

# **Firm Foundation**

## *The Doctrine Of Man*

### Prolog

If you were asked to repeat Christ's description of the path to heaven you would have to say, "It is a narrow path." That same statement is made also of right doctrine. Correct doctrine is nothing less than doctrine regarding the way to heaven. It is easy to lose your way on a path when it is narrow, rarely traveled, and leads through confusing and not so safe territory. Without intending to do so and without being aware of it, you may make a wrong turn to the right or to the left. It is equally easy to lose the narrow way of right doctrine, which is traveled by few people and leads through a dense forest of opinions not based on Scripture. You will land either in an area of fanaticism or in the trap of rationalism. These categories are dangerous, indeed poisonous to the soul.

You may have heard people say, "Show me a church that stresses pure doctrine, and I'll show you a church that is about to close." They will continue to say that the Christian (and everyone else for that matter) needs to pay more attention to right living and to nurturing the "good" that is within us all. Only then true and genuine Christianity will abound. That, however, is like saying to the farmer, "You spend too much time worrying about the quality of your seed when what is really important is the quality of your harvest." You see the foolishness of that. A farmer who takes care with the quality of his seed cares a great deal about his harvest. Just so, the Christian who actively cares about and pursues right doctrine based on Scripture is greatly concerned about genuine Christianity and the Christian lifestyle.

This study concerning the doctrine of man will be difficult and challenging to those who rely on the widely accepted concept of Mankind. There is no comfort for you here if you contend that there is an inborn goodness in all people. You will not find support in this doctrine of sin for contending that sin is only a flaw in our nature. On the other hand, when the total corruption of man is understood, the Gospel of Jesus Christ becomes a brighter and more comforting reality than ever before. In fact, the greater the understanding of the impact of sin the greater the understanding of the work of Jesus. We don't rejoice in our sin or in the law for pointing sin out. We do rejoice in our justification by grace through faith. It is in all humility and awe of the Father of Creation and His demand for justice that we approach the biblical doctrine of man.

### **Outline of the Study**

- I. Man Before the Fall
  - A. Man Created in the Image of God
  - B. What Constituted the Image of God
  - C. Image of God in the Proper Sense
  - D. Immediate Consequences of the Possession of the Divine Image
  - E. The Purpose of the Divine Image
- II. Man After the Fall
  - A. On Sin in General
  - B. Original Sin
  - C. Actual Sin

One can see by the outline that this study will be considering man before the fall and then man after the fall.

## **Man Before The Fall**

### **Man Created in the Image of God**

How is the original state of man described in general terms? Gen. 1:31\_\_\_\_\_

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What distinguished man from all other creatures? Gen. 1:26-27\_\_\_\_\_

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When the term "image" is used some assume that application is limited to the mind and the will. But such a limitation is robbing the full meaning of the terms used, that is "image" and "likeness."

Of course there are differences between God the Creator and man the creature. This, however, is generally fully addressed in the study of the Doctrine of God. But a distinction must be made at this point. Self-existence and eternity could not have been communicated to man, and the other divine attributes, for instance, the wisdom, lordship, etc., were only reflected in man. God is wise, and man is wise; God rules, and man rules. But God possesses unlimited, man only limited wisdom, dominion, etc. In other words, God's creation exists in time and space while He exists without those boundaries.

Some theologians assert that man was created after the "image" the human nature of Christ. Is this correct?\_\_\_\_\_Why?\_\_\_\_\_

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### **What Constituted the Image of God**

The image of God in man consisted in much more than in his possession of intellect and will, and personality; it consisted in the right disposition of his intellect and will, in his knowledge of God and the will to do only God's will. Man's basic needs such as eating were free from all ungodly propensity.

We know this when we read Gen. 1:31\_\_\_\_\_and Gen. 2:25\_\_\_\_\_

There are two other facts which support this.

1. Gen. 2:16-17\_\_\_\_\_

2. Gen. 2:19ff.; 3:2-3\_\_\_\_\_

What do these facts show?\_\_\_\_\_

This is supported in the New Testament as well. Col. 3:10\_\_\_\_\_

Eph. 4:24\_\_\_\_\_

This is an important point to be made. The popular notion of creation is that man was a brute, without language, or that he was a being "morally indifferent, " neither good nor bad, or that he was even then infected with an ungodly inclination towards gratification of his desires. This is not what the Scripture tells us. According to God's Word, man was not merely capable of culture, but was truly cultured, endowed not only with the gift of speech, but with intelligence that, besides knowing God, had such a grasp of the natural sciences as is unattainable today even by the most diligent study. Luther was right in saying that only Adam, as he was before the Fall, really deserves the title of philosopher. He says: "If we would speak of a great and excellent philosopher, let us speak of our first parents when they were yet free from sin.... Adam and Eve understood the senses, nature, powers of all the animals." (St. L. I:80-81)

What popular theory does this address?\_\_\_\_\_

Even more to the point, man was not originally in a state of moral indifference or endowed with a mere aptitude for what is good, but he was positively good, without any trace or propensity toward evil.

This leads us to some very difficult theology. If man was positively good, meaning he wanted to do God's will, how does one describe the original state of man when we know that he would completely rebel against God?

In Luther's writings he occasionally calls the original state of man status medius. He is not speaking of man as being morally indifferent, but as not yet so confirmed in well doing that he could not fall.

To further describe this status medius Luther uses the term "childlike" innocence as opposed to "manly" innocence.

Childlike Innocence:\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Manly Innocence:\_\_\_\_\_

So the original state was neither indifference nor the ability to do good. In fact Luther describes original righteousness in this way. "If we wish to follow Moses, we can say that the original righteousness consisted in this, that man was righteous, true, and upright, not only in his body and externally, but, above all, inwardly in his soul, and that he knew God, was obedient to Him with the utmost pleasure, understood the works of God without any instruction concerning them.... The original righteousness also consisted in Adam's loving God and God's work with all his heart, in a pure spirit."

### **The Image of God in the Proper Sense**

There is little argument within the Christian context that the image of God, which consists in the knowledge of God and holiness of the will, is lacking in man after the Fall, since Col. 3:10 and Eph 4:24 distinctly state that it is being restored in the believer.

The question which is asked, however, is to what degree is man without the image of God?

Is God's image evident in fallen man?\_\_\_\_\_How do you support that?\_\_\_\_\_

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### **The Consequences of the Possession of the Divine Image**

Man was created with the Divine image. It was not added after as some of the churches assert. Gen. 1:26 shows this to be true.

But what was the consequence of the possession of the Divine Image?

1. Gen. 2:17; Rom. 5:12, 6:23\_\_\_\_\_

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2. Gen. 1:28\_\_\_\_\_

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### **The Purpose of the Divine Image**

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2)\_\_\_\_\_

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## **Man After The Fall**

During one of the countless numbers of pilgrimages to "food markets," a package caught my attention. This package contained ingredients to make chili. As I continued to read, hopeful of the potential chili recipe, I came to a statement that was, I am sure, intended to "hook" and close the sale. It read, "Anyone who eats (this chili) can't be all bad."

While the marketing agent only wants to sell chili, his sentence reflects the nature of man since the Fall. Whether through humor or by means of some "spiritual pursuits" man does not want to recognize the

devastating impact of sin on creation. This is true of ancient civilization as well. Certain sects over two thousand years ago represented sin as the exaltation of mankind.

Both interpretations of sin (sin as exaltation or sin as being not all that bad) is the same interpretation of sin which Statne used to seduce our first parents. Gen. 3:5: "Ye shall not surely die . . . ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

These are not isolated cases. Philosophers and writers alike have stated that the Fall was "the most fortunate and the greatest event in the history of mankind." And again, "the Fall was a fall up and not down." Satan is still seducing as to the effect of sin (Gen. 3:5).

According to the Scripture, sin is not the exaltation of man which produced his happiness, but is the deepest degradation and the one great calamity that has come upon mankind; all other evils are simply the consequence of sin.

Experience confirms this. How? \_\_\_\_\_

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Is this always accurate? \_\_\_\_\_

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What was God's goal? \_\_\_\_\_

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In this restoration only he will share who will not permit Satan to deceive him again in the matter of the Fall and of sin, but who gains the right view of these things from God's Word.

As we pointed out earlier, this doctrine will be treated in three parts: Sin in General; Original Sin; and Actual Sin.

### **Sin in General**

#### Definition of Sin

What is sin? 1 John 3:4 \_\_\_\_\_

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According to Scripture is there an active or positive aspect to this nonconformity to the divine Law.

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This is evident elsewhere in Scripture.

1. Matt. 22:37-40 \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Matt. 6:24

Another insight to our nature is revealed in Eph. 2:3

Rom. 7:19,20

Apology of the Augsburg Confessions, page 106, line 43-45:

### The Divine Law and Sin

Since we define sin as lawlessness we must, if we would properly know the doctrine of sin, clearly see what the law is, the breaking of which constitutes sin.

The Formula of Concord sets us on the right direction. (p. 561, line 17)

Rom. 13:1ff

Col. 3:20      Acts 5:29

What about "laws of the Church?"

Matt. 5:22, 28

Matt. 12:36 \_\_\_\_\_ Eph. 5:5 \_\_\_\_\_

There has always been opposition, public, and even more so, secret, to the truth that the divine Law pertains to all internal and external acts of men.

People have said: (Ps. 10:11) " \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_." And in particular there always was and still is today a universal protest against declaring the inborn depravity of human nature to be truly sin and bearing the "character of guilt." But God responds to this as in Malachi 2:17. Don't be disillusioned, we are held accountable.

As we have stated, the Formula of Concord correctly defines the Law as the righteous, immutable will of God as to "what is to be the quality of man in his nature, thoughts, words, and works, in order that he may be pleasing and acceptable to God." The correctness of this definition is clearly confirmed by the fact that our Substitute, who in our stead assumed the obligation to fulfill the demands of the Law and bear its punishment, thus to make us "pleasing and acceptable to God," had to be a most unique, miraculous person, namely, "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners" (Heb. 7:26), one "who knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5:21).

### How the Divine Law is Made Known to Man

While the Gospel remains hidden to the natural heart of man (1 Cor. 2:9) this is not the nature of the Law, that is, to remain hidden.

How is the Law most commonly revealed? \_\_\_\_\_

This vehicle has two functions:

1) Rom. 2:15a \_\_\_\_\_

2) Rom. 2:15b \_\_\_\_\_

What else is true of this means of knowledge of the Law? \_\_\_\_\_

Gal. 4:8 \_\_\_\_\_

2 Thess. 2:11 \_\_\_\_\_ John 16:2 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Rom. 14:1ff \_\_\_\_\_

What then is the certain source of God's immutable will? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the real scope of the Scriptures? (John 5:39; Acts 10:43; 1 Cor. 2:2) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Nevertheless it is also a complete revelation of the immutable will of God.

Matt. 5:18-19 \_\_\_\_\_

Which Laws apply to us? \_\_\_\_\_

For instance, to Ex. 31:14,15 and Lev. 19:26 the New Testament replies, Col. 2:16. So what is the guide? (Book of Concord, Page 279, line 60).\_\_\_\_\_

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### The Cause of Sin

There is in fallen man a strong tendency to make God or other creatures responsible for his sinfulness and thus to remove the blame for his sin, either in whole or in part, from his own person.

How did Adam and Eve do this? (Gen 3:12,13)\_\_\_\_\_

This type of a discussion is typical of man. "Why did God create man with the ability to fall?" And: "Why does God today permit man to be tempted when according to His all governing providence He could keep temptation away from men?" These questions and others like them serve only to confuse the issue of the cause of sin.

The Scriptures make it clear:

a)\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

b)\_\_\_\_\_

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### The Consequences of Sin

Since God has forbidden sin, that is, a deviation from His Law, sin makes man guilty before God. This subjects man to the punishment imposed by God on sin (Galatians 3:10). There are consequences to the breaking of the Law. In addition to this, since God's Law is broken, He is the one who determines the nature and extent of the punishment. It is not determined by human sentiment, rather it must be determined solely by God's revealed Word.

What does the Word say: Gen. 2:17; Rom. 5:12\_\_\_\_\_

On the basis of Scripture, death may be said to be of three parts.

1)\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

2)\_\_\_\_\_

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3) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

To whom does this teaching need to be addressed? \_\_\_\_\_

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How can we, as Christians, view the sufferings which we are confronted with in this life? \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Original Sin**

#### Definition of Original Sin

Sin which is not committed but which is inborn since Adam's Fall is divided into two:

1) \_\_\_\_\_

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2) \_\_\_\_\_

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Why is there so much antagonism to this doctrine? \_\_\_\_\_

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What must we always remember regarding man's opinion? \_\_\_\_\_

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While this addresses hereditary guilt it does not address hereditary corruption. How does natural man deal

with this? \_\_\_\_\_

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The full understanding of the depth of the innate corruption and its origin in the fall of our first parents is gained only from the revelation of Holy Scripture.

Smalcald Articles, p. 302, line 3 \_\_\_\_\_

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FC, Solid Decl. Art I, line 60, p. 519 \_\_\_\_\_

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1) \_\_\_\_\_

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2) \_\_\_\_\_

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3) \_\_\_\_\_

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### The Effect of Hereditary Corruption on the Mind and Will of Man

After the Fall, natural man still retained a certain amount of intelligence in natural things. In what things is natural man utterly incapable of understanding?

How do we know this to be true? \_\_\_\_\_

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The will of natural man gets the same rating. According to Scripture the will is not only opposed to the Law of God, but it cannot change its condition.

Rom. 7:8 \_\_\_\_\_

Even natural man desires to do things externally good, e.g., feed the hungry, clothe the naked, etc., he is not moved by love of God, but he acts, at best, from natural compassion. Such works are praiseworthy in the natural domain or in the civil realm, and they have, as the civil law in general, their temporal reward; but they remain sinful before God because they do not comply with the demands which God's Law makes on every man. God's Law is not satisfied with works that are performed from any kind of motive, but demands very definitely that love of God be the motive of every act of man (Matt. 22:37). Natural man cannot come to love God. As a result he runs from God and lives without hope and without God. The more God's Law presses him with its demands, the more it becomes evident that "the carnal mind is enmity against God" (Rom. 8:7).

The total ruin of the mind and the will by original sin can be observed from the behavior of Adam and Eve after they had broken God's command.

Gen. 3:7ff \_\_\_\_\_

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

4) \_\_\_\_\_

This depravity has been transmitted through natural propagation as Christ says in John 3:6

Gen. 6:5 \_\_\_\_\_ Rom. 3:10-18 \_\_\_\_\_

Our confession reflects this Scriptural teaching. Augsburg Confession, Art. II, page 29.

### The Subject of Hereditary Corruption

Who is subject to hereditary corruption? \_\_\_\_\_ Is there any exception? \_\_\_\_\_ (Luke 1:35).

What about Mary, the mother of Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_

### The Effects of Original Corruption

One of the consequences of the hereditary corruption is the loss of free will in spiritual matters. This is really no new subject, for all that can be said in this matter is already contained in the statement of Scripture that every man is "dead in trespasses and sins." But since the term "free will" does not always mean the same thing and this ambiguity of meaning has been used for the purpose of denying the "death in sin," a further examination of this is appropriate.

a) \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

b) \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

c) \_\_\_\_\_

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Arguments for the free will of natural man in spiritual matters:

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

4) \_\_\_\_\_

5) \_\_\_\_\_

6) \_\_\_\_\_

7) \_\_\_\_\_

8) \_\_\_\_\_

9) \_\_\_\_\_

d) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Actual Sin

### Definition of Actual Sin

In relation to original sin, what is actual sin?\_\_\_\_\_

"Original sin, or nature sin, or person sin, is truly the principle sin. If this sin did not exist, there would be no actual sin either. This is sin not committed as all other sins are: but it is the living power which commits all sins."

We can be more specific: a)\_\_\_\_\_

b)\_\_\_\_\_

In other words, any act which is in conflict to the will of God is actual sin. Why do you suppose Scripture stresses sins of omission?\_\_\_\_\_

Give some Biblical examples:\_\_\_\_\_

Give some extra Biblical examples:\_\_\_\_\_

On what point should we be on guard when uncovering and reproofing actual sin especially sins of omission?\_\_\_\_\_

Why?\_\_\_\_\_

### The Causes of Actual Sin

There are, as Scripture plainly teaches, causes within and causes outside of man.

Causes Within Man:

The general cause of actual sin is\_\_\_\_\_

a)\_\_\_\_\_

b)\_\_\_\_\_

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c) \_\_\_\_\_

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Causes Outside Of Man:

a) \_\_\_\_\_

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b) \_\_\_\_\_

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God is not, because of His immanence and concurrence, the cause of the sins that are actually committed. This is shown in a study under "Divine Providence" and in a chapter on "Hardening of the Heart." That the evil in the sense of suffering comes from God, who absolutely controls every occurrence, is the clear teaching of Scripture

(Is. 45:7 "\_\_\_\_\_"). That is to be maintained over and against contrary positions and is very comforting for the children of God. When troubles over take us, we do not have to deal with Satan, who knows no mercy, but we turn in true contrition and faith to the one true God and Father. Luther puts it this way: "God is good, just, and merciful, also when He smites us. Whoever will not believe this fact forsakes the unity of faith that there is but one God and invents for himself another god, who is not consistent with himself, but is now good, then evil." And he adds, "But it is a single gift of the Holy Spirit to believe that God, when He sends evil, is still reconciled to us and merciful."

The Scripture Doctrine of Offense

What is the definition of "giving offense?" Rom. 16:17 \_\_\_\_\_

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What are some warnings against this in the Bible? \_\_\_\_\_

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Is "giving offense" limited to doctrine? \_\_\_\_\_ What else is included? \_\_\_\_\_

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What general rule should be observed in this matter? \_\_\_\_\_

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What is the opposite of "giving offense?" \_\_\_\_\_ How is this done?

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### The Scripture Doctrine of Temptation

There are two kinds of temptation. What are they? a) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ b) \_\_\_\_\_

Why are we tempted? Deut. 13:3 \_\_\_\_\_

1 Cor. 11:19 \_\_\_\_\_

2 Cor. 8:8 \_\_\_\_\_

The Scriptural axiom is: whoever succumbs to temptation falls by his own fault, through self-confidence. All Christians are warned: "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12). But he who overcomes temptation owes the victory not to his own merit and his own power, but solely to God's grace (2 Cor. 12:9).

### Classification of Actual Sins

In order to come to a clearer understanding of the magnitude of the battle that we fight as Christians, in faith, against sin, one should consider Scriptural classifications of actual sin. There are many such groups. This study will merely introduce these categories.

A: Voluntary and Involuntary Sins

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B: The Relation of Actual Sin to The Conscience

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C: Sins Against God, Against The Neighbor, and Against Oneself

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D: Grievous and Less Grievous Sins

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What is the most grievous of all sins? \_\_\_\_\_

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E: Peccata Mortalia et Venalia

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Can any sin become peccata mortalis? \_\_\_\_\_ How? \_\_\_\_\_

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F: Dominant and Non-Dominant Sins

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G: Partaking of Other Men's Sins

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H: Sins Crying to Heaven (Peccata Clamantia)

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## I: The Sin Against The Holy Spirit

If we would separate those sins for which pardon may be obtained through repentance and distinguish them from those which are unpardonable because there is no longer room for repentance, the latter class would comprise only one sin--the sin against the Holy Spirit.

The Bible passages which deal with this sin are Matt. 12:22-32 and its parallels, Mark 3:22-30 and Luke 12:10. Also 1 John 5:16.

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In 1 John 5:16 what is the difference between "sin unto death" and "sin not unto death?" \_\_\_\_\_

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What is its nature as opposed to other sins?

a) \_\_\_\_\_

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b) \_\_\_\_\_

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c) \_\_\_\_\_

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In what context was Jesus induced to warn against the sin against the Holy Spirit? \_\_\_\_\_

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Only now can we begin to define this sin. The sin against the Holy Spirit is committed when, after the Holy Spirit has convinced a person in his heart of the divine truth, that person nevertheless not only rejects the truth he is convinced of, but also blasphemes it. One theologian says this:

"The sin against the Holy Spirit is the malicious denial of the divine truth which a person has clearly understood and approved in his conscience, a hostile assault on it, horrible blaspheming, and an obstinate rejection of all the means of grace, which lasts to the end."

Again, it is the willful and determined suppression of the inner conviction wrought by the Holy Spirit. It is therefore distinguished from the sin committed against the Person of the Son of God. (Matt 12:32).

A number of questions which need to be addressed are as follows:

1. Does the sin against the Holy Spirit still occur today?\_\_\_\_\_

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2. Can it be established beyond a reasonable doubt whether a person has committed the sin against the Holy Spirit?\_\_\_\_\_

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a. \_\_\_\_\_

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b. \_\_\_\_\_

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1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Who can sin against the Holy Spirit?\_\_\_\_\_

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4. Can a person be forgiven the sin against the Holy Spirit?\_\_\_\_\_

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5. How does the fact that the sin against the Holy Spirit is not forgiven agree with the other fact that Christ gained forgiveness for all sins, therefore also for the sin against the Holy Spirit?

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There is only one thing that will deliver us from the fear of having committed the sin against the Holy Spirit. We must turn our heart, mind, and thoughts wholly to the absolutely universal and absolutely free grace of God in Christ, which is revealed in Scripture *sole clarius* (clearer than the sun). Sorry comforters in this case are the from both ends of the ecclesiastical spectrum. The Reform theologian Schneckenburger shows conclusively that a Calvinist must first become a Lutheran if he would deliver anyone from the fear of having committed the unpardonable sin. He says:

"The only thing that will avail here is to point with Luther to the objective merit of Christ, the promise of God's Word, and the faithfulness of Him who calls, who will not give up the work begun, but will preserve us. The Reformed Christian will simply have to forget that the merit of Christ, etc., does not concern all, perhaps does not concern him."

Therefore it is our privilege and responsibility to maintain the "universal grace" and "grace alone" teaching of Scripture.