

Augustine and Original Sin

PART ONE OF TWO

Augustine was born in Tagaste, in Numidia (now Souk-Ahras, in the territory of Constantine, in Algeria) on November 13, A.D. 354. His father, Patricius, was an influential and worldly pagan. His mother, Monnica, was a Christian who tried to train her son in Christian principles. Augustine, himself, was both very intelligent and very sensual. As he grew older, he studied at Madaura and then at Carthage. At the age of seventeen he took a concubine (a woman he was never properly married to). They lived together for fourteen years. Their son, Adeodatus, was born in A.D. 372.

Augustine dates his conversion to Christianity with the reading of the book, *Hortensius*, by the ancient heathen writer, Cicero. It “changed my affections and turned my prayers to Thyself, O Lord” (*Confessions of Augustine*, 3). Now he turned his attention to the Bible itself, but was not very impressed. All of the pagan books he had already perused seemed more interesting to him. “They [the Scriptures] appeared to me unworthy to be compared with the dignity of Cicero” (*Confessions*, 3). Augustine then turned to Manichaeism; and, for nine years, he was a devoted Manichaean. Manichaeism was started by Manichaeus (A.D. 215-275), a Persian who taught that all matter—everything that exists—is inherently evil. This strange error fastened itself strongly on Augustine’s mind and laid the basis for his later theological ideas. Original sin is basically the error of Manichaeism. And predestination is a logical result of it. Because man cannot be enabled by Heaven to put away his sins (original sin), God only intends to save certain ones; and He will do it automatically. They have little or nothing to do with His decision of who will be saved and who will be lost (predestination). Christ’s death on the cross is all there is to man’s salvation, and man has little or nothing to do with the salvation process.

During those nine years, Augustine continued to live either at Carthage or at Tagaste as he continued his studies. His prayer at the time was “God, grant me chastity and continence, but not yet” (*Confessions*, 8). From Manichaeism, he next turned directly to skepticism and practical atheism. Moving to Rome in A.D. 383, he obtained, the next year, an appointment as a teacher of rhetoric (speaking) in Milan, Italy. Milan at that time was considered to be the Western capital of the Roman Empire.

In Milan, Augustine heard the powerful preaching of Ambrose; but he was listening for rhetorical, not religious, instruction. About that time, Monnica, his mother, arrived and urged that he enter a proper marriage with a woman of his wealthy class status. But since the woman selected was still too young, Augustine regretfully put away his concubine, in preparation for the eventual marriage—and spent his time living with a prostitute.

Augustine badly needed some moral instruction. And now he discovered neo-Platonism, through the writings of Victorinus. Here he found a different set of speculations to tack onto those he had received from Manichaeus. Neo-Platonism was later adapted to the wanderings of the Greek philosopher, Plato. The surprised Augustine now learned that the only evil world was the spiritual—but it was in a terrible condition. Evil was not necessarily bad; it was just separation from God and little else. The best thing was to know God; liking this idea, Augustine was now prepared to accept Christianity and teach his ideas of what it consisted of.

But Augustine had also been listening to Ambrose, who taught that the authority of the Church at Rome was the highest authority. Out of this experience, Augustine could later say, “I should not believe the Gospel except as moved by the authority of the Catholic Church (to do so).”

(*Against Manichaeus*, 5) The authority of Rome, in doctrinal matters, combined in Augustine with the pagan philosophies he had earlier been taught. The result was Augustinianism; and it was to have a most powerful influence on Christian thought and Protestant thought after it, down to our own time.

Augustine decided that he needed more of God; and a well-traveled African, Pontitianus, told him about the monastic life of Egypt. He decided that was what he needed. It was now late summer of 386. He left his teaching post and began further philosophical reading at an estate known as Cassisiacum. He was now to discover and revel in that which many theology students after his time have found: the vagaries of the “great theologians.” In his time, these men were, in deepest respect, called “the church fathers.” Augustine was baptized on Easter Eve, 387, by Ambrose in Milan. In quick succession, both his mother, Monnica, and his son, Adeodatus, died. Planning to start a monastery, he went to Hippo, in North Africa;

and, there in 391, he was ordained as a Roman Catholic priest. Four years later he was appointed bishop of Hippo, and soon after founded the first monastery in that part of Africa. He is known as “Augustine of Hippo” and also as “St. Augustine”; for he was later canonized by Rome for his helpful Catholic theological writings. In 419, Rome had been sacked by Attila, the Goth; and the Vandals were besieging Hippo in 430, when Augustine was on his deathbed. He died on August 28, 430.

THE IMPORTANCE OF AUGUSTINE

It has been said that Augustine was the most important Catholic philosopher of history. He ranks even higher than Thomas Aquinas (1226-1274); for he preceded him and supplied very important theological speculations that Aquinas and his fellow schoolmen of the Dark Ages developed into full-blown Catholicism, with all of its theological confusion.

Only Origen (186-285) was a deeper thinker; but, like him, Augustine laid the logical basis for much of the theological heresies and errors that followed him. Another reason for Augustine’s prominence is the fact that, after his time, there were no other deep thinkers, with the exception of Boethius (480-524), for a number of centuries. In Augustine, many of the philosophical streams of ancient paganism found their meeting place. In him, the speculative neo-Platonic castlebuilding of the Alexandrian School of Christian philosophers (see *The Story of the Change of the Sabbath, Part 1-2* [BS-4-5]) could combine with the dogmatic authoritarianism of Rome. It is an amazing fact that the majority of early Christian theological daydreaming took place in North Africa and was then accepted by Rome, as they were seen to fulfill its political ambitions of ascendancy over all the other churches of Christendom. But of those North African thinkers, Augustine was the capstone. And such a powerful one, that even the leading lights in the sixteenth-century Reformation never really escaped from his shadow.

With Augustine, we find the origin of the brand of neo-Platonism that was to become the hallmark of the Medieval church. While their soldiers busied themselves with exterminating the remaining Christians (see *Great Controversy*, chapters 2-4), their philosophers occupied themselves with straining at theological gnats.

Here are the kind of Platonic ideas that Augustine believed, taught, wrote about, and bequeathed to the Catholic Church: “The soul participates in the divine ideas; for God is the illumination of the soul, as light is to the bodily eye. Discourse with other souls does not impart ideas; it only stimulates the divinely illuminated intellect within men, to see what is in fact already present within it. All men have an

original capacity to see Platonic fascination with “light”; this was used by earlier Christian philosophers as an excuse for Sundaykeeping—because that was the day that light was created; therefore it should be the Sabbath.

But such knowledge Augustine did not feel could come unaided. It took the help of God; he explained that we were to obtain this information from the philosophers. In short, if you haven’t been listening to the philosophers lately, you haven’t been listening to God. To hear one is to hear the other. But, because of the influence of Ambrose, Augustine would add that those philosophers that bring you the words of God must be those approved by Rome.

AUGUSTINE AND ORIGINAL SIN

At the heart of Augustinian theology was his own lack of self-control. He couldn’t seem to be able to stop sinning; so he speculated that it was impossible for anyone to stop. Augustine’s life was tempestuous and passionate. Despite His intellectual abilities, he could not keep his body under. His ideas of human depravity were based on pagan philosophies he had been earlier taught and on the memories of his sordid past. His *Confessions* constitutes one of the most remarkable psychological disclosures in all literature—Christian or otherwise. In careful detail, he vividly recalls the miserable life; so that his readers could consider all that impurity, that they, themselves, might the better absorb his wonderful theological truths.

Augustine decided that man, when he fell, fell into a somethingness called “original sin.” This is full sin and full guilt. And it is, according to Augustine, passed on from parent to child. As soon as the child is born it has that full sin and full guilt within it. The error of “original sin” is the error of biological transmission of sin. It is inherited sin and inherited guilt. Augustine had a specific example of this. He believed and he taught it: Man cannot keep from concupiscence (sexual sin); he is doomed to indulge in it. But, of course, we can understand why Augustine felt this way. He had the flaw of all philosophers: He spent his time thinking about his own problems instead of reading the Word and submitting to its clear teachings, no matter what the personal sacrifice that might be involved. Philosophers are concerned with thinking; “Christian philosophers,” or theologians, with “doing theology.” But in contrast, Christians are concerned with reading God’s Word, accepting it as it reads, communing with Him, and obeying Him. The objectives are as far different as the paths that they take.

Augustine was so wrapped up in himself and his “personal-image theology,” as one might call it, that he was not emotionally able to face the plain truth of

Scripture. If he had been willing, the Christian church, for sixteen-hundred years, would not have needed to be saddled with his error of “original sin.”

WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES

Augustine taught that sin and guilt are inherited. But the Bible teaches that every man is individually responsible for his own sin.

“Now, lo, if he beget a son that seeth all his father’s sins which he hath done, and considereth, and doeth not such like . . . that hath taken off his hand from the poor, that hath not received usury nor increase, hath executed My judgments, hath walked in My statutes: he shall not surely die for the iniquity of his father, he shall surely live.

“As for his father, because he cruelly oppressed, spoiled his brother by violence, and did that which is not good among his people, lo, even he shall die in his iniquity.

“Yet say ye, Why? Doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? [Adam was our father; don’t we bear his iniquity—his original sin?] When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all My statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live.

“The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.

“But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all My statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die.

“All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him. In his righteousness that he hath done he shall live.

“Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God, and not that he should return from his ways, and live? But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned. In his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.

“Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel: Is not My way equal? Are not your ways unequal?”—*Ezekiel 18:14, 17-25 (note verses 26-32)*.

“Your blood be upon your own heads.”—*Acts 18:6 (compare Eze 33:4)*.

“Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked! It shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him.”—*Isaiah 3:10-*

11 (also read Ps 128:1-2; 1:3-5; 11:4-6; Eccl 8:12-13; Gal 6:7-9; Rom 2:6-9; 2 Cor 5:10; Heb 6:12).

“Who will render to every man according to his [own] deeds.”—*Romans 2:6*.

“The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers. Every man shall be put to death for his own sin.”—*Deuteronomy 24:16 (compare Eze 14:14)*.

“If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself: but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it.”—*Proverbs 9:12*.

“We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”—*2 Corinthians 5:10*.

“And be it indeed that I have erred, mine error remaineth with myself.”—*Job 19:4*.

“But every one shall die for his own iniquity: Every man that eateth the sour grape, [it is] his teeth [that] shall be set on edge.”—*Jeremiah 31:30*.

“For every man shall bear his own burden . . . Be not deceived; God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”—*Galatians 6:5, 7*.

So then, it is clear from Scripture that man does not inherit sin from his father, either through biological transmission (heredity) or through day-by-day circumstances (environment).

Are we then saying that man can obey God without help from Christ? No, we are not. “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”—*Acts 4:12*.

Before the Fall, man could obey without divine grace; since the Fall, he must have divine help. But that post-Fall weakness is not sin. You do not have sin until you choose to sin. And, by submission to Christ and faith in Him, you can be empowered to choose not to sin—and remain faithful to your Lord.

OTHER IDEAS OF AUGUSTINE

As we already mentioned, Augustine was very important to Rome; for he provided logical (“theological”) reasons for some of their cherished practices. One of these was infant baptism. Augustine taught that when the newborn infant is sprinkled by the priest, the guilt of this original sin is taken away, but not the original sin itself. Thus, unconscious infants dying without this sprinkling are automatically damned to hellfire because they still have the inherited guilt. So infant baptism (sprinkling) becomes a theological must. This idea was helpful to Rome in its objective of making the people dependent upon the local priest for their salvation.

Augustine also taught that the sinful nature (of

original sin) remained after infant baptism; and, with the gradual dawn of moral consciousness, the actual sin would appear because of original sin. He said that this actual sinning was inevitable because of the dominance of concupiscence. Again, Augustine was dreaming up theology to match his own sordid experience. For if Augustine's ideas were correct, then his own life was a perfectly natural experience and not really so bad after all. All those sins really weren't his responsibility after all; he could blame Adam for them.

He says that not only are all men sinners in Adam; but their sinful state is made worse since all are born of "concupiscence" (*Marriage, 1*). Augustine, who never had a legitimate marriage relationship, decided that all marriages, even proper ones, were evil and only evil. The result is that the whole human race, even to the youngest infant, is a mass of perdition (*Original Sin, 34*); such deserve the wrath of God. Original sin is thus a hopeless state that can only be escaped through baptism, penance, and Christ.

But then Augustine took it further still: He said that this post-baptismal sin will inevitably lead to eternal hellfire, unless the person involved does penance (little wearisome activities suggested by the church or by the local priest, so the man can atone for his own sin).

Another helpful idea of Augustine's was that of the sacraments. These are all the holy rites and ceremonies of the Church of Rome; these include such things as ordination, marriage, baptism, and the Lord's Supper (later to become the full-fledged Mass). He taught that the sacraments are necessary for salvation. Rome recognized this as another excellent way to bind precious souls, for whom Christ died, to its hellish wagon.

PREDESTINATION

As with most else, Augustine was mixed up on grace. He had studied so much paganism that he couldn't see things clearly. He thought that Adam and Eve, before they fell, were able to resist sin only through a special divine grace. Of course, this is not correct. The truth is that unfallen man needed no grace.

We can agree with Augustine, that fallen man does need grace; but he immediately wanders off the track here, also. He maintained that God sends grace and that it is "irresistible." That means, that whoever receives it will be automatically saved. God arbitrarily decides who will be saved and who will be lost. Perhaps it will be the worst people that will be saved

and the most godlike in their conduct who will be lost. It matters not. God decides; man has nothing to do with it. This is predestination. Obviously, this conflicts with his other idea, that we must submit to the sacraments and church authority in order to be saved. Nothing is necessary for salvation, since everything is arbitrary predestination salvation and perdition. So why should it matter whether or not we are baptized and obey the priest, since we are all predestinated anyway? But this is part of the great Babylon of confusion that the theologians construct. Always filled with mixed-up ideas and conflicting errors, they spend their lives ever propounding new solutions and arguing with one another. The truth is that there are no two theologians in the land that can agree. Flee from the theologians and study the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy; and you will develop a solid and happy faith. Listen to the theologians and you will become confused. Your religion will soon become a matter of which theologian you have decided to adhere to. Theological study is a species of man-worship; Communion with God, through the prayerful study of His Word, is a very real act of divine worship.

Augustine taught that God predestinates whom He will, "to punishment and to salvation" (*Enchiridion, 107*). Christ saved man at the cross, and it is the decision of God who shall automatically receive it. Obviously, all this is but a step away from the modern theological error, that Christ provided salvation at the cross; and those who choose to accept it will be automatically saved in their sins.

THE REFORMERS AND AFTERWARD

There are two major reasons for Augustine's importance: (1) He was one of the most influential thinkers in the Church of Rome. (2) He was the most influential theologian in the eyes of Martin Luther. Luther (1483-1546) led out in the great sixteenth-century breakaway from Rome. Luther's strong points were his obstinate resistance to Roman authority and the depth of his convictions that drove him to do what he did. But Luther had two weak points also: (1) He had been thoroughly trained for years in the Augustinian order, and had received thorough instruction in Augustine's theology, from his Augustinian teachers. (2) When Luther came out of Catholicism, the changeover was all so new. His remaining mature years for thought, study, and writing were so short that he only partly came out from Rome. Martin Luther totally broke with the authority of Rome, but not from its teachings. And this was

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1 the same for the other Reformers, such as Calvin.

1 After the time of Luther, we see two forces at work
7 to mold Protestant thought. One was the thinking of
2 the theologians. They carefully based much of their
speculations on the immature conclusions of Martin
Luther, John Calvin, and other newly called-out Re-
formers. They also directly studied the writings of
the church fathers and Augustine. This study of men's
words and conjectures, as the means of understand-
ing the Bible, is still going on in our day. And it ruins
every Protestant denomination that it touches. Many
Adventists today consider it very important to study
the writings of Luther and his expositors as more
mature theology than will be found in the Bible and
Spirit of Prophecy.

The other major force at work was that of the
Jesuits. Hardly had the Reformation begun than de-
mons and men met in the hellish councils of Rome
and considered ways to destroy Protestants, the pu-
rity of their teachings, or both. A religious fanatic, by
the name of Ignatius Loyola, was selected to lead out
in part of this attack, commonly known as the
"Counter-Reformation." Read *The Jesuits—their
Origin, Objectives and Methods* (MB-1) for more
information on how they systematically murdered
Protestants, infiltrated their churches—and especially
their schools—and introduced compromising poli-
cies and Catholic error. Their two objectives, in this
undercover operation, have been (1) to blunt the Prot-
estant opposition to Rome and (2) to carefully instill
Catholic errors into their minds. Look about you
today and see what you find? We have come to the
time when only the smallest church organizations
will publish pamphlets and tracts against Rome. No
longer do the major denominations write articles in
their magazines and publish books and papers that
explain church history and reveal that Rome is the
Beast of Revelation 13. Then view their doctrines,
and you will find the other result of infiltration: a
strong concern for teachers trained in worldly Prot-
estant and Catholic universities and ministers that
adhere to the doctrines of these teachers. The warn-
ing against Roman Babylon has been muted; the
doctrines have been watered-down and compro-
mised; the organizational policies are governed by
fellowship and unity with the other churches.

IN SUMMARY OF AUGUSTINE

Augustine explained that we are all in a hole. That
hole is original sin. And there is no power in earth or
sky that can extricate us from it in this life. Grace
does whatever it wills, but nothing can really elimi-
nate the original sin predicament. And, as he prob-
ably knew, Augustine had solved a problem. Now we
have a theological reason for remaining in our sins.

And yet we must still get ourselves saved, some-
how! So Augustine kindly provided the solution to
that one. Here it is: God reaches down and points to
certain ones and says, "These will be saved anyway—
apart from any action of their own." And that is the
basis of his erroneous doctrine of predestination. And
it, along with original sin, is the basis of the modern-
ist "new theology" belief in a finished atonement on
the cross, with no need for obedience to God's Laws
afterward.

*Free from the Law, oh happy condition; bound
for heaven, in all my perdition.*

AN IMMACULATE CONCEPTION FOR CHRIST

But one more error was needed to fill out the
picture. Augustine had provided so much assistance
to the peculiar errors of Catholicism, that he was
later sainted by a pope. He taught the sacred impor-
tance of attendance at church services, so that the
sacraments could be received; and he emphasized
the importance of obedience to Rome. It is generally
recognized that his most important book was *The
City of God*. This volume explains that God's grace
will save His elect (predestined) children; but that,
in this life, they must stay in the City of God—and
this city is membership in the Church of Rome and
adherence to all of its rules and requirements.

But, after his death, it was eventually seen that
one more error was needed to complete the fabrica-
tion of lies about man's salvation. This missing doc-
trinal link was for later Catholic theologians to pro-
vide—the concept that Christ was so different from
us that even His very inherited humanity was a spe-
cial mystical something. It was decided in Vatican
councils that Christ inherited a special, totally flaw-
less, human flesh.

This was done, by the Catholic view, through the
Immaculate Conception of His mother, Mary. But
later, Protestants did not like such a close proximity

to Mariolatry in their doctrines. Too many church members objected to it; so they hit on a compromise: The modern Protestant view is that Christ received the nature of Adam himself, probably through an inheritance of genes directly from him.

Now the theological picture, by which souls could be bound in subservience to Rome or to its theological descendants, was far more complete:

(1) Original sin for man—that explains the nature of man to be hopelessly held by his sins, with no solution for extricating himself from them, except from the pronouncements of learned men. (2) An Immaculate Human Nature for Christ—that explains the inherited human nature of Christ to be descended from a superhuman that is not at all like the rest of us. (3) Inevitable Salvation for Some Human Beings—so that they will not need to worry about putting away the sins they enjoy.

Additional information on the theological basis of original sin is to be found in the present study you are now reading and also in *The Error of Original Sin* (FF-27). Additional information on the theological maze known as the pre-Fall nature of Christ will be found in *The Nature of Christ Change in Bible Readings* (DH-2). And, of course, further data from Inspired Sources will be found in FF-301 and onward, DH-1, and IC-3-6. But some have requested that we provide further background on the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. Here is that information:

An Immaculate Conception of Christ, by virtue of an Immaculate Conception for His mother, was a subject of controversy for centuries. But by the seventh century, three hundred years after the time of Constantine, the perfect sinlessness of Mary had been accepted by officials in both the Eastern and the Western portions of the Catholic Church. But then another argument arose: Was Mary conceived sinless or, nine months later, born sinless? The majority of the leading Catholic theologians of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries decided that she was conceived in original sin, but that it was removed from her at the moment that she was born into this world. However, the opposition to an Immaculate Conception for Mary was stifled by the point-of-logic that the Immaculate Conception did not take place at the moment that the parent cells united in Ann's womb (Ann is the name they give to Mary's mother); but, rather, she became Immaculate at the moment "her soul was infused into her body." Such hair-splitting theological detail may seem ridiculous to you and me; but, to the "theological experts" of some seven centuries ago, it won the victory. At about the same moment as her conception, Mary's "soul" was placed in her body by "infusion"; and, at that moment, she

became "immaculate"—free from every stain of original sin. Mary's body had become as immaculate as the vagaries of Roman Catholic theology. On December 8, 1854, Pope Pius IX read his newly written papal bull (an official doctrinal statement by the pope), entitled *Ineffabilis Deus*, to the waiting crowd in St. Peter's Square. This pronouncement imparted the sacredness of infallible truth to the theory of Mary's Immaculate Conception and defined it [quoted below].

Most, but not all, Protestants have rejected this Catholic legend. (The Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin takes place on December 8 and a similar feast is kept by the Church of England. Her conception has been celebrated on December 8 since the seventh century.) After 1854, theologians of the Eastern Orthodox Church officially rejected the Immaculate Conception dogma of Rome (although earlier they had generally accepted it). But, ironically, the Eastern Church continues to teach that Mary was utterly pure of all sin throughout her life; for, had she not been so, she could not have given birth to a sinless Christ.

SUMMARY OF THE THREE BASIC ERRORS

A doctrine of immaculate origin of the human nature of Christ was as necessary as a doctrine of total and irreversible depravity for man in this life. The two are inseparably connected. And a third was also needed: the teaching that man is either saved by Christ apart from his own moral actions or that he can save himself apart from Christ. These three constitute a triumvirate of doctrinal authority for the error that man cannot, and need not, obey the moral or physical laws of God in order to be saved and taken to heaven, there to live with the pure and holy angels through unending ages.

(1) Original Sin: Man cannot obey God's Law. (2) An Immaculate Human Nature for Christ: Christ could not have obeyed God's Law in our nature. (3) Finished Atonement on the Cross or a variation of this: Man need not obey God's Law.

In summary, then: (1) Original Sin: Man is totally fallen and cannot perfectly obey God's Law in this life, with or without the help of his Saviour. He has excuse to sin all his life. We know this doctrine must be true, since Christ did not dare be born with a human nature like ours, even though the Bible teaches that He was. (2) An Immaculate Nature for Christ: Jesus was born with a nature-not-ours. He was born with the nature of His sinless mother (Catholic view) or with the nature of sinless Adam (Protestant modernism). This theory has to be correct, or Christ could not have resisted sin in this life. And we know this to be so, because of the correctness of the doctrine of original sin. (Each of these

two teachings is used to prove the other.) (3) An Atonement not related to our moral actions: We are saved by obeying the Church; for it makes atonement for our sins in the Mass. Christ's life, death, and present intercession is not needed (Catholic view). Because of Christ's death and completed Atonement on Calvary, God will arbitrarily predestine certain ones to salvation, apart from their choice to accept Christ. For even a choice to accept Christ by them would be counted as a "work of the flesh" and would damn them. So they must be saved apart from even that. This is arbitrary predestination (the predestination of Calvin and the Reform Protestant Churches). We are saved by the act of Christ on the cross and there is nothing else that we need to do or can do in order to be saved. No act of ours counts for salvation, not one; but we must still have the act of accepting Him as our Saviour [inconsistent]. It is the Atonement that saves us; and this Atonement was started, carried through, and totally finished on Calvary. All who make a choice-acceptance of Christ are predestined to go to heaven, regardless of how they live on this earth. This is a predestinate salvation keyed to our choice alone, apart from other actions on our part. But it is inconsistent; for a choice is an act (Protestant modernism; the "new theology"). Because of Christ's complete Atonement on Calvary, or without it—all men will be saved. No act, including choice, affects our salvation (Universalism; Universal Salvation).

THE 1919 SOURCE BOOK NOTES

The following statement appeared in the 1919 edition of the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Students' Source Book*:

"We pronounce, declare, and define, unto the glory of the holy and invisible Trinity, the honor and ornament of the Holy Virgin, the mother of God, for the exaltation of the Catholic faith and the increase of the Christian religion, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ and the blessed apostles Peter and Paul, and in our own authority, that the doctrine which holds the Blessed Virgin Mary to have been, from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of Almighty God, in view of the merits of Christ Jesus the Saviour of mankind, preserved free from all stain of original sin, was revealed by God, and is therefore to be firmly and constantly believed by all the faithful."—*Extract from the bull, Ineffabilis Deus, of Pope Pius IX, Dec. 8, 1854, promulgating the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary; cited in Dogmatic Canons and Decrees, pp. 183-184.*

"Who can believe that, it being in the power of God the Son to prepare a spotless holy temple wherein to dwell incarnate for nine months, he preferred to have one which had been first profaned by

the stain of original sin? Who can imagine that God, who could become incarnate by preparing for himself a mother immaculate in her conception, should have preferred a mother who had first been stained by sin and once in the power and slavery of Satan? To admit such suppositions is shocking to Christian minds . . . It being in the power of God to preserve Mary unstained from original sin, there is every reason to believe that he did it. God is able; therefore he did it.'"—*Catholic Belief, Joseph Faa di Bruno, D.D. (R.C.), p. 218. New York: Benziger Brothers.*

"'God the Son, by assuming this perfect human nature, which he took from the Blessed Virgin, was born in the flesh.'—*Op. Cit., p. 208.*

Here is a second statement from the 1919 edition of the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Students' Source Book*:

"The Scripture plainly teaches that Jesus, when born of woman, assumed sinful flesh (Heb. 2:14; Rom 8:3), and thus became united with man in his fallen condition. [But] this doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary separates Jesus from the human family in its present state, by giving Him a 'perfect human nature,' free from the stain of original sin, and thus prepares the way for the introduction of that human mediation which is one of the prominent features of the Roman Catholic system. The very essence of Christianity being the experience, 'Christ in you, the hope of glory,' it thus appears that the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary strikes at the very heart of Christianity.—Eds.'"—*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Students' Source Book, 1919 Ed., p. 220.*

The above note in the 1919 edition of the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Students' Source Book* is even clearer and more descriptive of the basic issues involved than is the 1915 note in *Bible Readings* (see *The Nature of Christ Change in Bible Readings* [DH-1]). Both notes have been removed from more recent editions of these books. The replacement note in *Bible Readings* is given in DH-2. The current edition of the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Students' Source Book* has no replacement note of any kind.

THE RALPH LARSON PAPER

The following is a copy of what originally was a two-page typewritten article, written between 1978 and 1980. It was written by Ralph Larson who, at that time, was the senior pastor of the Loma Linda Campus Hill Church. The following is a very brief summary of the challenge we are now facing from the modernists in our Church.

WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT?

"This brief paper is being written to answer the

oft-repeated question that appears at its head. Many of our members and some of our ministers are puzzled by the present dialogue and debate in Adventist circles, and are wondering what the real issues are. I will here present a brief and simple outline of the points under discussion, and invite those who want more information to write to me.

“What is the overall problem? —An attempt by a few men to change the theology of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Who are these men? —Robert Brinsmead, Desmond Ford, and Edward Heppenstall. Are the changes they are proposing major or minor? —They include the nature of God, the nature of the incarnate Christ, the nature of man, and the nature of salvation itself. These are not minor matters. And in addition, we must recognize that acceptance of their ‘new theology’ would require the rejection of the Spirit of Prophecy.

“Is righteousness by faith the main issue? —By no means. Discussing this, as well as justification and sanctification, without examining the basic theological presuppositions of these men, would be like treating the spots on the skin of a measles patient without treating the disease itself.

“What then is the real, the basic, issue? —Augustine’s doctrine of original sin. This is a theory that all men are born with guilt from the sin of Adam in some way imputed to them, so that they are under the judgment and condemnation of God at birth. In addition, they inherit moral weakness from Adam.

“What is the connection between this and righteousness by faith? —Augustine taught that character perfection, even through the power of Christ, can never be attained in this life because of the moral weakness of original sin, which remains in all people, including Christians, as long as they live.

“What is the connection between this and the nature of Christ? —Since all descendants, according to the theory [of original sin], are born with guilt, some scheme had to be devised to keep this guilt from infecting Christ through Mary. Catholic theologians developed the idea of the Immaculate Conception to solve this problem. It is a theory that Mary herself, by a special miracle, was kept free from original sin so that she would not pass it on to Jesus. Protestants developed a slightly different theory of Immaculate Conception. According to their version, a special miracle made it possible for Christ, though a child of Mary, to not partake of her nature, but to take the nature of Adam before his Fall. The Bible, of course, knows nothing of either of these special miracles, and Ellen White flatly rejects both of them.

“How did these men get hooked on Augustine’s doctrine of original sin? —Calvin and Luther were devoted disciples of Augustine, and elevated his theories to a level far above their place in even the Catholic Church of their time. Brinsmead, Ford, and Heppenstall all studied under Calvinistic theologians.

“Did our pioneers accept Calvinistic-Augustinian theology? —Emphatically not. They aligned themselves with Wesley, Arminius, and Zwingli against Calvin’s doctrine of original sin, predestination, etc.

“How does Augustine’s doctrine of original sin view sanctification? —It views total sanctification as utterly impossible, even through the power of Christ. Ellen White traces this doctrine to Satan himself. See *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 69, 77; *Desire of Ages*, 24, 309, 761.

“How does Augustine’s doctrine of original sin view justification? —Since total sanctification is impossible, our only hope is in justification. We will still be sinning right up to the moment that Jesus comes. Compare [this error] with *Adventist Home*, 16.

“What do these teachers do with Ellen White’s picture of the close of probation and the righteous standing without a mediator [read *Early Writings*, 71, with *Great Controversy*, 613-614]? —They stubbornly argue that forgiveness will still be necessary, even after the close of probation.

“What did Augustine teach about unbaptized infants? —That they were lost and damned, since [the guilt of] original sin is canceled only at baptism. What do the Adventist teachers of Augustine’s theology say? —At least one of them teaches that unbaptized infants cannot be saved, but will not be punished either, but will simply go into non-existence without punishment. [This is the Catholic doctrine of Limbo, where unbaptized infants go if they die.] See *Desire of Ages*, 512.

“To sum up: These men have become infatuated with Calvinistic theology, which is itself an enlargement on Augustine’s theology. They have made it their goal to swing the Adventist Church away from its alignment with Wesley, Arminius, and Zwingli on these points and line us up with Calvin, Luther, and Augustine. It is therefore an enormous waste of time to enter into any discussion with them or any of their followers regarding sanctification, justification, etc., unless they first make clear their position on original sin. This is a doctrine that the Adventist Church has always firmly rejected.

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