Apology II. Original Sin

⁷ We have mentioned not only concupiscence but also the absence of the fear of God and of faith. We have done this because the scholastics misunderstand the patristic definition of original sin and therefore minimize original sin. They argue that the inclination to evil is a quality of the body; in their awkward way they ask whether it came through contact with the apple or through the serpent's breath, and whether medicine can cure it. By such questions they miss the main issue. ⁸ Thus when they talk about original sin, they do not mention the more serious faults of human nature, namely, ignoring God, despising him, lacking fear and trust in him, hating his judgment and fleeing it, being angry at him, despairing of his grace, trusting in temporal things, etc. These evils, which are most contrary to the law of God, the scholastics do not even mention. They even attribute to human nature unimpaired power to love God above all things and to obey his commandments "according to the substance of the act." And they do not see the contradiction....

This is precisely the intention of Augustine's definition that <u>original sin is concupiscence</u>. It means that when righteousness is lost, concupiscence follows. Since nature in its weakness cannot fear and love God or believe in him, it seeks and loves carnal things; either it despises the judgment of God in its security, or it hates him in its terror. Thus Augustine includes both the defect and the vicious disposition that follows. ²⁵ Concupiscence is not merely a corruption of the physical constitution, but the evil inclination of man's higher capacities to carnal things. They do not know what they are talking about when they simultaneously attribute to man a concupiscence that has not been quenched by the Holy Spirit and a love for God above all things. ²⁶ In our definition of original sin, therefore, we have correctly expressed both elements: lack of ability to trust, fear, or love God; and concupiscence, which pursues carnal ends contrary to the Word of God (that is, not only the desires of the body but also carnal wisdom and righteousness in which it trusts while it despises God)....

³⁰ These opinions agree with the Scriptures. For Paul sometimes mentions the deficiency, as in 1 Cor. 2:14, "The unspiritual man does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God." <u>Elsewhere</u> (Rom. 7:5) he mentions lust at work in our members and bringing forth evil fruit....

35 Here our opponents lash out at Luther because he wrote that original sin remains after Baptism, and they add that this doctrine was properly condemned by Leo X.8 His Imperial Majesty will recognize an obvious slander here. Our opponents know what Luther meant by this statement that original sin remains after Baptism. He has always written that Baptism removes the guilt of original sin, even though concupiscence remains — or, as they call it, the "material element" of sin. Concerning this material element, he has also said that the Holy Spirit, given in Baptism, begins to mortify lust and to create new impulses in man. Augustine speaks the same way when he says, "Sin is forgiven in Baptism, not that it no longer is, but it is not imputed." Here he openly attests that sin is — that is, remains — even though it is not imputed. This view pleased later generations so much that they included it in the decretals. Against Julian, Augustine says: "That law which is in the members is forgiven by spiritual regeneration, but it remains in the mortal flesh. It is forgiven because its guilt is absolved by the sacrament that regenerates the faithful. But it remains because there continue to work those desires against which the faithful struggle." ³⁷ Our opponents know that this is what Luther believes and teaches; and since they cannot refute the principle, they twist his words in order by this device to crush an innocent man....

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⁸ Roman Confutation: "The apostolic see has already condemned two articles of Martin Luther about sins remaining in a child after Baptism ... " (Pt. I, Art. II). Cf. the papal bull *Exsurge Domine* of June, 1520.

Luther's Works, v.23 p.107

But while we sojourn here on earth and the old Adam still endures, our flesh is unable to lay hold of and grasp this treasure properly. Our eyes do not see it, our hand does not feel it, our mouth does not taste it, and all our other members cannot reach or apprehend it. But yonder all this will surely be achieved. In that life our eyes will see it, our mouth will taste it, our nose will smell it. The treasure will shine in body and soul, for there we will have perfect assurance and the insight of experience telling us that He is eternal life. Even if I do not now taste it, grasp it with my hands and feel it, see it, or comprehend it with my reason, it is still mine by faith. I hear His Word; that is enough for this life until death appears, and my vile body turns to ashes. Then faith will cease, and my eyes will behold. Then it will come to pass that we experience this with body and soul and with all our faculties.

Luther's Works, v.22 p.177

John was to announce: "You are sinners, though you may be the holiest of Pharisees." This same sermon must be preached to all evil and unrepentant sinners today so that they may recognize their sins and learn that they stand in need of forgiveness. For even though we have attained remission of sin, we still have the old Adam hanging around our necks and therefore sin daily. Sin has not yet been purged from our nature; neither is the devil dead, who provokes our flesh and blood to every evil. This makes the preaching and the practicing of repentance imperative on earth until the old Adam is dead and man ceases to sin.