

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.

Possibly you 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 popular concept of Mankind to be accurate. There is no comfort for you here if you contend that there is 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. We don't rejoice in our sin or the law for this. 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

A. Man Before the Fall

1. Man Created in the Image of God
2. What Constituted the Image of God
3. Image of God in the Proper Sense
4. Immediate Consequences of the Possession of the Divine Image
5. The Purpose of the Divine Image

B. Man After the Fall

1. On Sin in General
2. Original Sin
3. Actual Sin

One can see by the outline that this study will be considering man (A) before the fall and (B) after the fall.

A. MAN BEFORE THE FALL

1

Man Created in the Image of God

How is the original state of man described in general terms? Gen. 1:31 Very good - this is a term which covered all creatures

What distinguished man from all other creatures? Gen 1:26-27 Man was created in His Image

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" or human nature of Christ. Is this correct? no Why? The Scripture says "let Us after Our likeness - He was created in the image of the Triune God. Man was not patterned after - neither, & after Man."

2

What Constituted the Image of God

The image of God in man consisted in much more than in his possession of intellect and will, in his 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 very good 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? Man knew God and was endowed with a holy disposition.

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? Evolution -

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 was to 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: the state in which man could still be deceived by Satan.

God wants a joyful - free response to His Love

Manly Innocence: the state such as angels confirmed in holiness enjoy - bliss - which we will experience.

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."

3

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? no How do you support that?

There would be no need for it - the only reason God still concerns himself with fallen ^{man} + preserves him is that he desires to renew fallen mankind to the original image - Col. 3:10; Eph 4:24 - A natural man has no inclination toward the spirit. 1 Cor. 2:14

4

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 Man was immortal - (able not to die)
death and its predecessors are the result of sin.
2. Gen. 1:28 He exercised dominion over creatures. This was real dominion - All that is left is "mock sovereignty." Man must use cunning + force to subdue creature - and still the creature fights its sinful master. Sin has totally damaged the relationship God intended us to have with creation.

5

The Purpose of the Divine Image

1. to know him and to live in conformity with his will in communion + bliss
 2. Would rule over the other creatures as his representative.
- After this was frustrated by our sin, God revives it again in Christ - For His sake He cancels our guilt and restores in believers, the knowledge of God + His Will
It presupposes the fall. What would have happened if Adam had not sinned?

B. MAN AFTER THE FALL

Preface

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 be the "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 Satan 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? ones conscience - this has been properly

called the invincible force of pantheism & every other form of atheism. Man is simply
unable to convince himself that sin is the passway to "false human" and "discontentment"

Is this always accurate? On account of sin man has an evil conscience before

God - as a result Man feels, because of his sin, just as "happy" as Adam & Eve before the Fall when they
loved themselves.

What was God's goal? To restore His Image in Man by an exceedingly great
and fortunate event in history. The incarnation - Substitute Satisfaction.

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: a) Sin in General; b) Original Sin; c) Actual Sin.

a. ON SIN IN GENERAL

1

Definition of Sin

What is Sin? 1 John 3:4 sin is non-conformity to the divine Law - The Law is the norm - relating to both to internal + external actions + Man's Condition.

According to Scripture there ~~are~~ is an active or positive aspect to this nonconformity to the divine Law. Not just a disregard but an active - conscious breaking.

This is evident elsewhere in Scripture.

1. Matt. 22:37-40 Man as a moral being, endowed with intellect and will, is duty bound to conform to the divine will in every moment of his life. When full agreement to the divine law is lacking, there is opposition to the law or lawlessness.

2. Matt. 6:24 It is impossible to be neutral even for a second. If his mind and will ^{are not} ~~remain~~ ^{attached} to God - they are attached to some creature and that is apostasy - Matt. 6:24.

Another insight to our nature is revealed in Eph. 2:3. This opposition is not something we become - it is the evil condition in which we are born.

Rom. 7:19,20 This ^{evil} condition does not lose its sinful character even when the Christian detests it. Sin is more than a conscious and deliberate action.

Apology of the Augsburg Confessions, page 106, line 43-45: ~~The power to observe~~ Law for Man rests solely with God.

2

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)

The power to observe Law for Man rests solely with God. Man denies his dignity from the observance of God's Law. Every man is subject to God's Law.

Analogy: A worker who fails to carry out the duties assigned would be condemned by his own conscience, if he pleaded that he had done no wrong, but simply had taken a neutral position over against his duties.

Laws on men are binding only when sanctioned by God

Rom. 13:1ff God does this in the case of civil governments

Col. 3:20 and parents Acts 5:29 He sanctions here only such laws as do not contradict the divine Law

What about "laws of the Church?" - they too can't bind our consciences
the Church has no legislative powers - in fact he forbids it. Matt. 23:8. What is not commanded is regulated in the Church by mutual agreement. - Only God's Law is the norm.
 What is the extent of the authority of God's Law? It is authoritative in every detail.

God demands in his Law the purity of the human nature. Eph 2:3 - not just external

Matt. 5:22, 28 He demands purity, thoughts - including omission of anger + lust.

Matt. 12:36 words Eph 5:5 works

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) "God has forgotten; He hides His face; He will never see it." 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, unmutable 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, maraculous person, namely, "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners" (Heb. 7:26), one "who knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5:21).

3

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.

How? it is written on our heart This functions in two ways:

a) Rom. 2:15a it reveals and demands - by means of a conscience.

b) Rom. 2:15b it judges and condemns.

What else is true of this means of knowledge of the Law? Since the Fall it is

not fully reliable - There is perhaps a higher as anerring conscience. Man regards certain things as permitted, even commended, which God has forbidden.
Gal. 4:8 He will commit idolatry

2 Thess. 2:11 submit to the Antichrist John 16:2 murder of sons

Rom. 14:1ff regards as forbidden what God permits

What then is certain source of God's immutable will? Holy Scriptures

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

Gospel Nevertheless it is also a complete revelation of the immutable will of God. Matt. 5:18-19

Which Laws apply to us? only those for all men

For instance, to Ex. 31:14-15 and Lev. 19:26 the New Testament replies, Col. 2:16. So what is the guide?(page 279, line 60)

a common example - Seventh Day Adventists

4

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) Try to place the blame elsewhere

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 allgoverning 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) the devil. John 8:44; II Cor. 11:3 - since he is the inventor of sin, we call sin, with good reason, a work of the devil, even in the case of sins committed by believers. As Peter "Gather thou Satan"

b) also sinning man - we are the perpetrators and are not relieved of responsibility for it. - Gen 3:16-18 - Adam Eve suffered consequences

2 Thess. 2:4-12; Mt. 18:7

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 Sin means death.

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

1. death of the soul or "spiritual death" - a breaking of communion with God. Separated from God. He was brought back from death and hell only by hearing and believing the Gospel. Tim. 5:6. being dead while living.
2. Spiritual death brings a catastrophe - temporal death. The only reason we don't fully realize its enormity is its daily occurrence. - it is an unnatural occurrence.
3. Spiritual + Temporal death will be followed, unless guilt is removed by faith, by eternal death. This is not the cessation of existence, but eternal torment 2 Thess. 1:9, Matt 25:46

To whom does this teaching need to be addressed? Set before all men. As prayered women are continually arguing against it. The temporal punishments are not regarded as God's judgments over sin but as natural phenomena. Eternal punishment is questioned as being contrary to God's love + mercy. ^{as well} ~~Pious men~~ ^{thinks} this.

How can we, as Christians, view the sufferings which we are confronted with in this life? The Plan is free from guilt + punishment Is. 53:5-6, and they have peace with God Rom 5:1 ff. 1 Pet. 4:17 - On the one hand there is a judgment against believers. On the other hand there are "disciplinary chastisements" to keep us from apostasy 1 Cor 11:32 - These are a "gracious + joyous punishment."

b. ORIGINAL SIN

Definition of Original Sin

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

It basis turns for Pious only through faith.

- a) hereditary guilt, the guilt of the one sin of Adam which God imputes to all men. Ps. 51:5 John 3:6 says God does not judge the body but entire ^{sinful man.}
- b) hereditary corruption - ~~sin~~ transmitted to all his descendants Rom. 5:18, 19

Why is there so much antagonism to this doctrine? because of the blindness of our heart (Eph. 4:18) we rebel against the fact of hereditary guilt. (a man cannot be charged against with something he didn't do)

What must we always remember? That doesn't change the fact of Rom. 5:18-19
those who reject the imputation of Adam's sin as an injustice are compelled, if they want to be consistent, to declare the God's righteousness as an injustice. They then stand outside Christianity.

While this addresses hereditary guilt it does not address hereditary corruption. How does natural man deal with this? He perceives of it. Ancient writers + Philosophers note the an inclination toward evil.

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, page 302, line 3

FC, Solid Decl. art I, line 60, page 519

Concerning three errors the Scripture speaks clearly:

- a) To those who deny that children inherit corruption through birth but think it is a learned behavior - read John 6:6 - then understand the term flesh.
- b) to those who admit a measure of corruption, but deny it as sin - unless it is deliberate, willful - etc - read Eph. 2:3
- c) to those who allow for various degrees of spiritual attributes outside of faith and ~~the~~ depend on self-decision, conduct, etc. read Eph 2:1, 5

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? spiritual matters.

How do we know this to be true? natural man utterly regards the Gospel as foolishness and cannot do otherwise. 1 Cor. 2:14. He looks to the Law for salvation Gal 3:10-12. The intelligence of man is rated as being dark Eph 4:18. Education & culture doesn't remove this - Col 2:8.

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. 3:7 ff Adam is totally changed and has become another man

- 1 to attempt the impossible in trying to flee from him whom no one can escape or avoid. - they must have known this but was blinded
- 2 Reason given for fleeing is that he heard the voice of God. Didn't he hear God before? Why didn't he run then? He is totally changed.
- 3 A further reason was his nakedness. - Scandal of the Leaf. - drive up discussion of what to wear.
- 4 He blames Eve - God - Serpent etc.

13.
P. 14 / Adam wants to appear innocent - Placing blame is admitting guilt

This depravity has been transmitted through natural propagation as Christ says in John 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh.

Gen. 6:5 Every imagination of his heart was evil Rom 3:10-18 This is a comprehensive description of the corrupt state of the human nature: intellectual.

Our confessions reflect this Scriptural teaching. Augsburg Confession, Art. II. page 29.

3

The Subject of Hereditary Corruption

Who is the subject? all men, all natural descendants of Adam Is there any exception?
There is one exception - Son of God (Luke 1:35)

What about Mary, the mother of Jesus? Pius IX in 1854, took her, in the interest of Mariolatry out of the category of sinners with the immaculate conception.

4

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," an further examination of this is appropriate.

- 12
P. 15
- If "free will" means that man, in distinction from the irrational creatures still has a will of his own and wills things we have to say that man has free will after the Fall. He sins voluntarily + gladly. - There is no coercion to sin (Eph 2:1,5; Gal 2:13 Rom 6:13 8:7)
 - If "free will" means the ability to will and desire what is spiritually good, to believe the Gospel of Paul out of love of God to keep God's Law - we deny free will. He cannot know the Gospel (1 Cor. 2:14; 1:23) nor subject to God, but hate it. Ro 8:7
 - To a certain extent fallen man has civil righteousness. This really does not

amount to much. - look up page 225 line 4, Act 18 - Free Will.

Arguments for the free will of natural man in spiritual matters. - Vol II page. 471

- 1 Faith in ~~God~~ demands something of men - we choose (The command to believe does not imply our ability to do so) John 6:44
- 2 Unless man co-operates conversion would imply coercion - Phil 2:13 - we are truly invited
- 3 God works only the power to believe - not the act of faith - Phil 1:29
- 4 Without human co-operation the subject who believes would be the H.S. Acts 17:25, 28
- 5 Since the reason for man's non-conversion is man - conversion is man's - accept/reject
- 6 Conversion as a "moral" act. - improvement.
- 7 Faith is "free decision" - argue for a neutral State - Mat 12:30, Luke 9:50
- 8 evil righteousness prepares us for conversion - Matt 21:31, John 1:13 - What is the preparation for conversion?
- 9 Natural man has the power to use the Means of Grace - this is a means - not a merit.
- d. Hereditary corruption results in actual sins. Scripture definitely declares the innate evil conditions to be the source of individual sinful acts. Ps 51:5 of 2 Sam 11-12 and Gal 5:19-21 This leads us to the next section.

c. ACTUAL SIN

1

Definition of Actual Sin

In relation to original sin what is actual sin? sin committed by man.

15
16 "Original sin, or nature sin, or person sin, is truly the principal 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. Sins committed by doing what is prohibited (commission)

b. those committed by failing to do what is asked of us - omission.

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? because it is so

easily lost sight of. (lack of action is not considered sin by most people.)

Give some Biblical examples.

Matthew 25:30 - The man who did not use his talents - + Luke 12:48 - call to be good stewards.

Give some extra Biblical examples. not going to worship - not helping your neighbor in need - offerings

On what point should we be on guard when uncovering and reproofing actual sin especially sins of omission? we must not become legalistic taskmasters.

Why? it is better to invite and encourage sinners with the mercy of God in Christ (D:!) so they take pleasure in performing the will of God: to "Make duty a pleasure."

2

The Causes of Actual Sin

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

CAUSES WITHIN OF MAN

The general cause of actual sin is hereditary corruption or depraved nature. Rom 7:17

a. The ignorance produced by hereditary corruption Paul sinned "ignorantly in unbelief" 1 Tim 1:13 - Still sin's character is not lost. Luke 23:34, Act 3:17.

b. Violent emotions + passions such as fear, rage, natural love, etc.

Mark 14:66 - sin is still sin as in Luke 22:62 "Peter went out and wept bitterly."

c. evil habits developed by repeating the sinful act is a cause of actual sin. Jer. 13:23 - we can be trained to do evil as we are trained to practice righteousness.

CAUSES OUTSIDE OF MAN

a. The devil - he is active in unbelievers (Eph 2:2; 1 Cor 10:20) and in the children of God. (1 Chron. 21:1; Luke 22:31)

b. Other men become the external cause of sin. They seduce by words + actions. both in the church (Rom. 16:17-18; 2 Tim. 2:17) and outside the church. unsanctified gestures + pornography.

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

God is not the author of sin
"Rah"

sense of suffering comes from God, who absolutely controls every occurrence, is the clear teaching of Scripture (Is 45:7 "I make peace + create evil") 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 signal gift of the Holy Spirit to believe that God, when He sends evil, is still reconciled to us and merciful."

3

The Scripture Doctrine of Offense

What is the definition of "giving offense?" Rom 16:17 to teach or do something by which we lead another not to believe onto believe error and thus cause him as far as this goes - to perish eternally.

What are some warnings against this in the Bible? Matt. 18:6, Mark 9:42 ff

Luke 17:1-2 -

Is "giving offense" limited to doctrine? No What else is included?

it is also given through inconsiderate use of permissible things. Romans 14:

Those who are free are not to be convicted but must be willing to restrict their understanding for the practical use of his brother.

What general rule should be observed in this matter? We must waive the

use of our Christian liberty unless the truth of the Gospel is at stake

When does the weak brother give offense? When he insists that his false understanding is true doctrine and judges others according to it.

What is the opposite of "giving offense?" taking Offense How is this done?

When one who is spiritually blind -

4

The Scripture Doctrine of Temptation

There are two kinds of temptation. What are they? a to do evil - the devil, world, or flesh.

b to do good.

Why are we tempted? Deut 13:3 to test your love.

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 own power, but solely to God's grace. 2 Cor. 12:9.

5

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

19/17
The will of man plays a part in every sin whether he knows this or not - and in that sense one might call all sins voluntary. But man's will participates in varying ways. Scripture examples: Judas' betrayal - Absalom's rebellion - 2 Sam 15. - Voluntary. In other examples it is not will as much as ignorance - Peter - ²⁰⁰thrice denied Christ. This also relates to infants.

b. THE RELATION OF ACTUAL SIN TO THE CONSCIENCE

Sinning against one's conscience is sin. Sinning against a correctly informed conscience is most grievous. ^{Tit 3:10} - this begins to approach the sin against the Holy Spirit - One who has an erring conscience and is compelled to pray to saints is in a real predicament. It is therefore of great importance to correct erring consciences by proper instruction in God's Word. In the case of a doubting conscience the Word must wait until it is cleared up before the next step. Rom. 14:23.

c. SINS AGAINST GOD, AGAINST THE NEIGHBOR AND AGAINST ONESELF

Gen 39:9 - against God. Lev 19:17 - against neighbor. 1 Cor. 6:18 - ones. Finally one must state as David, Ps 51:4. David is highlighting the enormity of sin.

d. GREIVIOUS AND LESS GREIVIOUS SINS

Gal 3:10 - every sin merits damnation. Yet there is a greater sin. John 19:11. Deut 1:39 Children are less guilty than men. Luke 12:47-48 Knowledge vs Ignorance. Accordingly, Scripture also teaches degrees of eternal punishment. What is the most grievous of all sins? it is despising the Gospel of grace.

John 3:17 - If we claim greater righteousness or lesser guilt before God we are despising the Gospel. Paul says he is chief of sinners in this regard in prior life 1 Tim 1:15. A secretly harbored implacability may be more grievous than a novel or direct prompted by a sudden outburst of passion. e. PECCATA MORTALIA ET VENALIA

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Mortal sins are those which result in the death of the sinner. This term takes in all the sins of the unbelievers. Believers mortal sin force the Holy Spirit to depart from ones heart, which destroys faith. Venial sins are sins which themselves merit damnation - are forgiven to the believer. despising Gods Word can be mortal.

Can any sin become peccata mortalia? yes How? _____

f. DOMINANT AND NON-DOMINANT SINS

This almost the same as part e. in the unbeliever sin is always dominant. In the believer sin is not to be dominant - Rom 6:12, 14 - When there is struggle sin is dominant and believers have fallen from faith.

g. PARTAKING OF OTHER MEN'S SINS

1 Tim 5:22 - 2 John 11 ^{16:12} Rom We share in the sins of others when we take pleasure in the evil they do.

h. SINS CRYING TO HEAVEN (PECCATA CLAMANTIA)

Certain sins cry out to God for public vengeance - Gen 4:10; Rev 6:10 - murder James 5:4 - withholding wages - Oppression of laborers, etc. The greatest sin John 6:9, 15:22

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.

Scripture stresses the unusual character of this sin by distinguishing it from the sin against the son of God - Mt 12:32 - Mk 3:28-29.

In 1 John 5:16 what is the difference between "sin unto death" and "sin not unto death"? The distinction is that we should intercede for one who sins "not unto death" but in the case of the sin "unto death" there is to be no intercession. This is not unbelief - 1 Tim 2:1,4 - Now is this a recommunication we are told to bring them to faith & save them. 1 Cor. 5:5; 2 Cor. 2:6-11. - Only Sin Against the H.S.

What is its nature as opposed to other sins? a It does not consist in final impenitence. The vast majority of men die in unbelief - but Scripture does not charge this sin to them.

b Not does every kind of resistance against the Holy Spirit constitute this sin. Other wise all who hear the Word would be guilty since resisting the Word is our nature

c Not does the sin against the Holy Spirit consist in blaspheming against the truth resulting from Spiritual blindness. - 1 Tim 1:13 - Paul - or Peter / Luke 22:61-62

In what context was Jesus induced to warn against the sin against the Holy Spirit? The Pharisees were powerfully impressed by the miracles of Jesus. They were convicted that this was a divine miracle - yet declared it to be the work of Satan. - Then Reckoned them.

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).

22
A number of questions which need to be addressed are as follows?

1. Does the sin against the Holy Spirit still occur today? Some say that this ended with the death of the last Apostle. However the passages are too general in scope and not limited to the Apostolic age. This a warning addressed to Disciples of all ages.
2. Can it be established beyond a reasonable doubt whether a person has committed the sin against the Holy Spirit? The answer to this has great practical

importance to the individual Person. It is correct when said that those who have not committed this sin torment themselves with despair of being guilty, while those who have committed it aren't concerned.

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- a. We should not be too hasty in charging this sin - Luther: there are hardened consciences which the devil is driving to despair by causing them to think they have committed it."
- b. On the other hand - to say it cannot be debated good or bad - 1 John 5:16 says two things.

1. The sin does occur and is discernible -

2. ~~This is not~~ by the use of the singular We know that discernment is confined to one person - at most - several - who discern the spirits.

3. Who can sin against the Holy Spirit? only regenerate persons can commit the sin against the Holy Spirit. - At least an internally convincing testimony of the Holy Spirit must precede this sin.

4. Can a person be forgiven the sin against the Holy Spirit? Heb. 6:4-8 + Heb. 10:26-27 too clearly deny the possibility of a renewed repentance in the case of those "who were once enlightened and have tasted the heavenly gift" but then severely blaspheme the Spirit.

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

The Calvinists say that Predestination is the answer. They say that Christ's death was not for everyone. But this is not Scriptural. 1 John 2:2

Rome says that those who commit this sin belong to the class that failed to acquire salvation. - We must say 1) if a man does not commit it is due to God's grace 2) if he does it is entirely his fault. - p. 625 Art. XI - Solid Declaration

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 Papists and the synergists and also the Calvinists. The Reformed 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.