edition 2011

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-0-521-23857-1 Paperback

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TO MY FATHER

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THE present work practically consists of four lectures which I had the honour to deliver before the University of Cambridge. They have been made rather more suitable for publication by such expansion as was necessary for clearness of expression, and by the addition of a few appended notes.

It was my original intention to incorporate the substance of these lectures in a larger work dealing for the most part with the early history of the development of the doctrines of the Fall of man and of Original Sin. When the end of that work was beginning to come in sight, however, circumstances necessitated considerable delay before it could be carried to completion. I therefore decided to publish the smaller portion of my material first; and this plan was the more readily adopted for the reason that the lectures, being of a critical and speculative nature, were easily and naturally separable from the matter furnished by a historical investigation. It is inevitable that the results of the historical study are sometimes presupposed in the addresses contained in this volume, but I hope to

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submit them also to the reader who may be interested in the subject before many months have elapsed¹. Until this can be done the argument of the present work will lack a very necessary supplement. For it is such a historical study of the development of the doctrines here examined, such a taking of them to pieces, as it were, to show the nature of their material and the processes by which they have been constructed, that destroys the one ground upon which their validity has hitherto been assumed by theologians².

Meanwhile I attempt to supply a criticism of the implications of a traditional doctrine, and a restatement of so much of its essential meaning as can be retained, rather than a commentary upon it; and, in doing so, to offer a small contribution to inductive and critical theology. It is hoped that some little service may be thereby rendered in meeting an increasing, if a silent, demand from persons who approach theological literature from the point of view of natural science or philosophy.

It is made sufficiently plain in the course of the lectures that the repudiation of the doctrine of Original Sin is not new to Christian theology, and that in some features of the reconstruction which they endeavour to supply I have already been anticipated.

¹ The author's promised work on *The Sources of the Doctrine of the Fall and Original Sin* has since been published.

² This sentence has been altered from its original form.

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It can scarcely be hoped that the change of view advocated in this book will be at once produced in those of its readers to whom the appeal may present itself with some abruptness. It can well be understood that the consequences of the new standpoint will prove, in many cases, a greater obstacle to its acceptance than the lack of cogency or persuasiveness with which the argument is presented. One may safely assume, however, that the evidence for the necessity of a restatement, and not the consequences thereof, will be allowed to be the only ground upon which the reader's judgment will be based. And if that evidence be insufficient, or its manipulation be fallacious, it can only be hoped that the book may be found worthy of the attention of those competent to expose its errors.

My indebtedness to previous writers is, I trust, sufficiently acknowledged in the places where I have relied upon their help. I have to thank the Editor of the *Church Quarterly Review* for kindly allowing me to reproduce in Lecture IV. some sentences which occur in an article previously contributed to his journal. The index of authors to whom reference is made in the book, and the revision of the proof-sheets, I owe to ever ready help at home.

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CAMBRIDGE, *April*, 1902.

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THE hope expressed in the Preface to the first edition of this work, that “the book might be found worthy of the attention of those competent to expose its errors,” has not been entirely unfulfilled. I am far from having been convinced that my criticism of the traditional doctrine of Original Sin is unsound, or that the theory of the origin of sin which I expounded is untenable or unsatisfying. But I have learned, with the aid of some of my reviewers, that several passages in the former edition contained faulty statements, and expressions sufficiently inadequate or obscure to leave the larger share of responsibility for their misinterpretation with myself. In the present edition I have endeavoured to correct such faults and to supply a few additional touches to my argument.

I am the more pleased to comply with a call for another edition of these Lectures because I have received from numerous individuals expressions of gratitude for help which they affirm they have derived from them in formulating a doctrine of Sin

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such as involves no conflict with their reason and no burden to their conscience.

Several of my readers, as I anticipated, find the greatest obstacle to their acceptance of the theory of the sources of sinfulness elaborated in this volume in the consequences which they suspect it may involve, through its relation to other departments of theological dogma. Christian theology, they maintain, is a unity; and reluctance to embrace a restatement of any one article of belief, such as appears to necessitate a change of attitude towards others, is very natural, until the full extent of such necessary change has been exhaustively considered. I do not believe, however, that the change of view which I have advocated with regard to Original Sin involves any interference with really vital elements in Christian theology. The doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration, it is true, in so far as this is concerned with the remission of Original Sin, is certainly affected; but only so far. A few words in this connexion have been added on the last page of the present edition. With regard to the bearing of the evolutionary theory of sin on the doctrines of Grace and the Atonement, I can only repeat what I have said before: that these are not in the least endangered, because they have their sufficient basis in the fact of universal actual sinfulness, and are independent of theories as to how sin takes its rise. The question of the inter-relationship

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of doctrines, however, is perhaps more relevant in connexion with the discussion, contained in Lecture IV., of the wider problems of evil and theodicy. But the speculations there advanced are not so necessarily and logically connected with the empirical theory of the origin and propagation of sin developed in Lecture III., that both stand or fall together. The discussion of the wider, philosophical problem is much the more tentative in nature; and its rejection as unsatisfactory would, I think, in no way affect the empirical doctrine. But the task of further tracing out the influence of the newer theory of sin upon other branches of theology is one which must be left to students less preoccupied than the present writer with more congenial lines of study, and better equipped with that intimate knowledge of the field of ecclesiastical doctrine which would be essential for a profitable investigation.

With a view to enabling the future reader better to decide as to the validity of the views submitted to him in the following pages, I would conclude this preface with a brief statement of what I take to be the more pertinent and weighty of the objections that have been urged against individual points in my argument, and with such a reply to each of them as I am capable of offering. It would render no service to theological truth to deal with criticism which is relevant to the reviewer's misinterpretation, through carelessness, of what I have *meant*, but not to what

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I have actually *said*; or with criticism which meets one's conclusions with dissent but no disproof¹.

1. Objection has been taken (*Hibbert Journal*, Vol. II. No. 4) to the assertion that heredity cannot take place in the region of the spiritual personality inasmuch as traducianism is an untenable doctrine. It is said that traducianism does not necessarily involve a semi-materialistic doctrine of the soul such as I have attributed to it; and that, if God can produce new spirits, then there is no impossibility in the reproduction of spirit by spirit.

In reply to these remarks, it may be urged that because God, who is spirit, must be held, on the theory of creatianism, to reproduce spirits of Himself, it does not follow that such a capacity belongs to spirit as such. The power which we must ascribe to God may belong to Him not as spirit, but as Almighty or Infinite Spirit. That reproduction of the finite spirit is a possibility must, perhaps, be admitted; but, until some evidence is adduced for it, it is a pure assumption somewhat difficult to reconcile with the facts at present

¹ The lengthy review of my two books dealing with Original Sin contributed to *The Expository Times*, May, 1904, by the Rev. W. Mackintosh Mackay, B.D., is, I fear, of no service to me because its criticism belongs almost entirely to one or other of these classes. On the other hand, I gratefully acknowledge the helpfulness of much contained in the critiques of Mr S. C. Gayford, Dr A. J. Mason (*Journal of Theological Studies*) and Mr A. Boutwood (*Hibbert Journal*).

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known with regard to the reproduction of human beings. The only traducianist theories of which I am aware certainly imply a conception of the soul as an entity existing apart from its activities, as spatial and divisible. When traducianism is able to present itself in terms which do not conflict with modern psychology it will be time to consider its merits afresh; at present, however, it can hardly claim to be a possible explanation of the facts¹.

2. The same review objects to the argument, developed in my larger work but presupposed in my *Hulsean Lectures*, that the doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin are shown to be invalid by a critical examination of their origin and growth. A doctrine,

¹ Prof. Orr, in his recent treatise *God's Image in Man*, pp. 236, 242, somewhat mistakes the meaning of my statement that heredity cannot take place "in the region of the spiritual personality." I admit the heredity of mental and moral characters, but not by such means as traducianism asserts. On the ordinary dualistic theory of the interaction of body and soul, I regard their re-appearance in the offspring as due to the physical inheritance of their corporeal equivalents, on the ground that if the soul is an entity it is hard to conceive it as endowed with a reproductive mechanism. I may here add that there is certainly a much more widely spread scepticism as to the inheritance of acquired modifications than is suggested in this writer's footnote (*op. cit.* p. 237), and that the instances of inherited consequences of drunkenness cited on p. 241 of his book are precisely of the kind which many specialists regard as highly doubtful. I am far from recognising mechanical theories of heredity, such as science is endeavouring to provide, as of metaphysical validity; but if appeal is made, on behalf of the doctrine of Original Sin, to physical science, I would plead that the verdict of science is inconclusive if not unfavourable.

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it is urged, cannot "be proved invalid by the history of its formation." This was not exactly my meaning. Just as a proposition deduced syllogistically may be true, though one or both of the premisses on which, in a particular argument, it rests may be proved false, so a doctrine may embody actual truth in spite of the illegitimacy of the steps by which the human mind attained to it. Then, however, its truth must rest on other foundations. The argument here called in question is as follows: the doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin have hitherto been believed by theologians to be sound because they have been held to be logically developed out of scriptural statements whose inspiration guarantees their historical truth; the Fall-story, however, must now be held, for divers reasons, not to be of this nature, and some of the steps by which the doctrines have been derived from it, even granting its asserted historical value, are illogical; therefore, so far, the doctrines are not established. If they are true, their defenders must henceforth base them upon other foundations. My argument, therefore, does not make "genesis the determinant of validity," but it implies that proven validity is not established by genesis in fiction. Some words in the footnote to p. 26 (ed. i), which appeared to give colour to the view thus attributed to me, have been made less ambiguous in the present edition. Cf., in this connexion, note 1, p. 112; note 1, p. 146.

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3. It has been asserted that my doctrine of man does not much differ from that of naturalism. Inasmuch as my account of man is professedly expressed in terms of scientific fact or scientific theory, and since science, as science, can use the language neither of philosophy nor of theology because indifferent to the principles of both, this is perhaps not to be wondered at. A very similar objection was indeed anticipated and met in the earlier edition; see pp. 143–4 below.

4. My account of the origin of sin in the race and the individual, with its repudiation of hereditary sinful bias, has been pronounced inadequate because it really evades the fundamental aspect of the problem.

“Granted that the propensities which constitute the *fomes peccati* come to us from our animal ancestry, and are in themselves non-moral, the last step in the evidence should tell us what attitude the will itself at its first appearance is seen to adopt towards these propensities. Is it neutral? Does it incline towards that ‘higher law’ which is just beginning to dawn upon the consciousness? Or is it found from the first in sympathy and alliance with the impulses which it ought to curb? This goes really to the root of the whole matter: and to most thinkers, not only the theologians, but also the philosophers, the phenomena have seemed to point to the last of these alternatives. It is this aspect of the question, the fundamental aspect, which Mr Tennant really evades. He assumes

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without proof that the will from the first has been neutral as towards the lower impulses¹."

If the will emerge before the moral consciousness; if, in other words, man's attitude towards his inborn propensities is volitional before it can possibly be influenced by any sense of right or wrong, then it must surely follow the will "from the first has been neutral as towards the lower impulses"; it could not be anything else. The impulses are non-moral and the will is as yet non-moral; the being is purely animal at this stage. No proof, then, is needed of the will's original neutrality, unless the priority of volition to moral consciousness, which I have assumed on the authority of psychologists, be called in question. What attitude the will takes towards our inborn propensities in the pre-moral stage of our development, is not for me an ethical problem: it has nothing to do with the origin of sin. I am aware that because, from the first dawning of his knowledge of what he ought to do, every human being has failed always to avoid doing what he has known he ought not to do, some philosophers as well as most theologians have attributed a 'bias' to the human will, or spoken of 'radical evil.' But I have given full reason, I trust, for holding that what is 'radical' cannot, *ipso facto*, be 'evil,' and have shown that post-Kantian psychology, or, at least, the recent sciences of child-psychology and race-psychology, render the

¹ Mr S. C. Gayford in *The Journal of Theol. Studies*, April, 1903.

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assumption of any warp in our nature unnecessary and improbable, if not impossible. The hypothesis of a 'bias' is purely gratuitous, and could never have presented itself, perhaps, but for the dominion over men's minds of the doctrine of Original Righteousness. Taking the facts of child-psychology and the theory of man's evolution simply as science presents them to us, it is at least as legitimate to go out of our way in search for a bias towards good, to explain the cases in which the moral sanction is obeyed, as for a bias towards evil to explain the cases in which it is disobeyed. That the child, on acquiring voluntary activity, uses its activity sometimes, or even habitually, to satisfy freely any impulses or appetites whose gratification is attended with pleasant feeling, is as natural as that water should flow down-hill, and as little a fact of any moral significance. That the child should even continue sometimes to do so after having come clearly to understand that it ought not, is a serious moral fact; but, in order to explain it, it is not necessary to postulate any 'sympathy and alliance' with natural impulses, hitherto habitually gratified, more mysterious than the continuance of the capacity to feel pleasure in their satisfaction. There is, I believe, no "root of the whole matter" deeper than that which my investigation of the sources of actual sin sought to lay bare.

5. If this alleged difficulty to the acceptance of the evolutionary theory of sin has been satisfactorily

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met, its more serious corollary, that the theory necessarily minimises the sinfulness of actual sin, is so far baseless. In so far as the same objection is grounded, as it would appear to be in Canon Mason's review of my two books, on an awkward and easily misinterpretable phrase in the earlier edition of these Lectures, it will, I trust, be incapable of being renewed now that my meaning has been more clearly expressed¹.

I have reason to believe that many amongst my readers have agreed with me that the sinfulness of sin is really more stoutly maintained by a theory which makes all sin actual and a matter of personal accountability, however less guilty its earlier stages may be than its later, than by a theory which finds the source of sinfulness in a supposed hereditary state for which no person is responsible. This, however, is not the opinion of all. In spite of my repeated warnings that language professing to describe only the initial stages of the life of sinfulness is necessarily very different from such as the Christian penitent, for instance, uses of the sin whose exceeding sinfulness only he can know: in spite of distinct assertions that the holder of the newer view of Original Sin does not, as a matter of fact, consider sin, in any of its stages, as unaccompanied by

¹ I allude to the words, to be found on p. 91 of the 1st edition: "and the first sin, *if the words have any meaning....*" The context in which these words occur has been re-written in the present edition.

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some degree of guilt, or in any way less sinful than it would be on the rival theory of its origin, it has been represented by some of my critics, whose opinion deservedly carries weight, that such an implication is necessarily inherent in my account of how sin takes its rise and spreads throughout the race.

In an age which is inclined to take sin lightly it is the more incumbent on a Christian theologian to be careful lest his words upon the subject really lend themselves to encourage such a tendency. I am convinced that the objection, brought against my attempt to explain universal sinfulness without recourse to the idea of an inherited warp in our nature, that it explains sin and its sinfulness away, rests upon a misunderstanding, at some point or other, of my account of the matter. And, in the interests of the vital truth which is at stake, it will be well to take the opportunity here presented to state, in propositions as clear and concise as may be, the essential elements in the theory I have advocated, and to challenge future criticism to say precisely which of them it is to which the Christian consciousness cannot reconcile itself.

The following, then, are the essential positions, with regard to the source of sin in the individual and the race, which I have endeavoured to establish :

a. Man inherits the natural and essential instincts and impulses of his animal ancestors ; these are neces-

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sarily non-moral, and there is no reason to ascribe to them any kind of abnormality.

b. Voluntary action in man appears before any consciousness of right and wrong. There has been a period, therefore, in the history of both race and individual, in which even volitional conduct has been innocent, however far such conduct differs from that later prescribed by moral sanctions and the conscience.

So far, sin has not emerged at all.

c. A period is reached during which moral sentiment is gradually evoked and moral sanctions are gradually constructed. Acts once knowing no law now begin to be regarded as wrong. The performance of them henceforth constitutes sin.

d. The earliest sanctions known to the race were but crudely ethical, and their crudity was but gradually exchanged for the refinement characteristic of highly developed morality. Similarly, the subjective sense of guiltiness, in the primitive sinner as in the child of very tender years, would at first be relatively slight, and would increase *pari passu* with the objective holiness and severity of the ethical code.

If I myself judge rightly, it is at the words “So far sin has not emerged at all,” that most critics of the evolutionary doctrine of the origin of sin begin to take offence. Theologians who are willing to admit that the infant’s unchecked greed, for instance, is less guilty than the adult’s yielding to the allurements of the

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flesh, or that the savage's unconscious transgression of the perfect moral law is less sinful than the Christian's deliberate trespass, refuse to allow that such acts of the infant or the primitive human being are not sins at all. The difference, it is said, is one of degree; not of kind, as I maintain. Christianity has erected an absolute ethical standard, and any falling short of that standard in any human being at any stage of his existence or development is therefore asserted to be necessarily sinful. To deny this, we are told, is to say that sin is not sin.

I admit that to deny this is to say that what is commonly called sin is not sin. But the possibility is overlooked that, in such cases as those above mentioned, what is commonly called sin is not rightly called sin. And this is precisely my contention. The whole question turns on this point. Hence, perhaps, Note B appended to these Lectures is the most important portion of this volume. And I would urge that those who regard the evolutionary theory of sin as declaring sin not to be sin are not entitled thus to condemn it until they have refuted the restriction of the usage of the term sin for which I have contended: until, that is to say, they have justified the application of such terms as 'sinful' and 'guilty,' in howsoever low a degree, to conduct which either *could not* have been other than it was, or at least *knew no moral reason* why it should have been other than it

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was. If such conduct is correctly included under the term sin, then, truly, my theory calls sin not-sin. But it is the very kernel of my argument that such usage of the term sin is incorrect, and rests upon a confusion. It involves, in short, the dominion of the moral law over non-moral agents.

That the human infant is at first an absolutely non-moral being, that it possesses no conscience, no power to discriminate right and wrong, will not, I presume, be disputed. That the savage, or the type of primitive man, though already recognising ethical standards of some sort, is, *relatively to such moral sanctions as are unknown, and, as yet, unknowable, to him*, on the plane of non-morality, will similarly be granted. If then either is to be held in any degree sinful for the transgression of unknown ethical standards, it follows that the moral law is taken to apply to non-moral beings and to be binding upon them as upon the adult Christian. But it then becomes purely arbitrary to limit the dominion of moral law to the human race. The infant, as subject to any moral law at all, and the primitive man of necessarily crude moral conceptions, as subject to the higher requirements of moral law as yet foreign to his conscience, are on precisely the same footing as the lower animal. Thus the cat's play with a captured mouse, because it falls short of the absolute ethical standard of conduct, must be called sinful; cruelty must be attributed to

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the cat if greed is imputed to the infant. And why stop here? Possession of conscience, knowledge of a restraining law, being no longer the endowment which solely renders an agent liable to ethical condemnation, why should sentience or organic life be the condition for accountability and guiltiness? The rock which, falling from a cliff, causes the death of a man below, must, on such a definition of sin as is now under consideration, be pronounced sinful. And herein lies the *reductio ad absurdum* of such doctrine. If it be represented that the behaviour of the brutes, or the activities of the forces of Nature, exhibit instances of what, though not rightly to be called sinful, nevertheless "ought not to be," it may be asked what precisely is meant by the word 'ought.' If the term is not intended to refer accountability to the agents in question, would it not be more conducive to accurate thought to substitute another?

I would submit, then, that if sin is to be imputed in any degree where there is no law, *i.e.* no consciousness of a restraining moral sanction, there is no logical halting-place in the world of organic and inorganic 'agents' at which we may cease to impute sin. Sin is therefore not sufficiently defined as 'transgression of law'; it is 'transgression of law by a moral agent.' Two acts in all respects identical, performed, one the day before, and one the day after, the recognition that a moral sanction is thereby transgressed, differ, for the

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ethicist, not merely in degree, but *toto caelo* in kind. The one no more comes under ethical categories than does the fall of an avalanche; the other is distinctly and definitely a sin. If actions of the former kind are still classed along with the latter under the term 'sin,' it is surely time that they were provided with another name; and that 'unconscious sin' were accounted a contradiction in terms. The distinction between the objective and the subjective points of view is here vital¹.

¹ The falling short of the absolute moral standard on the part of the child or of man in a primitive condition needs to be very clearly distinguished from that of the person who approves better things and follows worse. The one 'knows better,' the other does not. It is through identifying these totally different states, it would seem, that Mr Bethune-Baker (*Cambridge Theological Essays*, p. 559) is led to regard the evolutionary view of the origin of sin as incompatible with any estimate of sin which could be formed in the light of fundamental Christian doctrines. The moral state of the man who recognises the authority of the dictates of an ethical system but "does not feel within himself constraint to follow" them, instanced by the case of S. Augustine praying 'Give me self-control, but not just yet,' and answering his conscience 'Let me be a little while,' appears to me to offer no parallel to that of the child violating an ethical sanction of whose existence it is wholly unaware, or of the uncivilised man persisting in practices which the only code he knows does not forbid: it falls on the other side of the line which divides the realm of the moral from the realm of the non-moral.

Prof. Orr, in his recent work *God's Image in Man*, also states his conviction that on such anthropological theories as the one which has here been provisionally adopted, "we can never have anything but defective and inadequate views of sin" (p. 11). "There is, in fact, on the basis of this theory, no proper doctrine of *sin* possible at all" (p. 19). When the theory for whose maintenance I am responsible is dissociated from the avowedly naturalistic views of Haeckel and others

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-23857-1 - The Origin and Propagation of Sin: Being the Hulsean Lectures Delivered Before the University of Cambridge in 1901-2

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Finally, if there be any desire to keep the term 'original sin' for our 'stock-tendencies,' though it be admitted that they are not in any sense the outcome of human volition, I accept such a doctrine and protest merely against the inaptness of its name.

6. It has been pointed out to me that "'morality' in the sense of a code of morals, and 'morality' in the sense of an attitude of will towards the moral code, are two different meanings of the word, both of which must be taken into account in our conception of sin"; and that my conclusion, that the earliest human sin or sins would be the least significant of all, seems to ignore the

simultaneously controverted in Prof. Orr's treatise, his objection that it explains sin away would seem ultimately to be based on the ground of the sure 'value-judgment' "that sin is actually sin" (p. 210). Inasmuch as the same ground is strenuously maintained in the present work, it is plain that Prof. Orr must diverge from myself at the definition of the concept of sin. If he will allow the certainty of the value-judgment just quoted, in its converted form: "not-sin is actually not sin," I hope that the foregoing discussion will serve to remove the force of Prof. Orr's objection.

The inclusion of acts done 'without law' under the category of sin must surely be the only ground also for Prof. Orr's statements (p. 300) that "in the condition in which evolutionary science starts man off, he had no alternative but to fall," and (p. 204) that sin "becomes a necessity of man's development—a stage it was inevitable man should pass through in the course of his moral ascent." Indeed it would seem to be to this divergence between my critics and myself, as to the proper definition of sin, that all the forms of the objection that I have unintentionally explained sin away, or that my theory is incompatible with essential and fundamental Christian doctrines, are ultimately to be traced.

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second meaning of ‘morality.’ It is the attitude of the will towards the acknowledged moral code which determines the degree of guilt in the sin; and so the question which Mr Gayford puts¹: “May not the sin of the savage against *his* code be very sinful?” is legitimately raised. I have endeavoured to supply² the omission of explicit reference, in the context to which he has drawn my attention, to this aspect of morality; for it had been but very briefly noticed on an earlier page. I need therefore here only express my thanks to Mr Gayford for thus enabling me to present my argument more adequately, and state that if the gradual development of subjective and objective morality has gone on together, from small beginnings unattended with abrupt and sudden inrushes, we shall not be able to look upon the earliest sins of primitive man against his rudimentary code as, even from his own point of view, ‘very’ sinful.

7. Lastly, a few words may be said in reply to criticism of the relation in which my arguments or conclusions stand to Holy Scripture.

It is maintained by Dr A. J. Mason and others who have reviewed my works on Sin that the Fall-story, though the broad results of criticism with regard to it be accepted, nevertheless still contains a basis for a doctrine of human nature. But if so, what is the test

¹ *Journal of Theol. Studies*, April, 1903.

² Below, pp. 93, 94.

Cambridge University Press

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of the validity of the doctrine derived from it? Is it the divine inspiration of the record? There would seem to be no other guarantee that the narrative of the Fall supplies us with historical or theological fact. But I would again submit that we must define inspiration, in this connexion, in the light of an inquiry as to whether that which the narrative asserts is positive fact, rather than assume its assertions to be facts because they occur within the pages of a book which we regard as inspired. It is with the conception of man's origin and nature, not with the more obvious elements of Semitic folklore, which the third chapter of Genesis presents, that modern knowledge conflicts; and to adhere to the traditional teaching based upon this chapter while admitting the legendary or allegorical nature of its contents, is, I believe, to adopt a position which is quite untenable.

Similarly, it has been represented that S. Paul's inspiration—the ground claimed for the truth of his doctrine of Original Sin—is not invalidated because it may have been proved that the apostle had recourse, for some of his teaching, to the Jewish pseudepigraphic writings. But perhaps the question rather is, is his inspiration, in the sense of an infallible guarantee for the truth of his borrowed teaching, proved thereby? Are we to regard as inspired, or, as I would prefer to say, beyond question, every element of doctrine which he derived from the literature of his time? Again,

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inspiration must be defined in terms of ascertained facts, not facts ascertained by the assumption of perhaps much too full and definite a meaning for inspiration.

In the light of these general remarks it will be seen that the disputed question of the exegesis of Eph. ii. 3 (“children of wrath”), and that of whether or not there are other passages in the Old and New Testament than those which I claim only to have found, are not of essential importance to my argument as a whole. No more, therefore, need be said with reference to these questions.

F. R. TENNANT.

HOCKWOLD RECTORY,

February, 1906.