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Original Sin According to St. Paul

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In regard to the doctrine of original sin as contained in the Old Testament and illuminated by the unique revelation of Christ in the New Testament, there continues to reign in the denominations of the West—especially since the development of scholastic presuppositions—a great confusion, which in the last few centuries seems to have gained much ground in the theological problematics of the Orthodox East. In some circles this problem has been dressed in a halo of mystifying vagueness to such an extent that even some Orthodox theologians seem to expect one to accept the doctrine of original sin simply as a great and profound mystery of faith (e.g., Androutsos, *Dogmatike*, pp. 161-162). This has certainly become a paradoxical attitude, especially since these Christians who cannot point their fingers at this enemy of mankind are the same people who illogically claim that in Christ there is remission of this unknown original sin. This is a far cry from the certitude of St. Paul, who, of the devil himself, claimed that "we are not ignorant of his thoughts" (*noemata*).^[1]

If one is to vigorously and consistently maintain that Jesus Christ is the unique Savior Who has brought salvation to a world in need of salvation, one obviously must know what is the nature of the need which provoked this salvation.^[2] It would, indeed, seem foolish to have medical doctors trained to heal sickness if there were no such thing as sickness in the world. Likewise, a savior who claims to save people in need of no salvation is a savior only unto himself.

Undoubtedly, one of the most important causes of heresy is the failure to understand the exact nature of the human situation described by the Old and New Testaments, to which the historical events of the birth, teachings, death, resurrection and second coming of Christ are the only remedy. The failure to understand this automatically implies a perverted understanding of what it is that Christ did and continues to do for us, and what our subsequent relation is to Christ and neighbor within the realm of salvation. The

