

Original Sin

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So what is original sin? Where did the concept come from? How did Protestants borrow portions of it from Catholicism? More importantly why do we see evidence of it in Seventh-day Adventism? You might also wish to ask, what difference does it make for us anyway? Does it really change the way we think and relate to salvation? These and other questions will be addressed in this study, hopefully, giving important answers we need to know so we don't fall into the same quicksand of Biblical uncertainty as mainline protestant churches. We need to know what we believe and why we believe as we do.

Desmond Ford's name often comes up in conversations, but many people don't really know what the issue of his dismissal at Glacier View¹ in 1980, from the church really meant. After all, he was an ordained pastor teaching for many years in our denominational schools of higher learning, instructing the new generation of pastors and administrators at that time. Let us look at one example of his theological divergences.

Desmond Ford: (*i.e. Augustinian hamartiology*²)

"The truth, of course, is that because we are fallen, because we are BORN IN SIN, because we are born without the Holy Spirit, because the curse of Adam's sin is upon us from the beginning, we cannot perfectly obey a holy law. Not even after conversion. That's because every converted person is really two people....So even after conversion, never for one day do I fully fulfill the law of God. That's because I still have an old nature." (Right With God Right Now, pp. 241-242).

If no human was ever "born without the Holy Spirit" then how was it that John the Baptist was "filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb."? [Luke 1:15] And, speaking of Jesus our perfect example, Mary "was found with child of the Holy Ghost." [Matt 1:18] Also "for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost." [Matt 1:20] We may try and make an argument for Jesus because He was God incarnate³ but as for John, he was all human. There are others [Enoch and Noah for example] who allowed the Holy Spirit to lead them so that they "walked with God". [See Gen 5:22 - 24; 6:9]⁴

¹ In 1980 a group of Adventist church leaders such as administrators and scholars met to discuss the future of controversial theologian Desmond Ford. This event, which is now known as the Glacier View controversy, resulted in Ford being removed from church employment because of his criticisms of the "investigative judgment" doctrine. [See Wikipedia for details.]

² **hamartiology:** n. "that part of theology which deals with sin," 1875, from Greek hamartia "sin" (see hamartia) + -ology. [Online dictionary source]

³ **incarnate:** invested with bodily and especially human nature and form. [Merriam-Webster]

⁴ Gen 5:22-24 And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five

“It was Ford's emphasis on righteousness by faith that led him to see the necessity for reinterpretation of the SDA scheme of prophecy” (Desmond and Gillian Ford, *For the Sake of the Gospel: Throw out the bath water, but keep the Baby,* p. 153).

Let us pause for a moment, and take notice of what we just read. Desmond Ford taught in our seminaries students for a number of years. Those students would later occupy key positions of leadership in the Seventh-day Adventist church. This is of critical importance. To make sure we understand this point I reiterate. Ford taught pastors and church leaders the so called “new theology” and they took positions as pastors in our churches and began occupying key positions in administration. Is it any wonder why we have a divided church today! Not only did Ford teach the Augustinian doctrine of original sin but detoured away from the righteousness by faith of pioneer Seventh-day Adventists. Further, it can be found that he failed to accept the investigative judgment. When one veers off track on one truth other errors are sure to follow. At this juncture the average church member began to be re- indoctrinated away from the original pattern and toward the evangelical gospel.

We may wish, at this point to further begin to understand the differences in theology between our pioneers, as instructed by God through Ellen White, and the differences we see in the mind-set currently expressed. There are still a few pastors who correctly understand the truths once given us such as Elder Kirkpatrick. Note particularly the differences between the Ford statements above with those following. Reread them if you need to compare the two with each other. You may be shocked to see the differences. In effect it is the difference between truth and error.

Pastor Larry Kirkpatrick:

“To say that a person is a ‘born sinner’ or such things is a destructive combination of terms. We are born, as the accepted SDA position says, with ‘weaknesses and tendencies to evil.’ We are born damaged. Sin is always by choice. Once we have chosen sin we have chosen intentional rebellion against God. Sin is never involuntary. The results or consequences of sin come to us involuntarily, but in the end everything boils down to choice. Some will align themselves with Satan's kingdom intentionally and completely and receive the mark; some will align themselves intentionally and completely with the kingdom of heaven and be sealed. There will remain no intermediate or indeterminate group. All will choose for themselves intentional alignment with the principles of selfishness or of selflessness.

“To adopt the terminology of ‘born sinners’ is to make needless concession to an alien to-the-Bible theological system. Adventists ought not do it. It also misleads those who might be studying the

years: And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him. [All texts will be taken from KJV unless otherwise specified.]

Gen 6:9 These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.

Bible closely who would otherwise be led to consider Adventism more closely. Beside these things, such phraseology serves as a gateway to another theological system which is incompatible with the Adventist view and by which some will be led into false tracks. Let us be intelligent on these topics.

“Comment on Ford’s Theology: (*How Ford’s theology lacks validity*)

It looks like Ford's main problem is that he discounts the power of God so much. I doesn't matter how awful sin is or how depraved human nature is in the long run, if one takes the Gospel as the Bible presents it. Ford says we can't obey the law perfectly even after conversion. That limits what Grace can do! He says there are two people in each of us. But Paul makes it clear that one man is dead, and the other man is Christ. Paul says ‘For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.’ -- Romans 8:2.

“Faith is the thing. We need more of that. It isn't enough to maximize sin so victory is impossible - and thus unnecessary, or even to minimize sin so we can imagine victory to be possible. We have to have more faith in Christ who is able to do exceeding abundantly more than we ask or imagine. Faith is the key to victory.

“Parable:

You are standing on a river bank, and you pick up a rock. What kind of rock is it? Is it a ‘sunken rock’? Not really. Is it a ‘sinking rock’? It's not in the process of ‘sinking’, but on the other hand, it is the nature of rocks to sink - so in that sense it could be called a sinking rock. Now you toss it into the river. Guess what? It sinks. Now it is a sunken rock for sure.

“Now if we say that it is a sin for a rock to sink, is the rock guilty just because it's a rock with a sinking nature? No. But the rock at the bottom of the river is guilty. Furthermore, its only hope is for someone to go and fish it out, and keep it out. A rock thus saved is still liable to sink because it's still a rock. But with your help it need not sink ever again.”

Do you have the faith to believe that “Christ in you, the hope of glory” can work in us mightily so as to be overcomers, devoid of sin? [See Col 1:27 - 29]⁵ Since sin is a choice can we allow the Holy Spirit to influence us to make the correct decision each and every time a temptation comes to us? Isn't this possible? If you say no, then you limit the power of God in your life. It's really that simple.

To simplify; let us sample a few differences between Desmond Ford's Augustinian theology (the so called new theology) and the original historic Seventh-day Adventist teachings. Too many in our churches are falling for the evangelical gospel errors of original sin without even realizing it.

⁵ Col 1:27-29 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

Ford's New Theology	Historic Adventism
Born Sinners.	Sinners by choice.
No human Born with the Holy Spirit.	<u>Not true</u> : Example; John the Baptist. ⁶
Cannot perfectly obey a holy law.	<u>Not true</u> : Enoch ⁷ , Elijah ⁸ , 144,000 ⁹
Cannot obey even after conversion.	<u>Not true</u> : "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not." I John 3:6

Spirit of Prophecy:

"Sinful man can find hope and righteousness only in God; and no human being is righteous any longer than he has faith in God, and maintains a vital connection with Him..."--Testimonies to Ministers, pp. 366, 367.

Did you capture what is being said here? Notice the secret of success is "a vital connection with Him". As we saw from our definition of "incarnate", Jesus shows us the way. In His example of having "human nature" he was still without sin. [See Heb 4:15]¹⁰ Many people become confused as what constitutes sin. Question: Is temptation a sin? No! Keep in mind the difference of thought between those who believe in sin as choice vs. those who believe sin as nature. The answer is of utmost importance. If we have the incorrect belief here it can cost us our salvation. On the one hand original sin gives us an excuse for sinning, but on the other hand, choice makes us responsible for our actions.

How is it then that this wretched teaching came into being that we are born sinners instead of sin being a choice we make? Let us look at a few Bible verses telling us babies are not born sinners.

Babies Not Born Sinners:

"Moreover your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had

⁶ Luke 1:15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

⁷ Gen 5:24 And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.

⁸ 2 Kings 2:11 And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

⁹ See Rev. 7, 14, Rev 2:7, Rev 2:17, Rev 3:12, Rev 3:21

¹⁰ Heb 4:15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. KJV

no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it.” Deuteronomy 1:39

“Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.” Isaiah 7:15-16

“For the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.” Genesis 8:21

Notice this last verse says “from his youth” not from his birth. Only after the person is aware enough to make an informed decision and chooses to sin does sin occur. We are not guilty for Adam’s sin any more than we are from our parent’s sin.

“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.” Ezekiel 18:20

“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 [See also: Ezekiel 18:2 - 4, 17 - 20, 25, 29 - 30]

Here’s one that is too simple to miss. Emphasis is mine. It is all about **personal responsibility**.

“But he slew not their children, but did as it is written in the law in the book of Moses, where the Lord commanded, saying, The fathers shall not die for the children, neither shall the children die for the fathers, but **every man shall die for his own sin**.” II Chronicles 25:4

Follow the logic here: “God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.” Ecclesiastes 7:29 The logic follows thus; If we follow God we are “upright”. On the other hand, if we sin it is because of our “many inventions”. Again, we are placed in the responsible position. To sin or not to sin, that is the question.

Pastor Larry Kirkpatrick: “The key point is how all become sinners. By birth, as [some] suggests, or by personal choice? It can be very difficult for people to sort out why they believe something. They may honestly claim that they hold to a teaching because of the Bible evidence, and yet adhere to it for quite different reasons. Notice, they may honestly hold a view based on a mistaken understanding, which they perceive as being Bible-based. However, the facts of history and the Bible including the NT is that this teaching [original sin] was not taught during Bible times. but blossoms fully only around 400 ad. It is post NT.”

Is sin voluntary or involuntary?

“Choose you this day whom ye will serve...” Joshua 24:15

“Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations...they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not.” Isaiah 66:3-4

“And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart (that which he thought and chose to do in his heart) was only evil continually.” Genesis 6:5

“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.” Matt. 5:8

“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” Matthew 5:48

“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.” Hebrews 12:14

“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The Spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double- minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.” James 3:4-10

“Repent and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.” Ezekiel 18:30-32

“Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not.” I John 3:6

“Sin is the transgression of the law.” I John 3:4.

“Him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin.” James 4:17.

All these verses tell us that sin is a choice, one that babies are incapable of making. So, it is obvious we become sinners by choice when we come to the conscious realization between right and wrong. We either choose to remain right with God or choose the path of following Satan.

When Jesus was born was He exempt from the same nature as we have?

“What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels...But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels.” Heb. 2:6-7, 9

“For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.” Heb 2:11

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same.” Hebrews 2:14

“For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.” Hebrews 2:16

“Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren.” Hebrews 2:17

“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” Hebrews 4:15

“The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.” Matthew 1:1

“Which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God.” Luke 3:38

“Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh.” Romans 1:3

“God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.” Gal. 4:4

Could it be we exhibit the same antichrist belief *if* we deny the humanity of Jesus? After all we know where this belief comes from.¹¹

“Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.” I John 4:2-3

¹¹ “The doctrine that men are born sinners is a pagan doctrine and false. It is a pagan doctrine foisted in among the Christian doctrines in the fifth century A.D. by Augustine, who had been for nine years a disciple of the Manichaeans. The Manichaeans were a Gnostic-Christian sect, with the Christian elements reduced to a minimum. They taught the pagan philosophy that all matter is inherently evil. Because of this view, they also taught that Christ's bodily manifestations were only apparent and that he did not actually come in the flesh. They denied the real incarnation of Christ, as well as his bodily resurrection because of their view of the essentially evil nature of all matter. Augustine's nine years with them accustomed him to regard human nature as essentially evil and human freedom as a delusion.”

<http://www.gospeltruth.net/OS100bibleverses.htm>

“Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.” II John 7-11

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” John 1:14

“Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.” Hebrews 2:14

For further information regarding the origin of the doctrine of original sin see endnote #1.¹ As a side note here, we are instructed “Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you.” Deut. 4:2 See also Revelation 22:18. Also, pay attention as to the source of the original sin doctrine.

Let us examine some other points of interest.

A Monstrous Invention Of Men

The whole original sin dogma is a monstrous invention of men, foreign to the Bible, and an imposition on the Holy Word of God:

THE BIBLE says absolutely nothing of “The Immaculate Conception.” (“The Immaculate Conception” is the doctrine that Mary, the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, “was conceived free from any corruption of original sin” in order that she might be pure enough to be the mother of Christ.) The doctrine of “The Immaculate Conception” is an invention and an addition to the doctrines of the Bible made necessary by a belief in the doctrine of original sin.

THE BIBLE says absolutely nothing of the “Baptism of Children for the Remission of Original Sin.” This is another invention, and an addition by men to the doctrines of the Bible, made necessary by a belief in the doctrine of original sin.

THE BIBLE says absolutely nothing about “Limbo.” “Limbo” is another invention made necessary by a belief in the doctrine of original sin. (“Limbo” was invented for infants who have died without baptism. It is believed that “Limbo” is a place where babies go, when they have died without baptism; and, in place of going to either heaven or hell, they go to “Limbo,” where “neither the joys of heaven, nor the torments of hell prevail.”

DOES THE BIBLE ever speak about “inherited guilt”? Does the Bible ever speak about “God creating” sinners? Does it talk about men having the power to “beget” either saints or sinners? Does the Bible ever use the term “inborn sin nature” or “Adamic sin nature”? Does the Bible mention “original” sin or “actual” sin, making a distinction between the two? No! None of these doctrines

and none of these terms can be found in the Bible. They are all inventions of men and additions by men to the doctrines of the Bible.

Original Sin Destroys The Biblical Truth That Man Can Only Be Guilty For His Own Sin

The false teaching that we are born sinners and guilty and condemned for the sin of Adam destroys and takes away the true teaching of the Bible that man is not guilty and cannot be guilty for the sin of Adam or any other man, but only for his own sin:

“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.” Ezekiel 18:20

“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

“But he slew not their children, but did as it is written in the law in the book of Moses, where the Lord commanded saying, The fathers shall not die for the children, neither shall the children die for the fathers, but every man shall die for his own sin.” II Chronicles 25:4

Remember what Desmond Ford Taught? Again, keep in mind this man was allowed to instruct in our schools of higher learning for many years. Is it any wonder our own people are crippled in our understanding of such Biblical truths. See where the assurance of victory over sin goes with Ford’s teachings.

The Original Sin Doctrine Teaches That The Christian Cannot Obey God

Dear Christian, the doctrine of original sin is a devilish doctrine! It is anti-Christ, anti-God, and anti-Bible! *The Bible teaches that the Christian **can obey** God and overcome sin through God's power and grace in Christ Jesus. The doctrine of original sin teaches that the Christian cannot obey God in this life regardless of the grace of God and the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit!*

We are next going to examine what men teach vs what God’s Word Says.

Man Teaches:

“This corruption of nature, during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated.” [Westminster Confession]

“From this original corruption whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.” [Westminster Confession]

“...whereby he is utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to evil, and that continually.” [Larger Catechism]

“No man is able, either of himself, or by any grace received in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God, but doth daily break them in thought, word, and deed.” [Larger Catechism]

“They deplore their inability to love their Redeemer, to keep themselves from sin, to live a holy life in any degree adequate to their own convictions of their obligations... They recognize it as the fruit and evidence of the corruption of their nature derived as a sad inheritance from their first parents.” [Charles Hodge, Systematic Theology, Vol. II, p.273]

The above doctrine throws the flood-gates wide open for rebellion against God! Surely God (who knows all things) would not be so unreasonable as to judge us for our sins when he knows that we are unable to obey him! What? Would God command us to do what he knows we cannot do, and this on pain of the everlasting punishment of hell? Maybe a better way of expressing this is to say that the sinner is eternally nonexistent.

But, what a devilish doctrine is this that we are unable to obey God! The Bible does not teach that we are unable to obey God. There is not one verse in the entire Bible that teaches that the Christian is unable to obey God! The following verses are only a few of the many in the Bible that teach that the Christian has been liberated from the power of sin by the grace and power of Christ, and can live without sin and be victorious in his service to God:

But God's Word Says:

The Biblical Teaching Is That The Christian Does Overcome Sin

“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.” Romans 6:6-7

“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.” Romans 6:14

“But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine that was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.” Romans 6:17-18

“But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.” Rom. 6:22

“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” Romans 8:2

“And thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.” Matthew 1:21

“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.” I Thessalonians 5:23-24

“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.” Jude 24-25

“Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin...If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” John 8:34, 36

“And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins: and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not.” I John 3:5-6

“He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.” I John 3:8-10

“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?” I John 5:4-5

“We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not.” I John 5:18

So what is sin? Can you see it to be a choice and not something you were born with? Further, we could state that not doing something when we know we should is also a sin.

Sin Is Doing Evil Or Wickedness

The Bible teaches that sin is doing wickedness or evil. A baby is not born a murderer, a thief, or a liar. He cannot be born a murderer, a thief, or a liar for he has never murdered or stolen or lied. The baby would have to commit these sins to be a sinner. There are hundreds of texts in the Bible that speak of sin, and sin is always the evil or wickedness that the sinner does:

“Unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who knowing the judgment of God, that they that commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.” Romans 1:29-32

“Thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doeth the same things. But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them that commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them that do such things, and doeth the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?...who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that

are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil.” Romans 2:1-3, 6-9

“Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” Galatians 5:19-21

“To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.” James 4:17

“The children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil...” Romans 9:11

“For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; and spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; and delivered just Lot vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.” II Peter 2:4-9

“He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.” I John 3:7-10

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.” I Corinthians 6:9-10

“But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not once be named among you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience.” Ephesians 5:3-6

Notice the distinction between temptation and sin in the following. While temptation is the occasion for all sin, sin only occurs when yielded to.

The Bible Teaches That Temptation Is The Occasion Of All Sin

The Bible teaches that temptation is the occasion of all sin. Man is not a sinner by nature or by birth; man is a sinner because he yields to temptation:

“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.” James 1:12

“Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” James 1:14-15

“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able...” I Corinthians 10:13

“The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.” Matthew 13:38-39

“Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.” Luke 8:12

“Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.” John 8:44

“He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.” I John 3:8

“Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.” Mark 14:38

“And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan.” Mark 1:13

“He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” Heb. 4:15

Here is something to think about and seriously consider!

We need to realize that sin came into being from choice not from nature.

Thus we cannot excuse ourselves that we sin because of our natures. The point being, of course, is that choice is involved and not dependent on the nature we have but instead of the choices we make. The devil fell from his original perfection without a sinful nature to make him sin. (See Ezekiel 28:13-17.) The third part of the holy angels were tempted and fell from their original perfection without a sinful nature to make them sin. (See II Peter 2:4 and Jude 6.) And holy Adam and Eve were tempted and fell from their original perfection without a sinful nature to make them sin. (See Genesis 3:1-24.) And the Bible everywhere teaches that temptation is the occasion and cause of all sin today as it was with Adam and Eve in the beginning:

“Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” James 1:12-15

If the doctrine of original sin is true, then Jesus, his Apostles, and, indeed, all the inspired writers of the Bible lived in total ignorance of it. For they never spoke of original sin as being the occasion or cause of any sin! But they spoke of **the agency of the devil and of temptation as the cause and occasion of all sin**! Jesus exhorted his disciples to “watch and pray, that they not enter into temptation.” He taught his disciples to pray, “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” His Apostles, in their epistles, exhorted the believers to guard against the “snares of the devil,” lest they be tempted and fall into sin. They exhorted the believers to “be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour,” and to “put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”

In place of attributing the sins of mankind to a physical connection with Adam, they attributed the sins of mankind to a moral connection with the tempter, the devil. They spoke of sinners as being children of the devil, and of the devil as being their father. They spoke of men's sins as being the works of the devil, and they spoke of Christ coming to destroy the works of the devil. And finally, they spoke of the sinner as being a captive of the devil, and in need of escaping from the snare of the devil.

“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” James 1:12-15

“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man...” I Corinthians 10:13

“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” Hebrews 4:15

All Sin Is A Free Moral Choice That Transgresses God's Law

It is impossible to be born a sinner or to beget a sinner. For sin is not a material or physical substance¹²; it is moral and not physical, and it is only the soul or the spirit of man which has the POWER OF CHOICE and sins. There is nothing material about sin; it is a wicked moral choice, it is an evil act, it is disobedience or transgression of the law of God. The Bible says that ALL SIN is disobedience or transgression of God's law. No one can be a sinner without transgressing the law of God. There is no sin, and there can be no sin, if the law of God is not transgressed. The first sin in

¹² Our bodies, in and of themselves, are not sin. Sin originates in the mind, then the mind commands the body to participate in acts of sin. Another way of expressing this is to say the body does not control the mind, the mind controls the body.

the garden was a transgression of God's law, and ALL SIN since has been a transgression of the law of God:

“And (God) said...Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?” Genesis 3:11

“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.” I John 3:4

“But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.” James 2:9-11

“For where no law is, there is no transgression.” Rom. 4:15

“sin is the transgression of the law.” I John 3:4

“For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; (for not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.” Romans 2:12-16

For a partial understanding how Seventh-day Adventists relate to original sin and that of Augustine see footnote #2.²

An interesting side here is referenced in a book by Roy Adams. The nature of Christ, the new theology and Original Sin are connected and tied together.

“Pfandl’s reference to Roy Adams’ 1994 book *The Nature of Christ* is no help to his case, and for several reasons. Apart from shoddy scholarship and truncated history, Adams’ book reached a new low in civility by comparing advocates of post-Fall Christology and the perfectibility of Christian character to Jim Jones and David Koresh. Pfandl’s reference to Adams’ book is thus somewhat ironic, in view of Pfandl’s concern about his theological opponents allegedly manifesting the ‘spirit of criticism’.”¹³

¹³ NEW (OR SIMPLY FALSE) THEOLOGY? Reflections on Gerhard Pfandl, “What is New in the ‘New Theology’?” by an SDA pastor, Kevin D. Paulson.

“Pfandl’s reference to modern translations of I John 3:4, which render the verse as saying, “Sin is lawlessness”, says nothing about this state of lawlessness being an involuntary one received at birth. Nor is this meaning required by any of the other verses Pfandl cites, which speak both of the desperate and complete nature of human depravity (Isaiah 1:6; Jeremiah 17:9; Matthew 12:34; 15:19; Luke 11:13). Merely affirming, for example, that “the heart is deceived above all things, and desperately wicked” (Jeremiah 17:9), doesn’t require us to conclude we are born this way. All this and the other verses say is that the degeneracy caused by sin to humanity is pervasive and universal. None say this condition is received apart from choice.”¹⁴

“... the point is to ask whether the beliefs of pastors and laity concerning salvation and the humanity of Christ exert any noteworthy impact on the choices Adventists are presently making in matters of doctrine, worship, and lifestyle. The record of recent decades and the impact of dominant thought patterns among us suggest a decided correlation.”¹⁵

“The student quoted at the start of the book in question spoke of the need to ‘overcome the hurdle in our minds that Jesus was not exactly the same as we are. He was God’ (p. 10). No one, at least in this conversation, disputes the fact that Jesus was God. But Ellen White is very clear Jesus didn’t come to prove what a God could do in the conflict with sin.”¹⁶

“Christ’s overcoming and obedience is that of a true human being. In our conclusions, we make many mistakes because of our erroneous views of the human nature of our Lord. When we give to His human nature a power that it is not possible for man to have in his conflict with Satan, we destroy the completeness of His humanity. . . .

“The obedience of Christ to His Father is the same obedience that is required of man. Man cannot overcome Satan’s temptations without divine power to combine with his instrumentality. So with Jesus Christ; He could lay hold of divine power. He came not to our world to give the obedience of a lesser God to a greater, but as a man to obey God’s holy law, and in this way He is our example. The Lord Jesus came to our world, not to reveal what a God could do, but what a man could do, through faith in God’s power to help in every emergency. Man is, through faith, to become a partaker in the divine nature, and to overcome every temptation wherewith he is beset.”¹⁷

“The Lord now demands that every son and daughter of Adam, through faith in Jesus Christ, serve Him in human nature which we now have. The Lord Jesus has bridged the gulf that sin has made.

¹⁴ Ibid,

¹⁵ Paulson The Quest For an Elusive Compromise.

¹⁶ Ibid. [The student referred to here was from the book.]

¹⁷ White, SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 7, p. 929.

He has connected earth with heaven, and finite man with the infinite God. Jesus, the world's Redeemer, could only keep the commandments of God in the same way that humanity can keep them."¹⁸

In essence, those Seventh-day Adventists who believe Jesus took unfallen human nature, sin is impossible to overcome before Jesus comes, and related subject matter are adhering to the belief of original sin whether or not they wish to admit it.¹⁹

In Conclusion:

Those who believe sin cannot be overcome before Jesus returns are following an apostate belief, one began in the early centuries after the apostles died. It relates directly to the concept of original sin. The idea that one cannot overcome sin is a half truth. As we have discovered, apart from the Holy Spirit's influence this is true. However, with Him it is not only possible but an assurance, one necessary for salvation to occur. We know this because at probation's close every sinner will remain so as will every victory over sin will be won.²⁰ The early church became corrupted in this error primarily through Augustine's exposure the pagan society in which he lived. Could we be so infected also by our cultural society? Unfortunately, yes. People like Desmond Ford picked up on the idea and perpetuated it, teaching it in our institutions to the then future pastors and church leaders. Could this be the reason we see two distinct beliefs systems within the Seventh-day Adventist church? I believe the answer is a resounding yes!

Some additional thoughts before we finish:

Proponents of New Theology (really not new at all) like to present the Luther era Reformers as unanimous on the question of Original Sin, but apparently it isn't so clear-cut as some would claim. At least Huldrych Zwingli expressed serious doubts, which appeared, ironically, in his defense of infant baptism against the Anabaptists (which he defended as a covenant agreement, and not a washing away of Original Sin): [See Endnote #3 for further discussion/history.]³

Unfortunately, Wikipedia quotes in endnote #2, “. . . there is no dogmatic Adventist position on original sin”. Since the publication of “Questions on Doctrines” in 1957, there has been much blurring of pre 1950's Seventh-day Adventist understanding of Biblical and Spirit of Prophecies truths. It is almost as though a whole new church has emerged in theological venue. By hoping to gain the favor of Evangelicals we told them what they wanted to hear. Then we began to believe the deception we were trying to sell them with. Compromise with error always has a penalty attached.

¹⁸ Kevin Paulson

¹⁹ For further documentation see: www.ourfirmplatform.com. Look under Written Articles/Kevin Paulson

²⁰ Rev 22:11 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

We have only to look at the history of ancient Israel and their compromises and joining with the nations around them to understand how this can happen. If we would but examine our own history we could once again see where we have gone astray and be able to turn back again to the truths once given us.

There could be so much more written here but, at the bottom line, we need to be astutely aware of what we believe. Without even realizing it we can adhere to a belief that at first we would deny but now see many are ignorantly adhering to. Sin is a choice we make. To believe otherwise is to believe in the doctrine of original sin by default.

I do wish to acknowledge many persons not recognized in this document as they are too numerous to mention. Not all written here have been my words even those not expressed by quotes.

— Bill Eichner

End Notes

1. My thanks and credit to <http://www.gospeltruth.net/OS100bibleverses.htm>

Not Taught In The Bible

“The whole human race existed as one moral person in Adam; so that in Adam's sin we sinned, we corrupted ourselves, and we brought guilt and merited condemnation upon ourselves. Adam's will was the will of the species, so that in Adam's free act, the will of the race revolted against God and the nature of the race corrupted itself.” Doctrine of Augustine, fifth century A.D.

Not Taught In The Bible

“Adam was the federal head of the race and God made a covenant with Adam, our federal head, agreeing to give eternal life to him and to all his descendants if he obeyed; but making the penalty for his disobedience the condemnation of all his descendants. Since our legal representative or federal head did sin, God imputes his sin, his guilt, and his condemnation to all his descendants.” Doctrine of Cocceius, 17th century A.D.

Not Taught In The Bible

“Because Adam sinned all men are born with a corrupt sinful nature and are guilty and condemned for that nature. They are not guilty for the sin of Adam, but are guilty only for the corrupt sinful nature that they are born with. It is the corrupt nature only, which they inherit from Adam, that is sufficient cause and legal ground for God to condemn them.” Doctrine of Placeus, 17th century A.D.

Direct Quotations, That Are Not Taught In The Bible

“Our nature sinned in Adam.” And, “It was just, that after our nature had sinned... we should be born animal and carnal.” [Augustine]

“Our nature there transformed for the worse, not only became a sinner, but also begets sinners.” [Augustine]

“Unconscious infants, dying without baptism, are damned by virtue of their inherited guilt.” [Augustine]

“From this condemnation no one is exempt, not even newborn children.” [Augustine]

“The 'nature and essence' of man is, from his birth, an evil tree and a child of wrath.” [Martin Luther]

“Even children, dying unbaptized, are lost.” [Martin Luther]

“Original sin is the hereditary depravity and corruption of our nature... which first makes us subject to the wrath of God, and then produces in us works which the Scripture calls works of the flesh.” [Calvin]

“The sin of Adam is the immediate cause and ground of inborn depravity, guilt, and condemnation to the whole human race.” [A. H. Strong, Systematic Theology, p. 611]

“This evil tendency or inborn determination to evil, since it is the real cause of actual sins, must itself be sin, and as such must be guilty and condemnable.” [A. H. Strong, Systematic Theology, p. 611]

“Q. 16. Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression?”

“A. The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity; all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him, in his first transgression. [Shorter Catechism”]

“Q. 19. What is the misery of that estate whereinto men fell?”

“A. All mankind by their fall lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever. [Shorter Catechism]

“There is in us a necessity of sinning.” [Augustine]

“Every man is guilty in Adam, and is consequently born with a depraved and corrupt nature. And this inner corruption is the unholy fountain of all actual sins.” [L. Berkhof, Systematic Theology, p. 251]

“Original sin is the corruption of man's nature, whereby he is utterly indisposed, disabled and made opposite to all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to evil, and that continually.” [Larger Catechism]

“From this original corruption whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.” [Westminster Confession]

“This corruption of nature, during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated: and although it be through Christ pardoned and mortified, yet both itself, and all the motions thereof, are truly and properly sin.” [Westminster Confession]

“It may be difficult to reconcile the doctrine of innate evil dispositions with the justice and goodness of God...A malignant being is an evil being whether he was so made (created by God) or so born...We admit that it is repugnant to our moral judgments that God should create an evil being; or that any being should be born in a state of sin, unless this being so born is the consequence of a just judgment.” [Charles Hodge, Systematic Theology, Vol. II, p. 308]

“No man is able, either of himself, or by any grace received in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God, but doth daily break them in thought, word, and deed.” [Larger Catechism]

“They deplore their inability to love their Redeemer, to keep themselves from sin, to live a life in any degree adequate to their own convictions of their obligations...they recognize it as the fruit and evidence of the corruption of their nature derived as a sad inheritance from their first parents.” [Charles Hodge, Systematic Theology, Vol. II, p. 273]

My Note: So, we see that the idea of “Original Sin” is not a Seventh-day Adventist doctrine in any way. Unfortunately these concepts came from our bright minds being taught from outside the Holy Scriptures and Spirit of Prophecy. We see a borrowing from apostates. When we send our future pastors and leaders to obtain their higher degrees to other church entities, they bring back poisonous errors akin to a rat bringing back poison injected wheat kernels to her nest for her young to eat and also die.

2. Wikipedia — Seventh-day Adventism

“Seventh-day Adventists believe that humans are inherently sinful due to the fall of Adam, but they do not totally accept the Augustinian/Calvinistic understanding of original sin, taught in terms of original guilt, but hold more to what could be termed the ‘total depravity’ tradition. Seventh-day Adventists have historically preached a doctrine of inherited weakness, but not a doctrine of inherited guilt. According to Augustine and Calvin, humanity inherits not only Adam's depraved nature but also the actual guilt of his transgression, and Adventists look more toward the Wesleyan model.”

In part, the Adventist position on original sin reads:

“The nature of the penalty for original sin, i.e., Adam's sin, is to be seen as literal, physical, temporal, or actual death – the opposite of life, i.e., the cessation of being. By no stretch of the scriptural facts

can death be spiritualised as depravity. God did not punish Adam by making him a sinner. That was Adam's own doing. All die the first death because of Adam's sin regardless of their moral character – children included.

“Early Adventists Pioneers (such as George Storrs and Uriah Smith) tended to de-emphasize the morally corrupt nature inherited from Adam, while stressing the importance of actual, personal sins committed by the individual. They thought of the ‘sinful nature’ in terms of physical mortality rather than moral depravity. Traditionally, Adventists look at sin in terms of willful transgressions, and that Christ triumphed over sin. Adventism believes that Christ is both our Substitute and our Example. They base their belief on texts such as ‘Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.’ (1 John 3:4)

“Though believing in the concept of inherited sin from Adam, there is no dogmatic Adventist position on original sin. Related articles dealing with the subject are publicly available on the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's official website on theological doctrine, the Biblical Research Institute.”

Wikipedia — Augustine

“Augustine of Hippo wrote that original sin is transmitted by concupiscence and enfeebles freedom of the will without destroying it.

“Augustine of Hippo (354–430) taught that Adam's sin is transmitted by concupiscence, or ‘hurtful desire’, resulting in humanity becoming a *massa damnata* (mass of perdition, condemned crowd), with much enfeebled, though not destroyed, freedom of will. When Adam sinned, human nature was thenceforth transformed. Adam and Eve, via sexual reproduction, recreated human nature. Their descendants now live in sin, in the form of concupiscence, a term Augustine used in a metaphysical, not a psychological sense. Augustine insisted that concupiscence was not a being but a bad quality, the privation of good or a wound. He admitted that sexual concupiscence (*libido*) might have been present in the perfect human nature in paradise, and that only later it became disobedient to human will as a result of the first couple's disobedience to God's will in the original sin. In Augustine's view (termed ‘Realism’), all of humanity was really present in Adam when he sinned, and therefore all have sinned. Original sin, according to Augustine, consists of the guilt of Adam which all humans inherit. As sinners, humans are utterly depraved in nature, lack the freedom to do good, and cannot respond to the will of God without divine grace. Justo Gonzalez interprets Augustine's teaching that grace is irresistible, results in conversion, and leads to perseverance.

“Augustine articulated his explanation in reaction to Pelagianism, which insisted that humans have of themselves, without the necessary help of God's grace, the ability to lead a morally good life, and thus denied both the importance of baptism and the teaching that God is the giver of all that is good. Pelagius claimed that the influence of Adam on other humans was merely that of bad example. Augustine held that the effects of Adam's sin are transmitted to his descendants not by example but by the very fact of generation from that ancestor. A wounded nature comes to the soul and body of

the new person from his/her parents, who experience libido (or concupiscence). Augustine's view was that human procreation was the way the transmission was being effected. He did not blame, however, the sexual passion itself, but the spiritual concupiscence present in human nature, soul and body, even after baptismal regeneration. Christian parents transmit their wounded nature to children, because they give them birth, not the "re-birth". Augustine used Ciceronian Stoic concept of passions, to interpret St. Paul's doctrine of universal sin and redemption. In that view, also sexual desire itself as well as other bodily passions were consequence of the original sin, in which pure affections were wounded by vice and became disobedient to human reason and will. As long as they carry a threat to the dominion of reason over the soul they constitute moral evil, but since they do not presuppose consent, one cannot call them sins. Humanity will be liberated from passions, and pure affections will be restored only when all sin has been washed away and ended, that is in the resurrection of the dead.

“Augustine believed that the only definitive destinations of souls are heaven and hell. He concluded that unbaptized infants go to hell as a consequence of original sin. The Latin Church Fathers who followed Augustine adopted his position, which became a point of reference for Latin theologians in the Middle Ages. In the later medieval period, some theologians continued to hold Augustine's view, others held that unbaptized infants suffered no pain at all: unaware of being deprived of the beatific vision, they enjoyed a state of natural, not supernatural happiness. Starting around 1300, unbaptized infants were often said to inhabit the ‘limbo of infants’. The Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1261 declares: ‘As regards children who have died without Baptism, the Church can only entrust them to the mercy of God, as she does in her funeral rites for them. Indeed, the great mercy of God who desires that all men should be saved, and Jesus’ tenderness toward children which caused him to say: ‘Let the children come to me, do not hinder them,’ allow us to hope that there is a way of salvation for children who have died without Baptism. All the more urgent is the Church’s call not to prevent little children coming to Christ through the gift of holy Baptism.’ But the theory of Limbo, while it ‘never entered into the dogmatic definitions of the Magisterium ... remains ... a possible theological hypothesis’.”

3. Discussion/History: “[Original Sin] is a defect which of itself is not sinful in the one who has it...it cannot damn him, whatever the theologians say, until out of this defect he does something against the law of God. But he does not do anything against the law, until he knows the law” [Zwingli cited by W.P. Stephens, Zwingli: An Introduction To His Thought (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 74]

Zwingli's idea of “original sin” likely equates to having a sinful nature, that which we inherit but doesn't condemn us until we exercise the power of choice to commit sin. Zwingli's hamartiology apparently clashed with Luther's and later Calvin's, and the assertion that the Reformers were unanimous on the issue is certainly suspect, and quite different from what the historical facts tell us. But historical revisionism isn't a new thing for New Theologians anyway, pun not intended.

The doctrine of original sin was most pronounced among the magisterial Reformers, though not in the Arminian/Wesleyan wing of the Reformation. However, some of the New Theology proponents

reference the Magisterial Reformers seeing the Great Controversy's use of them as Ellen White's approval of most of their positions (they will admit except the Sabbath, of course), ostensibly including Original Sin. Of course this is a blatant false appeal to authority fallacy, and poor scholarship. Given that now even a prominent Magisterial Reformer expresses doubts on Original Sin doctrine, it gives even further evidence God is giving Light leading from that erroneous position even that early a stage in the Reformation, Arminian Remonstrance aside.

Remember, the reformation effectively breaks out into three groupings:

- 1) Magisterials (Lutheran, Calvin/Reformed, Zwingli)
- 2) Elizabethan Reformation (Church of England/Anglican, and later, Methodism)
- 3) Radical Reformation (Anabaptist)

Of the three, many tend to see only the first or second group/ings as legitimate. And it is true that the third group (Radical Reformation) had two main groups, one which was very legitimate and the other which was kooky and truly heretical.

Further east you get Greek Orthodox, which separated fully from Rome in the great schism in 1066 (perhaps 1054). The Radical Reformation and Orthodox tended to have more biblically clear views of sin. Among the Magisterials, Zwingli was the best, although he was wrong on other points and was killed early (1531). It would be interesting to know more of his background and what influences shaped his views.

McGrath sees Zwingli's difference on this point in his masterful "Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification, 3rd ed." "Zwingli's characteristic suspicion of the doctrine of original sin was echoed by radical theologians such as Peter Riedemann. Redemption was about inner transformation, ensuing in a life of discipleship" (p. 249). "This brings us to one of the most decisive differences between the early Reformed tradition and Luther. For Bucer and Zwingli, the Jewish law is seen to be a good thing now fulfilled, rather than (as in much of Lutheran thought of the 1520s and beyond) a bad thing which is now abolished" (Ibid.). "Zingli rarely uses the term 'justification' or 'justified,' tending to use the term rechtglobig ('right-believing') instead" (p. 250).

Question:

So far as the three wings of Protestantism are concerned, wouldn't Methodism be more connected with the Anabaptist movement, at least theologically? The Church of England and Anglicanism had more to do with Henry VIII and his personal travails as distinct from any theological differences with the papacy. The English Puritans, of course, were Calvinist in their outlook, whereas the Methodists traveled more in the lane of Arminianism.

Answer:

The lines cannot be drawn precisely. Geographically, Methodism launches in Elizabethan territory.

Ideologically, there are some similarities with Anabapist thinking, although John Wesley's views on original sin are not fully developed. Charles Wesley was more Calvinist. But I have not seen anyone who links Methodists with the Radical Reformation.

Similarly, we Adventists highlight some of Luther's ideas but truth be told, few if any early Adventists came over from Lutheranism. Lutheranism changed greatly from Luther in 1520 to the Book of Concord in 1580, hardening in a forensic view of justification Luther would not have recognized. But that became the Magisterial baseline.

Your point about Luther and justification is quite accurate, despite what many Adventist supporters of the New Theology believe. This was a major embarrassment for them when Geoffrey Paxton's book came out in 1977. Probably the best Adventist scholar who rebutted the forensic-only view of justification as allegedly held by Luther has been Erwin Gane, Roy Gane's father.

The conundrum in Luther's theology is that while he definitely taught a transformative aspect of justification, one wonders why it mattered when you recognize he believed in predestination, just as Calvin and Augustine did.

Interesting Quotes From History:

Here's more from the primary source: Declaration of Huldreich Zwingli Regarding Original Sin, Addressed to Urbanus Rhegius. August 15, 1526.

“...I have said that the original contamination of man is a disease, not a sin, because sin implies guilt, and guilt comes from a transgression or trespass on the part of one who designedly perpetrates a deed.” pg. 5

“This propensity to sin, therefore, from self-love is ‘original sin’, the propensity is not properly sin, but is a sort of source and disposition to it...The disposition, therefore, is the original sin or defect, the plundering is the sin which flows from the disposition. The sin itself consists in the act, which recent writers call, "actual deed" and this is properly the sin.” pg. 9

“The flesh, then, is one thing, its works another, and the flesh is not sin, but that which the flesh doeth is sin.” pg. 10

That quote sounds a lot like Ellen White:

“The lower passions have their seat in the body and work through it. The words ‘flesh’ or ‘fleshly’ or ‘carnal lusts’ embrace the lower, corrupt nature; the flesh of itself cannot act contrary to the will of God” (AH 127).