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THE IMPLAUSIBILITY OF ORIGINAL SIN

The intellect, as a means for the preservation of the individual, unfolds its chief powers in simulation; for this is the means by which the weaker, less robust individuals preserve themselves, since they are denied the chance of waging the struggle for existence with horns or the fangs of beasts of prey. In man this art of simulation reaches its peak: here deception, flattering, lying and cheating, talking behind the back, posing, living in borrowed splendor, being masked, the disguise of convention, acting a role before others and before oneself—in short, the constant fluttering around the flame of vanity is so much the rule and the law that almost nothing is more incomprehensible than how an honest and pure urge for truth could make its appearance among men. —Friedrich Nietzsche¹

The doctrine of original sin is as puzzling as it is entrenched in current conventional Christian thought. Even though the doctrine of original sin was scarcely mentioned at all during the first three centuries of Christian writings, it became a key doctrine at the core of “Christian” thought due largely to the influence of Augustine. Two primary reasons explain the doctrine. First, it is supposedly found in the writings of the Apostle Paul. While it is doubtful that Paul adopted anything like the traditional doctrine, there are good reasons to believe that the doctrine cannot simply be avoided as if it had no scriptural basis whatsoever, for even LDS scriptures have an abundance of passages referring to “original guilt” and to something in human “nature” that is inimical to God—the “natural man.”