

WHY I BELIEVE

The Sinfulness of Man

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. The conflict between philosophy (naturalism) and Christianity (supernaturalism) revolves around the nature of man. Is man basically good or evil? There can be no question that the Bible teaches men are basically sinful.
- B. A proper grasp of the fact that all men are sinners is essential to the understanding of our so great salvation. Sin and redemption go hand in hand. Where sin is minimized, redemption is impoverished. NOTE: Only when we have had a malady accurately diagnosed, will we be willing to take the medicine prescribed, so only when a person sees he is a sinner will he flee to Christ for salvation.
- C. Sin is what God says it is and human opinion and philosophy must bend to the testimony of the Word of God in which God declares the true nature of man.

II. DEFINITION OF SIN

- A. Words: The Bible uses three basic words to describe sin. Sin which means “to miss the mark.” Iniquity which means “to pervert” or “to make crooked.” Trespass or transgress which connotes “rebellion.”
- B. Passages: According to the Bible all men are guilty of personal sin (Rom. 3:23). Sin is rebellion to the law of God (I John 3:4) and is always against God’s authority and person (Psa. 51:4). Sin may also be a failure to do the good which man knows he should do (James 4:17). There are, therefore, sins of commission and omission.
- C. Conclusion: Sin is a failure to reach God’s holy standard by going astray and a failure to do what is right in a moral sense. Sin is voluntary rebellion against God, so that man is not only a sinner but he is a guilty sinner before a holy God.

III. UNIVERSALITY OF SIN

- A. Biblical: The universality of sin is acknowledged in every part of the Bible.

1. O.T.: I Kings 8:46; Eccl. 7:20; Psa. 14:1-3; 130:3; 143:2; Isa. 53:6; 64:6; Gen. 8:21.

2. N.T.: Rom. 3:10-12; 3:20, 23; Luke 11:13; Mark 7:21-22; I John 1:8-10.

B. Logical

1. A baby never has to be taught to do evil but must be instructed to do good.

2. History is filled with the wicked deeds of men.

3. Modern news is 75% about man's rebellion to God's order.

4. Men must pass laws in order to protect them from the evils of all men.

5. Men must have a police force to maintain law and order.

6. Why do we put locks on doors and windows if men are not sinful?

IV. THE FALL

A. Definition: The sin of Adam and Eve, the first human parents, against God.

B. The Event: Adam and Eve had a free will under the sovereignty of God, for while God did not force Adam and Eve to sin, it did not take Him by surprise or happen outside of His control. Adam and Eve had no sin nature as men have today, so they were free not to sin. Though they could be tempted, they could not be compelled or impelled to sin. Adam and Eve chose as a deliberate act of the will to sin; this was a free act. After they had sinned, they immediately became conscious of their guilt and hid themselves from God. The results of their sin were immediate. They were separated from God and aware of guilt. A curse was pronounced on them and their posterity which involved spiritual and physical death, condemnation and separation and the dreadful spread of evil. Adam and Eve acquired a sin nature that affected every area of their personality – will, mind and emotion. The Fall would have devastating effects upon all the descendants of Adam and Eve. Paul Little comments,

As a result of the Fall, the image of God in man was badly marred in both its moral and its natural dimensions. Man lost his original inclinations toward God and became a perverted creature, inclined away from his Creator. His personality was sadly marred. His intellect became bound, his emotions corrupted, and his will enslaved. He lost his true manhood. (Know What You Believe)

V. ORIGINAL SIN

- A. Definition: Original sin is an explanation of why all men are sinners. Man's universal sin is traced back to the Fall of Adam and Eve. All men inherit a common corrupt nature which always tends towards evil. Perhaps "original sin" is a misleading term, and it may be better to use the term "inborn depravity."
- B. O.T. Teaching: David makes a clear statement that he was born with a sin (Adamic) nature (Psa. 51:5).
- C. Jesus' Teaching: Our Lord dealt with the depravity of human nature and treated sin as a condition as well as an act (Matt. 26:41; Mark 7:21-22). Sins are the result of a sin nature. In other words, we are not sinners because we sin; we sin because we are sinners.
- D. Paul's Teaching: The Apostle Paul connected the guilt of the human race with the Fall (I Cor. 15:22), for Adam was the Christian's representative when he sinned (Rom. 5:12-21). Little says,

Adam represented us just as, when our government declares war, it represents, affects, and involves us. As a result of Adam's sin, all who are in Adam die. This includes each of us. We tend to think that things might have turned out differently if we had been in Adam's place. But each of us, by doing as Adam did, has ratified the decision our first parents made to rebel and disobey God. Who would claim he had never sinned? And so we are justly condemned today not only for Adam's sin, but for our own sin.

NOTE: The guilt, penalty and condemnation of Adam came upon all men by imputation and by nature for all men have sinned in Adam. This includes children as well as adults. This may not seem fair to the human mind but this is what the Word of God declares.

E. Views on the Fall

- 1. Liberals (Pelagions, Socinians): This view originated with Pelagius, a British monk in the 5th century, and teaches that man is merely diverted. Pelagius taught that all men could be sinless if they chose to be, and that some men have lived free from sin. Adam was born with a free will and his sin was a bad example to the human race and affected only him. Pelagius denied the whole concept of original sin, and said that Adam's sin did not pass to every member of the human race. He believed that men were sinners only by acts and could, by these same acts, live without sin. He denied the grace of God in salvation, asserting that man had no need for supernatural help to live a righteous life. Pelagianism was condemned as heretical by the Church at the Council of Catheridge in A.D. 418 and the Council of Ephesus in A.D. 431. NOTE: Pelagius' views are the forerunner to 20th century modernism which says that man is basically good with no inherent sin nature. Any bad in a man can be overcome by education and a

- right environment. Modernism, as did Pelagianism, accepts universalism (all men will be saved).
2. Freewillers (Semi-Pelagianism, Arminians, Roman Catholics): They say that man is only diseased because of sin. This is a compromise position between Pelagianism and Augustinianism. They taught that all men were affected by Adam's sin but not so much that the human will could not respond. The sinner begins the work of turning to God by his free will and then God puts forth His grace; thus the sinner cooperates with God in salvation. The saint can lose his salvation if he does not continue to do good works in his life, for if he chose his way into salvation then he can choose his way out of salvation. Semi-pelagianism was condemned by the Church as heretical at the Council of Orange in A.D. 529. NOTE: This viewpoint in one form or another is widely held by many modern day Fundamentalists.
 3. Sovereignists (Augustinianism, Calvinism): This view teaches that all men are totally depraved and spiritually dead. Augustine, who opposed Pelagius, believed that Adam transmitted to his descendants, because of the unity of the human race, both his guilt and the corruption in belonging to it. All men inherit Adam's corrupt nature and is dead spiritually. Man has lost his freedom not to sin. He is free to carry out the desires of his nature – but since his nature itself is corrupt, he is really free only to do evil. The will is free but not freed from sin. Though man has a free choice, man in his natural state always chooses a perverse course. Thus there is a need for supernatural grace to be applied to the sinner for that person to turn to Jesus Christ in faith. NOTE: Augustinianism goes back to the teachings of the Apostle Paul for the right views on sin and grace. Thus Augustinianism is closest to the Biblical view.

VI. SPIRITUAL CONDITION OF MEN BECAUSE OF THE FALL

- A. He is corrupt in nature. Every aspect of man is corrupted because of sin. Intellect is corrupted (Eph. 4:18; II Cor. 4:4-5; Tit. 1:15); conscience is perverted (I Tim. 4:2; Tit. 1:15); heart is wicked (Jer. 17:5-9); flesh and spirit are filthy (II Cor. 7:1); the will is corrupt (Rom. 1:19-23, 29). NOTE: Man is totally depraved because every area of his life is blighted by sin but this does not mean that everything about him is totally bad.
- B. He is alienated from God. (Isa. 59:1-2).
- C. He is in bondage to sin (John 8:31-34; Rom. 6:17; Eph. 2:3; Tit. 3:3).
- D. He is unable to respond to God (Eph. 2:1; I Cor. 2:14; II Cor. 4:4-5; Rom. 8:7-8; Rom. 3:10-12; Eph. 4:18; I John 5:19). NOTE: The unsaved man in his natural state is unable to respond to God even though he is held responsible to do so. However, by the grace of God he can respond. Therefore, there must be the

sovereign works of the Holy Spirit on a sinner – convicting, drawing, calling and regenerating – if men are going to be saved.

VII. CONCLUSION

- A. The root problem in the world today is not ignorance or poverty. The root problem is sin. Man is alienated from God, and is self-centered. All conflicts between races, economic classes, and nations are nothing more than self-centeredness. Man operates according to his sinful nature.
- B. All men are sinners in Adam but the truth of the gospel is that men can be made righteous saints in Christ (Rom. 5:19). One gets into Christ when he trusts Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior.