

THE DOCTRINE OF ORIGINAL SIN.¹

THIS is a posthumous work of Dr. Landis, Professor of Theology in the Danville Theological Seminary, Kentucky. It arose out of a discussion between him and the admirers of Dr. Charles Hodge, touching the doctrine of the latter about the manner of the imputation of Adam's sin to the race, which Dr. Landis conducted in *The Danville Review* and *The Southern Presbyterian Review*. He complained that the supporters of Dr. Hodge in the Northern Church, to which Dr. Landis belonged, resented all criticism of their leader, in a factious, tyrannical, and popish spirit, which refused to give a fair hearing to the truth, and even punished him for daring to assert that truth against their great man. Hence Dr. Landis felt that no resource was left him, in defending God's cause and his own good name, except the publication of his full views and their grounds. He therefore devoted the latter years of his life and the riches of his own magnificent theological library to the laborious and careful composition of this volume, which he rewrote seven times. He then bequeathed it to the Central University of Kentucky, as his literary executor, to which he also gave his collection of books. It is now published by the University, in fidelity to his memory and wishes. The intelligent reader will of course understand that the University considers itself by this act as only performing its engagement as to Dr. Landis's memory as a scholar and divine, and not as making itself a partisan on either side of the theological issue debated. That issue is one of those in which, as is generally avowed, honest Calvinists may differ without compromising their orthodoxy. We have, in our own day, seen on one side a Chalmers and a Hodge, and on the other a Landis, a Breckinridge, and a Baird. The University can therefore claim, indisputably,

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that, in securing for Dr. Landis a full hearing, it has broken no obligation of courtesy or discretion resting on it as a Presbyterian institution.

Dr. Landis's whole discussion is directed to a single point—the strict theory of Dr. Hodge asserting the antecedent, immediate, and gratuitous imputation of Adam's sin to his race as (in the first stage of the judicial transaction) merely *peccatum alienum*. Readers of church history are aware that since the time of Placæus, about the middle of the seventeenth century, debate has existed among the Reformed whether this imputation was antecedent to the actual moral corruption of the race, and immediate, or whether it was consequent thereon, and mediate. The occasion for disclosing this question was an act of the French National Synod condemning any—meaning virtually Placæus and his followers—who should teach that the doctrine of original sin was limited solely to the hereditary subjective corruption of men, and should deny, as a part of the doctrine, the true imputation to men of Adam's first sin. Thereupon Placæus sought adroitly to evade the point of this condemnation by explaining that he did not deny that imputation, but only denied that it was “antecedent and immediate.” He held that it was only “mediate and consequential” on men's actual, personal, and subjective corruption.

Of this explanation the Synods seem subsequently to have taken no notice. But sundry of Placæus's brethren remained dissatisfied, and continued the discussion. In this discussion, antagonism of feeling not unnaturally developed and fixed the ill-starred distinction, which never ought to have been stated or discussed, between Placæus's idea of an imputation of Adam's guilt only mediate and consequent on the actual personal corruption of Adam's posterity derived to them merely by hereditary descent, and the opposite view of an imputation by God of the guilt of Adam's first sin to men, antecedently, immediately, and gratuitously, God conceiving them as initially holy in their personal estate at the time of this imputation, and then visiting on them, as the penalty of this imputed guilt, the initial depravation of their subjective characters, at least so far as the *privatio justitiæ* could go. Now, it has pleased Dr. Hodge to adopt this latter extreme view, and to push its consequences in the hardest manner, asserting, with his sternest dogmatism, that this, and

this alone, is the doctrine, and that all the great Calvinistic leaders are with him, and those who dissent are virtually not Presbyterians at all on this point. Dr. Landis undertakes to prove, on the contrary, that none of the great leaders or symbols are with Dr. Hodge in this extreme; that he has misrepresented or misunderstood them all; that the church has always rejected Dr. Hodge's extreme view as distinctly as she has discarded Placeus's, has refused to entertain the mischievous distinction, and has always held that the imputation, while in a certain just sense "immediate," proceeded with even step with the actual personal participation of men in the race sin, and was not "antecedent" and "gratuitous" in Dr. Hodge's sense.

This issue may seem a narrow one upon which to write a large book. But it is the hinge question. Its vital importance proceeds from its corollaries and the other vital doctrines involved. These are such as the following: the relations of reason to revelation; the sovereignty and moral attributes of God; imputation; satisfaction for human sins; justification; believers' union with Christ; effectual calling and sanctification; God's providence over the posterity of wicked men.

We will let Dr. Landis define the question (p. 111, § 13):

"Dr. Hodge teaches that the sin of Adam was made common to the race by a forensic and gratuitous imputation; while, on the contrary, the Calvinistic and Lutheran communions have from the beginning always taught that sin was imputed *because it was common*—i. e., the sin alike of Adam and his posterity. This single point presents, in fact, the *nucleus* of the whole question. For if the sin becomes common only through the forensic or gratuitous imputation of Adam's *peccatum alienum*, or merely personal guilt, then the doctrine of our participation therein is a figment, and Dr. Hodge's theory is the true doctrine, and no alternative can remain to us but to accept it with all its fatal sequences as regards our theology, and to acquiesce moreover in the exegesis by which he claims that it may be supported. But if, on the contrary, the first sin was imputed because it was common, and if such be the unvarying doctrine of the church of God, then, of course, Dr. Hodge has left his brethren no alternative but to regard and treat his theory as a fundamental and fatal departure (as he himself has always conceded) from their cherished faith."

The older readers of this *Review* will recognize in Dr. Landis's criticisms and exceptions a close resemblance to those advanced in the review of Hodge's *Theology*, in the number for April, 1873.

Dr. Landis's extended discussion may be virtually reduced to three heads, in which he asserts that Dr. Hodge's exaggerated

doctrine is, (1), illogical; (2), unscriptural; (3), unchurchly, or against the uniform teachings of the church's symbols and leaders, from Augustine to Edwards.

I. The points wherein Dr. Landis asserts this doctrine to be illogical are chiefly these :

1. That Dr. Hodge, like other Calvinists, argues to the reasonableness of the imputation of Adam's sin to the race from that method of divine providence which now visits the sins of the parents on the posterity. But, says Dr. Landis, the essential condition of such providential dealing is, that the posterity are also actually and personally sinful. God only visits the parents' sins on the generations "that hate him." Were the case of Adam and the race, then, analogous to these providential dealings, it must be just the opposite of what Dr. Hodge represents it. For,

2. The latter asserts that, initially, the guilt of Adam's first sin is imputed to men while as yet unfallen, pure, and guiltless, as behoves them to be when issuing first from the creative hand of God; for the first depravity comes upon infants *as the penalty* of that merely imputed guilt. Dr. Hodge must hold, as indeed he says, that the newly created soul has at least an instant of innocent and pure subjective being, not only logically but chronologically, prior to its condemnation for Adam's sin and to that initial depravation which is the penalty therefor. Now, this view leaves the doctrine of imputation opposite to, instead of analogical to, the other case of children suffering for parents' crimes. So that, for Dr. Hodge, this argument is absurd, and contradicts instead of confirming him. Next, his view is as stubbornly inconsistent with fact (in another direction) as was Placæus's view, and equally contradicts Scripture. For, according to this, subjective corruption is absolutely as early in each individual case. There are as many and as strong texts which say that man is corrupt from the beginning of his life, as that he is guilty from the beginning. So that, as Placæus uttered a solecism when he represented the young soul as depraved before it was guilty for imputed sin, so Dr. Hodge utters the counter-part solecism when he represents it as guilty before it is depraved. Scripture says it is both guilty and depraved from the very first. And, once more, Dr. Hodge sins against fact, Scripture, and the invariable teaching of our churches in not only rejecting, but

ridiculing the doctrine of our *actual participation* in the first sin. Dr. Hodge sneeringly asks, How could a person participate in an act done before he had any existence? He says it is nonsense. He insists that the only sense in which the individuals of the race could have participated in Adam's sin is the formal and forensic putative sense, and that this was the only participation the church ever held, or could hold, without stultifying herself. But Dr. Landis asserts, with equal stoutness, that the church always did hold to the actual participation of the individuals of the race in Adam's sin, in its criminality as well as its guilt; that our divines invariably teach this as a fact, and as the essential condition of the imputation; and while they admit it to be a mystery, inexplicable by human philosophy, they assert it as made possible by the race unity and community of nature between the head and the branches. And herein Dr. Hodge opposes scriptures such as John iii. 5, 6, and the Confessions, which assert that we "sinned in Adam" as well as "fell with him." Dr. Landis asserts, moreover, that his opponent is perpetually misled and misleads his readers as to what our divines mean by "Adam's sin" and the "first sin," by which they always mean that sin as common to Adam and the race, as actually, though mysteriously, shared by the race; while Dr. Hodge persists in regarding it as Adam's mere personal sin made common to men, in the first stage, by nothing but its formal imputation as *peccatum alienum*. This Dr. Landis abundantly sustains by profuse citations.

3. He asserts that Dr. Hodge's doctrine tends to make God "the author of sin." For if the initial subjective corruption is the penalty merely of the guilt of Adam's personal sin formally and forensically imputed to us, it is every way natural to conceive of God, the judge, *as inflicting the penalty* he pronounces. This is the only intelligible view of judgment and penalty: while the criminal brings about the crime judged, *the judge brings about* the penalty righteously affixed, either by inflicting it himself or efficiently procuring its infliction. This is what a judge is for. So that Dr. Hodge should consistently teach that the depraving of every soul since Adam is God's direct doing. Must he not do it with his own hand? Does he employ the holy angels to do it? Hardly. Or the devils? or the parents? The latter would be our doctrine of original race sin, which Dr. Hodge has

rejected. Again: if each soul is subjectively pure when it begins to exist, it is an insufficient explanation to say that each one regularly and invariably, though freely, depraves itself. This is too much like the Pelagian theory for accounting for the prevalence of actual apostasy. And how comes it that this multitude of initially holy wills should invariably choose corruption? Why does not the result turn out, if it were simple self action, as it did among the angels, where some chose to deprave themselves and some chose to remain pure? In another place, Dr. Hodge, floundering in the meshes of his erroneous speculation, seeks to avoid making God the author of our corruption by saying: If God saw fit simply to *withdraw* the indwelling of the Holy Spirit from the newly created soul, its depravation by the law of defect would follow. But the hard question for him is, Would God impute a *peccatum alienum* to a soul initially pure, and also privileged with the indwelling of the Spirit? And can any one believe, with the Bible in his hand, that creatures ever had that indwelling efficiently for one instant who were at that instant under the curse, "by nature children of wrath," "conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity"?

4. Dr. Hodge concurs often with all the Reformed divines and the Scripture in teaching that our federal and natural union with our head results, according to God's ordinance, in his first sin's affecting us (as being a common sin), both morally and forensically, as it affected himself. This, says Dr. Landis, is good doctrine. But now come two questions. Are we actually in race union with Adam holy, or with Adam corrupted? Certainly the latter; because Adam had no child until after his fall, and then he begat sinners, "after his image, in his own likeness." And in Adam's own person, which preceded, subjective corruption or judicial condemnation? A just God does not condemn a creature until after he sins, and in the overt sin corrupt motive must have preceded guilty action. Now, then, why do we not represent the seed, like their head, as condemned, because already actually corrupted?

5. But let us see Dr. Hodge's affirmative logic, by whose stress he feels compelled to strain his theory of imputation so high. It is, in substance, this: unless we hold that the imputation of Adam's guilt was immediate, gratuitous, and precedaneous, we cannot consistently hold the imputation of our guilt to a holy

Christ, nor of his righteousness to us vile sinners. For the three imputations must be held as exact parallels. This is implied in Romans v. 11–21, where the apostle illustrates justification in Christ's imputed righteousness by our (admitted) condemnation in Adam, and the honesty and soundness of the apostle's argument require us to suppose an exact parallel between the two imputations, both in fact and in mode. But the imputation of our sins to a holy Christ, and of his righteousness to us, are gratuitous, whence the apostle must have regarded the imputation of Adam's sin to us as equally gratuitous and immediate. Moreover, let the opposite doctrine as to original sin be held, and the exact parallelism be borne in mind, and our theory of justification must be the popish one; for as Placæus held that men's subjective corruption was prior to, and in order to, the imputation of Adam's guilt to them, so the Papists teach that the believer's inherent and subjective godliness must be prior to, and in order to, the imputation to him of Christ's righteousness. Thus Dr. Hodge urges with the utmost tenacity that unless we admit his extreme view, we cannot consistently be Christians at all.

To this showing Dr. Landis objects, that the assumptions made in it are all absolutely erroneous, and the inferences of no force whatever. Thus:

That the immediate and gratuitous nature of the imputations in expiation and justification do not at all imply a similar quality in the imputation of Adam's sin to men, because two grand differences in the two cases intervene. The imputation in the fall was one of *justice*, that in redemption is one of *mercy and grace*. A righteous ruler, in dispensing free gifts and favors, properly holds himself at liberty to exceed the bounds of strict desert. In administering justice, never. To overlook this difference, in order to force on us a favorite speculation, is an amazing oversight. And, second, an essential difference in the two cases is found in this: that Christ's coming under imputation of guilt was optional and voluntary on his part. And so his righteousness is imputed to no soul for justification until that soul freely accepts and chooses it in the act of faith. We must believe in order to be justified. True, it is the merit of the divine substitute, and not the merit of the believing, which justifies; but none the less is it absolutely true that the sinner must believe in order to have that divine merit imputed to him. So that in both the im-

putations involved in a sinner's redemption, that of his sins to Christ and Christ's merits to him, we find *this feature of free consent in the party receiving* the imputation to be an essential element, which, in the imputation of Adam's sin to us, would be totally lacking on our part were Dr. Hodge correct. Dr. Hodge unwisely insists on an exact parallel between the three imputations. Well, let it be settled, for argument's sake, that they are exactly parallel. Then we must hold that the free assent of each sinning person to Adam's act as his representative is essential in order to make the imputation of his guilt any parallel at all. And we find that assent only in the old Calvinistic doctrine of *actual participation* in Adam's sin, as in order to the imputation, which Dr. Hodge so rejects.

Our author in another place carries this point farther with great acuteness. Does Dr. Hodge urge that both holy and unholy creations begin existence with a subjective disposition certainly regulative of their feelings and choices; that this law of their character does not, and cannot, originate as the Pelagians vainly fable in an act of that creature's choice, and that, hence, as to his just responsibility for acting with that disposition, it is worthless to raise the question how or whence it came to him, and we only ask, Is it *his own* disposition, and does he freely act it out? Then he is justly responsible. True, says Dr. Landis, just so. And therefore all the cavils of ancient and modern Pelagians, that a created righteousness—in Adam's creation, or the believer's new creation—cannot be a responsible righteousness, are silly and worthless. But Dr. Hodge should have noticed that the subjective righteousness inwrought in the soul in regeneration *only becomes a true righteousness as it is accepted and freely preferred by the soul born again*. The causal source of it is external to the renewed will, almighty and supernatural? Yes, certainly. But none the less is the infused holiness the freely chosen preference of the soul from the very instant it is accounted by God as a true holiness. The rule of the divine work is expressed in the text, "My people shall *be willing* in the day of my power." The very essence of the divine work within the dead soul is that it renews and quickens *the will*, causing the soul to choose and pursue freely that godliness which, in the days of its bondage and spiritual death, it had as freely rejected. It appears, then, that in no case does God account holiness or un-

holiness to a creature, except as there is a voluntary participation in it by the creature's own will. So that, to establish the symmetry Dr. Hodge so ardently pursues, and to range the imputations of the two covenants in that exact parallelism he demands, he ought to have retained instead of discarding the good old doctrine that the guilt of Adam's first sin is imputed to us, *because we sinned in him*, and have an actual participation of our free agency in his crime as well as its guilt.

This train of thought prepares the way for Dr. Landis to wrest Dr. Hodge's next point from him and turn it against him. Does he charge a tendency towards popish justification on Dr. Landis? Dr. Landis charges a more real tendency to Arminian and semi-Pelagian justification on him. For he insists that in original sin the guilt of Adam's personal sin as *peccatum alienum* is first immediately imputed to souls, viewed as so far personally pure and guiltless; and consequentially the first subjective corruption comes on them as penalty of that imputed guilt. And the three imputations must be strictly parallel! Then the application of redemption must, of course, be on this wise: first, the righteousness of Christ must be imputed to the sinner, he being still in his state of native spiritual death and sin. On this imputation is grounded his acceptance. And then, as the consequence of this acceptance, and as the first merited reward to this imputed righteousness, the new birth is bestowed, implanting spiritual life and subjective godliness. But *this is Arminianism*. This ill-starred tenacity of Dr. Hodge in adhering to his speculation, despite its bad consequences, receives a striking illustration in his last work, his *Theology* (Vol. II., p. 249). Ten years after he had been warned by Dr. Landis he prints these sentences as his description of the application of redemption: "It was by the disobedience of one man that all men are constituted sinners, not only by imputation (which is true, and most important), but also by inherent depravity, as it was by the obedience of one that all are constituted righteous, not only by imputation (which is true and vitally important), but also by the *consequent* renewing of their nature, *flowing from* their reconciliation to God." These words are dangerously incautious. Doubtless Christ has purchased for the elect by his priestly work all the blessings of effectual calling and sanctification from beginning to end. Doubtless all Calvinists hold that increase in sanctification is one of the

after-fruits of justification. But here Dr. Hodge says, not that subsequent growth in holiness, but the very *renewing of the sinner's nature* is "*consequent*" on justification, and "*flows from*" their reconciliation to God, apparently as though he would rather avouch the Arminian theory than recede from his favorite doctrine about imputation.

For if there is any one thing in which Calvinists are unanimous, it is that justification follows faith, and that faith is the act only of new-born souls following their renewal. And strong Arminians are equally unanimous in assigning this contrary order to the redemptive causations. First, common sufficient grace, evoking, with the synergism of the self-determined will, repentance and faith. Next, justification by faith. Then, as the consequence of justification, the regeneration of the soul. And then progressive sanctification. A synergistic system calls for this arrangement of the steps. And it is equally true that this arrangement implies synergism; for the sinner must believe in order to be justified, and be justified in order to be regenerated. Of course, then, faith is an exercise of soul which an unregenerate soul is competent to put forth. Of course, then, no unconditional election of grace, no almighty quickening is needed to decide the sinner for the gospel; he may decide himself in the sovereign exercise of a self-determining will, while grace follows on and coöperates in the good change which the human will has sovereignly instituted! Is that Calvinism? But Dr. Hodge says that such must virtually be the adjustment resulting from his theory of imputation. Then his is not the theory of the old Calvinists.

The difficulty he obtrudes as to our view and its resultant popish justification by inherent instead of imputed righteousness is easily solved. No Protestant ever denied, in opposition to Papists, that all justified persons have an inherent righteousness. Our denial is, that our inherent righteousness can be, at the beginning or ever after, the "formal cause" of our justification. We utterly deny that it is, or can be, the ground of justification by any merit of condignity or of congruity, not because we doubt whether the believer really has it at the time he is justified, but *because it is imperfect*, because a condemned creature *cannot merit*, and because the inherent righteousness is *due to God's inworking*, not to that of the man's own natural will. "What

hast thou, that thou didst not receive? Now, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory in it as though thou hadst not received it?" But saving faith, on which justification instrumentally depends, is the exercise of none but a regenerate soul. The instituting of the vital union between the dead soul and Christ is absolutely needed in order to faith. Out of that union all our life, reconciliation, and holiness flow. Chronologically, both the new birth, which is the initiation of the process of sanctification, and justification instantly follow that union. But causatively Christ must quicken us first, through the union, in order that we may put forth the true faith which justifies. Were we inclined to insist upon a perfectly symmetrical parallel, then, between the steps of our fall in the first Adam and our redemption in the second, as Dr. Hodge insists, we should be led to a conclusion opposite to his; that in each case the subjective change is in order to the forensic.

But the great Reformers did not think that Paul's argument in Romans v. proceeded on the idea of such exact parallel. They all say, as Calvin, that the one topic illustrates the other; which supposes—the apostle being an honest reasoner—that the two imputations have something in common. But that, while they agree in the thing, they obviously differ in mode. Thus, Calvin, *Commentary*, on Romans v. 17, says: "Moreover, it is important to note here *two differences* between Adam and Christ," etc. Gomarus, the strict supralapsarian Calvinist: "Adam, by the force of nature (*vi naturæ*), communicates his sin to all and each of his natural offspring; but Christ communicates his righteousness and life to each of his renewed." "But the comparison is twofold, to-wit, of a resemblance and of a difference." Polavius of Bâsle: "Bellarmine deceives himself in his exposition of the analogy contained therein (Rom. v.), since Paul *does not compare the modes* by which we are in ourselves either sinners or righteous, but the efficient causes whereby we become sinners or righteous before God." Andrew Rivet, the special opponent of Placeæus, whom Dr. Hodge claims as wholly his own: "Yet there is nothing in this argument which forbids that we acknowledge the necessity of *inherent qualities*" (in order to imputation). "For it can only be proved" (from Paul's comparison) "that in Christ we have righteousness, as we have in Adam unrighteousness. But there is a comparison *of the causes* and *not of the mode* in which the

thing is communicated to us. For the sin of Adam is communicated to us by generation; but the righteousness of Christ by imputation. Therefore, the apostle *does not compare the modes* in which righteousness is received, but the causes, effects, and subjects of each." A. Willets, "Sixfold Commentarie upon Romans," speaking of the illustration of Romans v., mentions "the disparitie and unlikeness" of the two cases: "The *manner* how these things (death by Adam and life by Christ) are conveyed *is diverse*: Adam's sin is transmitted by natural propagation, but life and righteousness are conveyed by grace." Theodore Beza, the strictest of Calvinists, Commentary on Romans v. 12: "But this distinction plainly appears" (in the analogy) "partly, indeed, from the whole comparison of the unrighteousness of Adam with the righteousness of Christ, to-wit, of the former through propagation, of the latter communicated to us (believers) through imputation." And (unkindest cut of all to Dr. Hodge) Francis Turretin (Loc. 16): "Nor, if we are constituted unjust and guilty through the sin propagated from Adam, must we immediately be justified through inherent righteousness communicated to us by Christ through regeneration; for the method of each is most different. And Paul here institutes a comparison between the first and second Adam *in the thing, and not in the mode of the thing.*" And yet Dr. Hodge claims Turretin wholly!

We have seen how Dr. Landis charges him with misconception of what the Reformers meant by "first sin." They, Dr. Landis holds, uniformly meant by this the breach of the covenant of works in paradise, not merely as Adam's personal act, but also as the common sin of the race. They have in mind always the mysterious fact of our actual participation in that breach. And whereas Dr. Hodge rejects this idea as "unthinkable," the Reformers uniformly advance it as a revealed mystery, above the comprehension of reason indeed, but not contrary to reason, and the very key to the whole doctrine of original sin. This is well summed up in these remarks of the recent Lutheran divine, Dr. Julius Müller: "This, therefore, is the point at which all the threads of the doctrine of the orthodox concerning hereditary sin meet, in which it must be dogmatically justified, if it is at all capable of such justification. It first of all appears as something quite incredible that in the fall of Adam all his natural posterity are supposed to have some participation. If, now, it may be

shown that this is only the paradox which every deeper connection of things has for ordinary thinking, then all further difficulties of the doctrine become involved of themselves." And Dr. Landis asks: Can the Trinity be rationally explained to our finite minds? Have not the apparent paradoxes involved in the "three in one" been the constant subjects of rationalistic cavil? Yet Dr. Hodge holds that this inexplicable mystery of the Trinity is the essential foundation of the whole doctrine of redemption, as we all do. So, says Dr. Landis, there may be an apparent paradox in the statement that "the race sinned in Adam;" the human mind may be incompetent to explicate the whole conception of a *race unity*, which is a real fact, and yet does not destroy individuality and personal responsibility. But it does not necessarily contradict the intuitive reason; and *it is a revealed fact*, and also *the clearest of experimental facts*, that *the race became actually and universally sinful (except Jesus) in Adam's sin*. And on this fact the doctrine of imputation hinges. The philosophic attempts made, from Augustine to S. J. Baird, to explain this fact have been failures; they have given us no real light; their failure probably shows—as did the failure of the scholastics to give the *rationale* of the Trinity—that the conceptions involved concerning such ultimate facts in ontology lie beyond the grasp of the human intellect. And the best philosophers see most clearly that this feature of our ontological beliefs *constitutes no objection whatever to their rational validity*. Could Sir Isaac Newton explicate the notion of gravitation? No, not at all. Has metaphysics ever explicated the notions of substance, as distinguished from essence, of power in cause? of the unconditioned notions, eternity, infinity, self-existence, abstract number? No; yet every thinker in the world adopts these notions as essential elements of his beliefs. How strangely has Dr. Hodge, then, here betrayed himself into that rationalistic position which everywhere else he so clearly and justly condemns?

For Dr. Landis asserts next that the peculiar features of his doctrine about imputation, and of his exposition of Romans v., are precisely those advanced by the Socinians, Arians, and Arminians in the Reformation ages, and sternly rejected and refuted by the Reformers. Socinus, Curcellæus, Whitby, Limborch, and their whole schools, deny the actual participation of mankind in the sin of Adam's fall; define original sin as consisting

in the gratuitous immediate imputation of the formal guilt (*reatus actualis*) of Adam's personal sin, and in that alone; describe God's act in thus imputing Adam's guilt as one of mere sovereignty, and not of real judicial righteousness; so that the evils and natural death which the race incur from this imputation are not properly penal, but the results of this arbitrary formal imputation. The same was the doctrine of the papal semi-Pelagians, Pighius and Contarinus, so sternly resisted by Calvin. And, accordingly, it is in the commentaries of these rationalists on Romans v. that we currently see those features of exposition on which Dr. Hodge insists, and in which he departs from the line of interpretation before current among the Reformed.

Now, the Socinians, Arians, and semi-Pelagians had certain doctrinal ends to pursue in setting up this theory of original sin, and they are ends thoroughly obnoxious to Dr. Hodge. Strange that he did not see whither his unnatural fellowship was leading him. The vital truths most hated by these Socinians and their sympathizers are these: that the human soul is naturally and decisively corrupted by a connate ungodliness; that hence man has no longer any self-determination of will to any spiritual good; that distributive justice is an essential and unchangeable attribute of God; that hence there is a strict moral necessity for real satisfaction to justice for the guilt of sins in order to their remission; that all the natural evils men suffer are properly penal, and thus their occurrence proves the criminality before a holy God of all that suffer; that so Christ's sufferings during his humiliation were properly penal, sacrificial, and expiatory; that the believer's justification is grounded in the real merit and acceptance of that vicarious satisfaction, and not merely in the arbitrary compassion of God. Denials of these are the very lineaments of the Socinian anti-Christ, from the Racovian Catechism to Dr. William Channing, as none know better than Dr. Hodge.

Let us now see how these heretics proposed to get rid of these doctrines by their tampering with the Reformed theory of original sin. Thus, if there is no actual criminality in Adam's posterity, but only the formal imputation of the mere guilt (*reatus actualis*) of a *peccatum alienum*, and God has really made that imputation and visited all natural evils on such a ground upon creatures wholly devoid of personal criminality or demerit, then it follows that natural evils may occur to responsible creatures which are

not properly penalties of sins. Then the famous argument of the Augustinians, that the sufferings of infants prove them sinners, is shown to be worthless; and then, moreover, it follows that God's dispensing of such sufferings is an act of his arbitrary will, and not of a righteous judicial will. And this plainly implies that *distributive justice is not his essential attribute.* And thus falls the main argument of the Calvinists for their dogma, the necessity of penal satisfaction in order to remission. Again, since Paul, in Romans v., establishes a strict parallelism between the two imputations, and also between the mode of the two, the imputation of believers' sins to Christ is like that of Adam's sin to his race: not a true judicial judgment, carrying over to Christ a righteous penal obligation, but a mere formal politic arrangement, dictated by God's arbitrary will, as moved by his general goodness; and Christ's sufferings were no more penal, in strict sense, than are the sufferings of sinless infants when they die under the imputation of Adam's guilt. Then there was no true sacrifice, expiation, and satisfaction for man's sins made on the cross; and the Reformed doctrine of justification founded thereon is senseless and false. These, unquestionably, are the logical ends which the rationalistic divines were pursuing when they vitiated the orthodox church doctrine of the fall in Adam in the manner described. So the Reformed divines apprehended their objects, and for that reason they resisted their expositions utterly. These are the objects distinctly pursued and claimed by the Socinians and their sympathizers in these expositions. Yet Dr. Hodge adopts these perilous expositions, so uniformly exposed and rejected by the Reformers, and that in the professed defence of strict Calvinism! What are likely to be the fruits among his blind admirers? It is not charged that he himself had any Socinian or semi-Pelagian leanings; his loyalty to the truth is here unquestionable. But he is loyal to it by a happy inconsistency; and the danger is that others may work out his principles to their mischievous results, and introduce Socinian rationalism into the huge church of which he was the Gamaliel.

II. We are now prepared to touch briefly upon the exposition of the classical passage (Rom. v. 12-21) on which this doctrine of imputation chiefly rests. The reader is requested to place the Greek of the following verses before his eye:

“12. Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: 13. (For until the law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law. 14. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. 15. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. 16. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. 17. For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) 18. Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. 19. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.”

Now, as to the general scheme of exposition for this passage, Dr. Landis charges that Dr. Hodge, following the Socinian expositions of such writers as Curcellæus, Whitby, and Dr. Taylor of Norwich, insists on making the parallel exact between the two imputations in thing and in mode. But the current of the Reformed divines, from Calvin down to our day, as represented by Alford, Wordsworth, Schaff and Shedd, hold as does Dr. Landis, that the apostle compares the two cases, the fall and redemption, as two processes analogous in their sources and causes, but different in details of mode. In each case there is a great company of souls represented in its respective federal head, an imputation, a justification, and a condemnation of the individuals of the two companies through their federal heads’ respective actions. So that men all sin and are condemned in Adam as truly as they are renewed and justified in Christ. But in the details diversities appear, some of which the apostle himself specifies:—as that the corruption passes from Adam to the race by natural participation (and along with it the imputed guilt), but the restoration is wrought through Christ’s righteousness, gratuitously imputed; that the transaction in Adam was one of strict justice, that in Christ of free grace, that in the one case a single criminality was the source of death to a whole race, in the other a single righteousness was the source of life to all the elect. Still other differences (see Calvin’s commentary on verse 12) exist, which the apostle does not specify, because it does not suit his purpose, as: “The first is, that in Adam’s sin we are not condemned through imputation alone, as though the penalty of another man’s sin were

exacted of us; but we thus sustain its punishment, because we are also guilty of fault (*culpa*) so far, to-wit, as our nature, vitiated in him, is involved in guilt before God. But through the righteousness of Christ we are restored to salvation in another mode." . . . "The other difference is, that the benefit of Christ does not reach to all men, as Adam involved his whole race in condemnation," etc. So that the great current of the Reformed have held the fact that the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the believing sinner is gratuitous was not meant by Paul to show that the imputation of Adam's sin was, in exactly the counterpart sense, gratuitous.

When we come to details of exposition, Dr. Landis claims that Dr. Hodge has followed the current of the rationalists in the following points, which he rejects, in company with the current of the Calvinists. In verse 12, "For that all sinned," (*ἐφ' ᾧ πάντες ἡμαρτήθημεν*), Dr. Hodge, with the opponents of Calvinism, makes the sinning not an actual, but merely a putative and forensic accounting as guilty, with the guilt of a *peccatum alienum*. While he admits that the usage of the verb makes against this construction, yet, as it gives the only rational sense, it must be adopted, and the exposition of the remaining verses squared to it. But the Reformed expositors, with Calvin, say that *ἡμαρτάνειν* cannot bear that sense, that it is against all usage, and that the subjects of the verb must be held to *have sinned* in some actual sense. And the least we can get out of the proposition is, that death passed on all from the first sin, *because all* in that sin incurred subjective depravity of nature. Calvin actually enters into a specific argument to prove that the verb "to sin" may, according to Scripture usage, mean "to be subjectively a sinner;" which accords with the Reformed theology, by which subjective depravity is regarded as veritable sin, and, while not the result of previous volitions, yet personal and voluntary in the sense of being spontaneous.

On verse 14 the Socinian divines would have us understand that death's passing over on them "who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression," means the forensic and formal denouncing of death on human beings personally sinless, merely for Adam's *peccatum alienum*. But the Reformed think generally that this means *infants*, who suffer and die, thus showing that they are condemned persons, while the difference be-

tween their personal sinning and Adam's is this: that his sin was overt as well as *in habitu*, while they have only a sinful disposition *in habitu*, being at the time the condemnation comes on them not capable of overt sin.

On the 18th verse, Dr. Hodge reads, *ὃν ἕνός παραπτώματος*, "by the sin of one man," making *ἕνός* masculine, and thus getting an implied support for his doctrine of the gratuitous imputation of Adam's personal sin. Dr. Landis, with the best Reformed, regards *ἕνός* as neuter, and reads, "by one transgression"—that is, by that one race sin, common by participation to Adam and his seed. And he claims the exegetical force of the *ἐν ἐνὶ παραπτώματι* in the exactly parallel expression of verse 17, which cannot justly bear the translation, "by one man's offence," given it in the received version.

Once more, when the apostle says, in summing up his comparison, verse 19, "By the obedience of one shall many be *made righteous*," Dr. Hodge still limits the result here stated by Paul to the putative and forensic estimation. He thinks *δικαιοχαραστηθήσονται* is equivalent to "shall be declared righteous." Dr. Landis, with Wordsworth and Schaff, thinks the words mean far more, constituting Christ's redeemed both forensically and actually righteous. Thus the concluding declaration is made to correspond with that of the same apostle in 1 Cor. xv. 22: "As in Adam *all die*, so in Christ *shall all be made alive*." Then the counterpart result of the first member of verse 19: "As by one man's disobedience *many were made sinners*," includes not only their putative, but their actual fall.

The fact to which Dr. Landis calls our attention is certainly worthy of note: that the traits which mark Dr. Hodge's cherished exposition of the passage, so far as they differ from the old current view of the Reformed, are the very ones which the Socinians advanced and the Reformed divines contested so strenuously.

III. The third position laboriously defended against Dr. Hodge is, that his doctrine is unchurchly; that it is an innovation upon the traditionary Reformed doctrine as taught by the great divines of the Presbyterian churches and by their Confessions of Faith. Here Dr. Landis's assertion is, not only that there is a discrepancy in the way of stating the doctrine, but that the peculiar features which Dr. Hodge claims to be essential to

the consistency of our Calvinism are expressly stated, and *stated to be rejected* by the great Calvinists. The tenor of his citations might receive, as a summary and homely paraphrase, the following statement: "This view of a gratuitous antecedent imputation of Adam's sin as *peccatum alienum* we find advanced by Socinians and Socinianizers, or we hear cast up to us as an absurdity; but we declare that it is not our view of the doctrine of original sin, nor that of our churches. We wash our hands of it." Dr. Landis, moreover, complains that his opponent astonishingly misleads his readers by asserting that such and such of the great Reformed divines are expressly with him, when in fact they are as expressly against him. This part of his work is, of course, chiefly a compilation of extracts. It is marked by profuse and laborious scholarship, and in most respects by fairness and discernment. He delights especially to quote against Dr. Hodge the highest Calvinists, as Beza, those who carried the federal theory to the greatest lengths, as De Moor, and those who especially entered the lists against Placæus and his theory of mediate consequential imputation. The reader has already seen instances of the first class in the citations made from Gomarus and Beza. This may be added, from John Owen's "Display of Arminianism" (Chap. 8): "Sin imputed by itself, without an inherent guilt, was never punished in any one but Christ." And again: "Now, be the punishment what it will, never so small, yet if we have no demerit of our own, nor interest in Adam's sin, it is such an act of injustice as we must reject from the Most Holy with a God forbid!"

Under the second class, De Moor, although carrying the federal system to its greatest height, says (De Moor's *Marckii Medulla*), on the twelfth question of the Heidelberg Catechism: "Adam was considered as the representative head of the whole human kind, and we all, adorned in him with the gift of righteousness, sinned in him, so that those gifts were taken away judicially, and in the way of penalty, from us, on account of the guilt contracted in Adam, not less than from the first parent, inasmuch as we ourselves spontaneously dilapidated these gifts when sinning in Adam." As to its being Adam's particular sin, he replies: "The crime, nevertheless, is common."

As specimens of the third class, we may recall the declarations of Andrew Rivet, the leading opponent of Placæus. And we add

declarations from Des Marets, who is writing with especial reference to the Synod of Charenton and Placcæus: "For divine imputation, seeing it is an act of justice, neither principally nor instrumentally produces native corruption, inhering in each one from his mother's womb." . . . "But it only subjects them to guilt and obligation to punishment on account of the sin of the first man, *which all committed in him.*" And from Wallæus, the colleague of Rivet, who endorsed his work as excellent: "The guilt of the first sin to condemnation (Rom. v. 16) cannot be imputed to posterity, unless that vitiosity of inherent sin intervene, seeing that the justice of God will not permit that the first sin should be imputed for condemnation to a posterity having no sin in themselves."

Sundry of the points of theology involved with the nature of imputation have been already indicated. Our author dwells especially upon two, among others. If Dr. Hodge's view of imputation is adopted, it must seriously modify our views of the divine justice and sovereignty. Instead of ascribing to him a full sovereignty, regulated by infinite reason and holiness, we must believe that an absolute physical sovereignty regulates his justice. We ought, in consistency, to lean to the supralapsarian dogma, that actions are simply right because God pleases to will them, instead of his willing them always because they are right. That God's mere will, in a word, is the sole source of right and wrong. Certainly the answer which Dr. Hodge recommends to the anxious objection, *How can it be right* for God to punish an innocent creature for the sin of another, to which he had not consented? savors of this harshness. God says he does so, therefore it is our business to believe it just.

The relations of reason and faith are also involved in this debate, and Dr. Landis charges that Dr. Hodge's extreme view concerning imputation has occasioned his falling into a dangerous inconsistency on this vital point. When dealing with Rationalists and Socinians, Dr. Hodge is usually firm and sound, repudiating their dogma, that comprehensibility by our reason is the test of revealed truth, and powerfully refuting it. But Dr. Landis complains that when he advances the great doctrine of our actual participation in Adam's sin—a truth he regards as being as essential to our anthropology as the Trinity is to our theology—Dr. Hodge rejects it as "unthinkable" and "nonsensi-

cal." And he justifies himself by saying that since the rational intuitions of the mind are as truly God's handiwork as revelation itself, no proposition of Scripture can contradict those intuitions. And this he claims for sound Protestant doctrine. But Dr. Landis replies that the human mind is now a fallen mind, belonging to persons who are "defiled in all the parts and faculties of the soul and body;" whence it is apparent they may err even in operations deemed intuitive. The history of opinion shows that such errors have often occurred, in fact. And when we concede, as Dr. Hodge seems to claim in this case, that the fallible man is to exercise the prerogative of deciding whether the pet opinion of his, which happens to clash with some proposition of the word, really is intuitive and necessary, we have nothing short of full fledged rationalism.

So stands the debate. Dr. Hodge has obviously been incautious. The reader will note, however, that Dr. Landis claims a right of judging some dogmas rationally impossible, similar to Dr. Hodge's claim. For while the latter pronounces the proposition of our actual participation in Adam's sin to be "unthinkable," the former pronounces, though with a less imperious dogmatism, that the gratuitous antecedent imputation of one person's guilt to another person wholly innocent conflicts with man's moral intuitions. Dr. Hodge's friends have doubtless said that his critic does the very thing which he condemns.

In fact, right reason has its proper prerogative, even in the presence of revelation. Did we not grant this, we should not be Protestants, but should be bowing with an implicit faith to the impossible absurdities of popish transubstantiation. Were it infallibly certain that a given judgment of the human intellect was intuitive and rationally necessary, then we should have a right to hold it, yea, be obliged to hold it, against all witnesses. Even when the clashing witness professed to be revelation, we should be obliged to say no. It could not be the true meaning of revelation, because the judgment held was the immediate and necessary prompting of laws of thought just as really established by God as the Bible itself. But the critical question remains: is this human judgment really the immediate and necessary result of man's constitutive laws of thought? Or is it merely a fallible opinion fondly cherished and unjustly elevated to the rank of an intuition by the pride and prejudice of the mind? The question

of the rights of reason all turns on that hinge. And, as Dr. Landis urges, we cannot grant to the individual fallible mind the right of deciding that question. To whom then shall we reserve that right of decision? If we say, to the document claiming inspiration, we seem to require, for the initial acceptance of that document, the mere blind, implicit faith of the Papist. Shall we refer the question, with Vincentius of Lerins, to the general *consensus* of Christians, and hold such judgments to be necessary and valid truths, *quæ ubique, quæ semper, quæ ab omnibus credita?* This famous platform, which so long satisfied the mind of the church, has in it an unquestionable element of truth. Could we define the *omnes* as the living elect, the real members of the invisible church, "who shall be all taught of God," we should be ready to accept it as a practical rule. But the invisible church is—well, *invisible*. It is not any *man's* prerogative to separate the "tares from the wheat," and to distinguish the minds really taught of the Holy Spirit from those who plausibly profess to be so taught. Tried by the rule of Vincentius, Dr. Landis is more nearly right than Dr. Hodge; for the former evidently has the *consensus* of the major part of the Reformers. There is no safer or better settlement of the rights of reason than that proposed by Turretin: that the reason has its prerogative, even concerning the things of faith, when it is not a carnal and inimical but a humbled and sanctified reason, and when its judgments are necessitated by the soul's constitutive laws of thought. Now, the individual believer may know, by the fruits of the Spirit and the witness of the Spirit, for himself whether he is truly humbled, sanctified, and truth-loving, and may thus know in himself that he is entitled to his conclusions as necessitated by the reason. But should he attempt to dictate his thought on only rational grounds to others, they would be entitled to reply: "Hast thou faith? Then *have it to thyself* before God."

Dr. Landis also proceeds to discuss the theory in its ethical relations, and argues that Dr. Hodge furnishes the basis for the following inferences: that a portion of the race was created in order to be damned; that the theory of restorationism is justified; that we should be willing to be damned for the glory of God; that God has introduced sin into the universe as a means for accomplishing the greatest good; that it obscures God's love towards his creatures and our true Christian conception of

his worthiness of our worship; that it subverts our view of God's justice and of human accountability, and thus undermines the obligation to repentance for sin. These consequences the friends of Dr. Hodge would of course deny with heat. No one supposes that he deliberately intended or approved them. It will be the business of the reader to judge whether his positions are really responsible for them.

We have thus attempted to put the reader in possession of the main thread of Dr. Landis's work, rather than to advance our own judgment of his doctrine.

We only say, in this direction, that he has left an able, acute, and learned work. He has shown himself in all these respects fully equal to the contest with his great opponent. The book should be in the hand of every Presbyterian minister. It is a *succedaneum* for many of the works of the Reformers on this cardinal subject, which are not generally attainable. Dr. Landis's learning and thoroughness were, in one respect, his snare. His discussion is in some degree repetitious, and consequently lacking in lucid order. All his reasonings, and even all his quotations, could have been compressed, by means of a closer method, into a smaller bulk.

In one particular he has, unintentionally no doubt, done scant justice to Dr. Hodge, in that he denies him any countenance for his extreme doctrine of imputation in the writings of the church divines. This does not appear to us true. Dr. Hodge could have quoted a number of them who seem to countenance him in his assertion of an antecedent, immediate, and even gratuitous imputation of the guilt of Adam's sin, and in the dogma that the very first initial subjective depravity of the infant human soul comes upon it *as penalty* of that imputed guilt of the *peccatum alienum*. So De Moor. Nearly all Dr. Hodge's positions may be found in the ninth chapter of Turretin's Locus on Original Sin. The true verdict on this history of opinion seems to us this: that a few of the more acute and forward of the Calvinistic divines were tempted, by their love of system and symmetry of statement and over-confidence in their own logic, to excogitate the ill-starred distinction of the antecedent and gratuitous imputation. Their error here was exactly like that of the supralapsarians, who thought they could throw light and symmetry on the doctrine of the decree by assigning what they thought was the logi-

cal order of sequence to its parts. But they became "wise above that which was written." They added no light to the mystery of the decree, but they misrepresented the moral attributes of God, and provoked a crowd of natural cavils and objections. The distinction of supralapsarians and infralapsarians ought never to have been heard of. Enlightened Presbyterians now rejoice that it is practically obsolete. So say we, this distinction of the antecedent imputation ought never to have been drawn. The eminent men who drew it, constrained by good sense, piety, and force of Scripture, usually contradicted it in substance by teaching along with the church that the original corruption and the imputation were coëval and inseparable, and by agreeing that a just and good God would not gratuitously impute the guilt of a *peccatum alienum* upon an agent personally innocent. And such was doubtless the conclusion of the great body of the Reformed and of their Confessions. They usually concurred in the statement of Stapfer, refusing to distinguish the mediate from the immediate imputation. But the difference with Dr. Hodge seems to have been this: his love of systematizing enticed him to adopt the extreme points of his great teacher, Turretin. But after they were adopted, the boldness and dogmatism of his temper and the confidence of his logic led him to follow them out hardily to their repulsive consequences. He scorns those amiable inconsistencies by which the others avoided the harsh consequences. The result was the extreme and exaggerated doctrine which has provoked several able protests, and last, this posthumous one of Dr. Landis.

With one more point this criticism will end, and this is a point by which it is humbly conceived the difficulty Dr. Hodge professed to find in the doctrine of our participation in Adam's sin may be relieved in some degree. Dr. Landis has asserted several times that not only do sinners of subsequent generations partake in Adam's sin, but partook in it *when he sinned*. He also claims that this is the teaching of the Reformers. If we understand him, his one authority for thus dating the epoch of our participation is the phrase in Rom. v. 12, ἐφ' ᾧ πάντες ἥμαρτον. He urges that this is *aorist*, and must mark a finished act completed in one definite past time. Hence, all the race actually sinned *when* Adam sinned, although none of the race except him then had any personal existence. Now, does he not herein unnecessarily

complicate and damage his doctrine? Does the apostle say that the common participation in sinning which he here teaches occurred as to the children of the nineteenth century, for instance, on the day Adam ate the forbidden fruit? No evidence appears of it. We surmise the apostle would be hugely surprised to hear that he had said so. The aorist does, indeed, describe definite past action. But when the agents are more than one, it does not describe the definite past actions as all occurring at one time. In the fifth chapter of Matthew, for instance, we have, again and again, an aorist to express *actions done at various past times by successive agents*. See verses 21st, 27th, 31st, 33d, ἐββήθη τοῖς ἀρχαίοις. If we translated these places, "Your ancients were *wont to say*," etc., it might be objected that we confounded with the aorist the more proper sense of the imperfect. But we must translate it virtually thus: "Your ancients" (succeeding each other in their generations) "said" (successively). So let us read in Rom. v. 12: "For that all successively sinned." When? *As soon as they began to exist and act*. Each human soul became an actual sinner when it began to exist. Then the apostle's reasoning will be, that the one man's sin (Adam's eating of the forbidden tree) brought death upon mankind, and so death passed upon all, not solely because the first man sinned, but also because all subsequent men like him sinned too. How much more simple is this reasoning? How much more accordant with fact and experience? We have no call to insist upon the "unthinkable" assertion that the soul born in the nineteenth century actually and literally shared the forbidden fruit by eating it while in Adam's loins sixty centuries before that soul had any personal existence at all. What the apostle says is: that the first man introduced death into the race by sinning in Paradise, and that this penalty judicially passed upon all men for this reason, among others, because all these men, like Adam, personally sinned also. Thus they adopted and endorsed their first father's rebellion. Thus their personal attitude exactly and invariably conformed itself to their federal attitude, and that freely. Thus it becomes just in God to associate them in the common associated guilt of their father. If the question be asked, How it came about that they all began existence with sinful wills and lives? the answer of the Scriptures and of the Reformed theology is, because it pleased a holy, wise,

just, and benevolent God, in creating *a race* existing by the tie of generation, to so make its first head the natural and federal head of all the members of the race as to let his action under probation equally determine for them the same legal state and the same moral state as for himself, and both in inseparable conjunction and with coordinate originality. Adam sinned, was condemned, and died. His natural seed are born equally dead in sin and condemned with him. So God ordained. This is our fall in Adam—a fall both judicial and moral; both moral and judicial.