

Baier's Compendium of Positive Theology

Part Two

Chapter One

On Sin in general.

1. Since the subject of the operation of revealed theology is the human sinner, therefore looking at the goal of theology, and what applies to that, now is the time to speak about sin.
2. However, in this place sin is accepted partly abstractly, being in itself a lack of conformity with the law, which concerns the life and actions of a rational creature, and for this reason it is pure privation, not a certain positive thing; partly concretely, in so far as besides an absence of conformity with the law there is included also some subject, which that privation is adjacent to, or it may be an attempted quality, or an acquired habit, or an act, which that lack of conformity itself otherwise has, as through a certain law it ought to have itself, and therefore it wanders from the law, or does not agree to the law; by which reason, some sins are positive, it is certain.
3. However through the law the eternal and unchangeable wisdom and justice of God about this ought to be understood, of which wisdom and justice a rational creature, by which it is such, agrees or disagrees, joined with the will, so that it does or does not do.
4. That first law was put forth in creation itself, when the knowledge of the chief practices and faculties were conferred on humans, likewise to individual actions and to the circumstances of the actions it is applied.
5. Afterwards, being sent away from that perfection by the fall, the power of the divine image which before was pleasant, that law most certainly was blotted out, but however certain traces or marks of it remained; however God, besides other revelations, especially in the decalogue repeated the highest of laws by voice and writing and individual laws which were here and there explained more clearly in sacred Scripture.

6. And thus the greatest and most universal power of being obliged by this law is able to be known, a law from which no human is able to escape.

7. However that is also truly a sin, which is committed against any positive law, whether divine, or human, as long as the human law is not contradicted by the divine.

8. The physical efficient cause of sin, abstractly seen, properly speaking, is not given. However the inclination of the acts and habits, from which sin hangs, in so far as they are acts and habits, rightly a physical cause is sought for them.

9. Meanwhile to sin, by which it is sin, a moral cause is rightly assigned. And that always is a cause of nature, which cause has the most power with the intellect and will.

10. God, neither morally, nor physically, is able rightly to be called a cause of sin.

11. However, the devil and other rational creatures, not bound to the good, are both able to be and are an efficient cause of sin.

12. That other things are not sin, unless it is with respect to his will, by which from there a sinner is judged, is universally not true.

13. The subject Which of sin is the rational nature, not bound to the good, or the human traveler who is named a sinner.

14. The subject by Which of sin is the soul and its faculties; although also the body and its members are sometimes seen as a secondary cause in this matter.

15. The consequences of all sin is the fixed guilts and punishments properly speaking, both temporal, and eternal.

16. Sins, by which the human race is stained, are usually distinguished: I. in actual and habitual. II. Actual sins again are distinguished in this, those which imply real acts, and those which imply acts of omission. III. Habitual sins are distinguished in sins of impulse or original sin, and acquired sins. IV. Habitual sins are distinguished both in habits properly called defective, and in a lacking of habits that ought to be present. Because in humans, as it is known by revealed

theology, since humans are the subject of revealed theology, sin is found in the posterity of the first people, before a human sins by act, he was captured by a sin of impulse; therefore a more special doctrine about sin is thus commonly put forward, that first there is a discussion about original sin, or that, which has its origin there from a human and his carnal origin or birth, then there is a discussion about actual sins, which rise now in a human now existing in original sin by actions proper to sin being added.

17. It is possible to describe sin as abstractly accepted, that it is a lack of conformity with the law, actions of rational creatures in deficient actions, or also in acts of omission, such acts adhering to sinful habits or deficiencies, and therefore worthy of guilt and punishment, both temporal and eternal.

18. Sin concretely seen is able to be described as an action of a rational creature or the omission of an action, a habit or its lack, fighting with the law of God, and leading the rational creature to build and a reward of punishment.

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