

LESSON 3

THE EFFECTS OF SIN

Introduction

Although some philosophies speak of man's natural goodness and ability to improve himself and his society, they tend to overlook the seriousness and universality of sin. Man does have, according to the Biblical account of Creation, a natural goodness stemming from his creation in the image of God.

The Bible explains that sin entered God's good creation through the disobedience of Adam and Eve. The Bible also states that sin has spread to every member of the human race. The head of the human race has become also the source of sin for every person. How is Adam's sin transmitted to his descendants?

Some people tend to take sin lightly. Their attitude is expressed in the words, "So what if I do wrong? Everyone else does, too." Sin is much more serious and more far-reaching in its effects than many individuals and political and philosophical movements realize. It accounts for many world ailments and individual illnesses.

The Transmission of Sin

Biblical statements

The theory that Adam's sin has been transmitted to his descendants is based primarily on two Scriptures: Psalm 51:5 and Romans 5:12ff. These two Scriptures, interpreted from the perspective that sin is a substance, have led to the tradition that sin is inherited.

The Psalmist recognized that he was born into a sinful society and with a sinful nature (51:5). He did not state that he inherited the guilt of Adam's sin nor that he was accountable for the misdeeds of Adam and Eve. He recognized that he did not live an individual existence but was a part of society which was evil. Paul stated that sin entered the world through Adam; and death, the co-worker of sin, entered the world as a result of sin. The fact that death passed upon all men shows that all have sinned (Rom.5:12). The universal reign of death shows the universal

Man's natural goodness stems from his creation in the _____.

(image of God)

Sin entered God's good creation through _____.

(disobedience)

Psalms 51:5 and Romans 5:12ff. are the two Scriptures used mainly to support the theory that _____ sin has been transmitted to his _____.

(Adam's, descendants)

Did the Psalmist say that he inherited the guilt of Adam's sin or that he was accountable for the misdeeds of Adam and Eve?

(no)

experience of sin (Rom. 5:12), even though other men have not transgressed the specific commandment given to Adam. Through Adam's transgression, sin entered the world and infected society. Every person is a part of that sinful society; therefore, his nature is inclined towards sin.

The Psalmist and Paul both recognized that sin is a dominant force in society and is universal. The most natural way of understanding the universality of sin is that the sin of Adam has been transferred to the whole human race. Church tradition has associated the transmission of sin with procreation. This idea suggests that Adam's sin is inherited and man is born condemned for the sin which the first man committed. It also suggests that sin is connected to the sexual act of procreation; therefore, sexuality is evil. These ideas are misinterpretations of the Biblical doctrine of sin.

The Pelagian view

Pelagius was a British monk who propounded his doctrines at Rome in A.D. 409. His position was condemned by the Council of Carthage in A.D. 418. He taught that every human soul is created immediately by God as innocent and free from depraved tendencies. Each is able to obey God perfectly as Adam was at his creation. The only effect of Adam's sin upon his posterity is the effect of evil example. Human nature, according to Pelagius, has not been corrupted; therefore, man can be saved by keeping the Law, and some have actually obeyed God perfectly. Physical death is not the penalty of sin but an original law of nature. Adam was created mortal; therefore, he would have died even if he had not sinned. The Law is as good a means of salvation as the Gospel. Even before Christ came, some men lived who did not commit sin.

The Pelagian view fails to recognize the universality and seriousness of sin. It disregards the doctrine of Creation by declaring that man is self-sufficient and the Biblical teaching that sinful man's only hope is in God's grace.

The Augustinian view

Augustine (A. D. 354-430) was the opponent of Pelagius. He concluded that God imputes the sin of Adam immediately to all his posterity by virtue of the organic unity of mankind. The whole race existed in Adam at the time of his transgression, not individually but seminally. The human race had its potential existence in Adam but its essence had not yet been individualized. Adam stood in such organic unity with the race that his will was the will of mankind. Augustine interpreted Romans 5:12 to mean that death passed upon all men because all had sinned in Adam. This means that infants are guilty of sin at birth.

Two traditional teachings of the Church concerning the transmission of sin are:

1. Adam's sin is _____ and man is born _____ for the sin of Adam;
2. Transmitted sin is connected to the sexual act of _____. Are these correct interpretations or misinterpretations of the Biblical doctrine of sin?

(inherited, condemned, procreation, misinterpretations)

Read the Pelagian view and the Augustinian view and then compare the views of Pelagius and Augustine concerning original sin.

Pelagius: By creation, every human soul is _____ and _____.

Augustine: By creation, every human soul receives the _____ of _____.

Pelagius: Everyone is able to _____ God perfectly. The only effect of Adam's sin is _____ example.

Augustine: Infants are guilty of _____ at birth.

(innocent, free, sin, Adam, obey, evil, sin)

The theory conceives of sin as a substance which can be transmitted in a materialistic way. Conner points out that this theory regards in a very crude and materialistic way the idea of Adam's descendants being present in him.¹ Adam's descendants could not have been present in him in such a way as to justify the imputation of Adam's guilt and condemnation.

The Federal theory

Cocceius (1603-1669) stated that Adam was constituted, by God's sovereign appointment, the representative of the whole human race. As the representative of the race, he entered into a covenant with God which stated that eternal life would be given to the race if Adam was obedient, but the penalty of death would be passed upon all if Adam disobeyed. Since Adam sinned, God accounts all his descendants as sinners and condemns them because of Adam's transgression. Each soul is created immediately by God with a corrupt and depraved nature which inevitably leads to sin.

This theory passes judgement upon man for something for which he is not responsible. There is no Biblical indication that God entered into such a covenant with Adam.

The Arminian theory

Arminius (1560-1609) of Holland taught that all men are naturally destitute of original righteousness and thus are exposed to misery and death. An infirmity was propagated from Adam to all his descendants, leaving mankind unable to attain eternal life apart from divine help. This inability is physical and intellectual but not voluntary. Because God is just, He bestows upon each individual from the first dawn of consciousness a special influence of the Holy Spirit. This influence counteracts the effect of the inherited depravity and makes obedience possible, provided the human will cooperates. Arminius agreed that the evil tendency and state may be called sin, but they do not in themselves involve guilt or punishment.

Arminius believed that man's salvation depends on his own efforts in cooperation with the grace of God. The security of salvation depends upon man's ability to persevere to the end. The attainment of salvation depends largely upon man's accomplishment.

¹W. T. Conner. The Gospel of Redemption (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1945), p. 29.

Cocceius believed that Adam and God entered into a _____ which gave eternal life to the race if Adam was _____ and passed death upon all if Adam was _____.

(covenant, obedient, disobedient)

Is there evidence in the Bible that God entered such a covenant with Adam? _____

(Compare your answer with the text)

Arminius of Holland taught that an infirmity was propagated from Adam to all his _____.

He believed that eternal life had to be gained from _____ through the _____.

(descendants, divine help, Holy Spirit)

Factors to consider in imputation theories

Sin is universal in Time and Space; therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that human nature has been affected by sin. Since God made man and nature good, it is logical to conclude that sin entered man's experience after his creation. Although man does not transgress the specific commandment given to Adam, his breaking of God's commandments has characteristics like Adam's transgression. With Paul, it is reasonable to assume that sin entered into the first man's experience and all men have since been affected by it.

Paul teaches that man is not responsible when he does wrongs in ignorance (cf. Rom. 7). Before man is held guilty for sin, two conditions are required:

1. He knows the act he is doing is wrong.
2. He deliberately chooses the wrong.

He is guilty before God for the wrongs which he commits rather than the sins committed by others. This is not to deny that innocent men often suffer as a result of sins committed by others. It does affirm that men are not guilty before God for sins for which they are not responsible.

A New Testament survey reveals that sin can be an action, an element in man's nature, or a quasi-personal power invading man's life. Man's sinful actions are the result of his sinful nature. His sinful nature comes to life and vitality as a result of the power of evil. Man is not guilty because the power of evil attempts to invade his life, nor is he held accountable because his nature contains a sinful tendency. His instinct for reproduction is not sinful, but dwelling on the satisfaction of the instinct beyond God's will is sinful and is the basis of adultery. Man is guilty of the wrong act only when he knows the limits of God's plan (His Commandments) and deliberately transgresses them.

Man's sin is the perversion of natural instincts and normal characteristics. Actions of the sinful nature harm the well-being of others and destroy relationships between man and others. Sin is man's refusal to live within the confines of his humanness. It is man living in rebellion rather than in submission and faith. Because of pride, sinful man is unwilling to accept his creaturely limitations.

After Adam sinned, man's social environment became infected with evil desires. Interest in self-preservation and personal gain was constantly pushed to the extreme of selfishness. A selfish and proud society produces self-centred and prejudiced individuals. The influence of a dominant personality on others is illustrated by how easily mobs are incited

Since sin is universal one may reasonably conclude that _____ has been affected by _____.

(human nature, sin)

Is this statement true or false? Men are guilty before God for sins for which they are not responsible. _____.

(false)

According to the New Testament, sin can be

1. an _____
2. an _____ in man's _____
3. or a quasi-personal _____ invading man's life.

(action, element, nature, power)

Man's sin is the perversion of _____ instincts and _____ characteristics.

(natural, normal)

Man's social environment has become infected with _____ desires.

(evil)

to violence. Individuals tend to adopt the attitudes and join the actions of their society. Since sin is universal and prevails in every society, it is not surprising that individuals are drawn into the sin of their environment.

In arriving at a view of personality by combining the Biblical emphasis on man's unitary nature and the psychological and theological emphasis on interpersonal relationship, neither individualism nor socialism should predominate in the understanding of man and sin. Man is an individual but he has real human existence and meaning only in relationships—in society. Corporate personality has been emphasized in recent years as a Hebrew concept of life. What one man does affects the total body of his society. Corporate personality is another way of expressing man's oneness with his society—what his society is affects him and what he does helps determine what his society is. As a sinner, man is both affected (more appropriately—infected) by the sin of his race and he contributes also to the sin of his race: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Ps. 51:5).

Man is not an individual whose 'humanness' can exist in isolation. Man is a part of all that he has met, and all that he has met becomes part of him. The distinctive feature of his humanity is his capacity to relate to God and man—his spiritual and social relationship. His unique being as human is threatened when he is unable to relate. He cannot live without God, for his existence comes from his Creator: "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself" (Rom. 14:7). He cannot be human without relationships and communication in society. He is distinguished from lower animals by his capacity to relate as a person to other persons. Sin constantly threatens his true humanity by enticing him to live independently of God and by thwarting his relationship to his fellow-man by actions originating in pride and selfishness. Relationships are not established by man's selfishly taking advantage of others but by sacrificial actions of helping others:

For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink:...I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee?...Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me (Matt. 25:35-40).

Which should predominate in the understanding of man and sin, individualism or socialism?

(neither one)

As a sinner, man is affected (or infected) by _____ and he contributes also to _____.

(the sin of his race, the sin of his race)

Man's true humanity is threatened constantly by sin which entices him to live independently of _____ and thwarts his relationship to his _____ by proud and selfish actions.

(God, fellow-man)

In addition to a general spirit of evil which pervaded society after Adam's sin, an evil spirit was present to tempt and entice men to sin. Satan is more than a general spirit of evil; he is a personal power who works in and through men to incite them to evil. Paul and John described this world as under the power of an evil ruler, not because the material world is evil or bad but because an evil power is at work to influence and to enslave men to evil works. When the power of evil is permitted to have control, man's attitudes and actions are not in conformity with God's plan and purpose. Man cannot live a neutral life which is free from the influences of good and evil. He may desire to do right, but he does not succeed: "I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate" (Rom. 7:15—RSV).

Sin is not a substance transmitted from one generation to the next but a perversion of God's plan and design for the universe. It is not so much man's abuse of material nature as it is the substitution of the material for man's higher life—his life in relationship to man and God. When man's primary interest is directed to accumulating possessions, he not only misses but destroys the higher life (the realm of his true humanity). He is inclined towards the life of sin because of his oneness with sinful society. Part of the effect of Adam's sin must be understood with reference to the society which has been infected by sin.

It is difficult to explain how the nature of fallen man has been affected by Adam's sin other than the above discussion of his participation in a fallen society. Paul stated that we are by nature children of wrath. How the attitude and nature of man created in God's image were changed by the Fall has not received agreement by theologians. Some say that man lost the image of God. Others suggest that he lost the likeness of God, but the image was retained. Still others claim that he did not completely lose the image which continues to be the point of contact in man for the operation of the divine Spirit, but the image was marred and needs to be restored. That the image needs to be restored is implied by Paul in the statement that God predestinates us "to be conformed to the image of his Son" (Rom. 8:29) and by John in the statement that we are "the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him" (1 John 3:2).

Man's nature has been affected by the Fall. Perhaps the change in nature has not been the loss of something he possessed or the addition of something he did not possess but the redirecting and perverting of his interests from others (love) to self—a real change of character!

Satan is a _____ power who works in and through men to incite them to _____.

(personal, evil)

Fill in the blanks with the following words: design, generation, substance, perversion, plan

Sin is not a _____ transmitted from one _____ to the next but a _____ of God's _____ and _____ for the universe.

(substance, generation, perversion, plan, design)

Is this statement true or false?

As a result of the Fall of man, God's image in man has been marred and man needs to be restored to God's image. _____

(true)

The Consequences of Sin

The effects on life

Man exists because God made his body from the dust and breathed the life principle into it. God sustains man whose life is more than animal existence; it is a life of responsible relationship to God and man. When man sins, he rebels against his relationship as creature to the Creator. Just as physical death is the separation of life from the body, so spiritual death is man's separation from his Maker. Man's rebellion against God's Commandment is equivalent to declaring his independence of God. Since his life comes from God, he cannot possibly exist independently. The result of his sin is death. This was the warning given to Adam in the Garden before he sinned. The concept is repeated by Paul in Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin is death."

Man's sin involves both body and soul in the experience of death. Physical death means that the body returns to the dust and the soul continues "an incomplete" existence. The body serves as the vehicle through which the soul is expressed. After the return of the body to the dust, the soul's existence is greatly limited. Spiritual death does not mean annihilation or cessation of existence but it means the breaking of fellowship with God and separation from Him. This existence is inadequate and tragic. It is described as loneliness in outer darkness and as torture in flames of fire. Punishment is man's existence apart from life and fellowship with God.

The effects on man

Man's experience in sin does not give him greater ability and wisdom to avoid wrongdoing. The more one sins, the weaker he becomes and the greater his enslavement: "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (John 8:34). The sensations of seeking to satisfy instinctive needs outside God's plan result in the development of inordinate cravings. Attempting to satisfy the need for fellowship and acceptance by focusing on material accumulations or individual accomplishments results in greater isolation and loneliness. Man's reaction asserts that he is self-sufficient and not in need of others. His efforts only isolate him further from meaningful life in God's plan.

The experiences of loneliness and shame resulting from man's self-interest and pride are the fruits of his labour which he deserves. His experiences often do not turn him back to God but drive him into greater despair and isolation. Man has the desire for restored relationships through forgiveness and

The effect of sin on man's life is both _____ and _____ death.

(physical, spiritual)

Does man's experience in sin help him avoid wrongdoing? _____

(no)

The effect of sin upon one's relationships is isolation from his _____ and from _____.

(fellow-man, God)

deeds of love, but his pride and self-interest drive him deeper into the bondage of sin.

Total depravity means that every area of man's life is affected by his sinful nature. It does not mean necessarily that he is as bad as he could be nor that he commits tragic deeds equivalent to those of others. It does mean that even though man desires to do right within God's plan, his nature and a power working within him control his life and pervert his efforts to do the will of God.

The effects on nature

Sin not only affects man but also the innocent and amoral nature. According to the account of Adam's Fall, nature was caused to bear thorns and thistles as an appropriate environment for sinful man. When man struggles with and is defeated by natural elements, he is caused to realize his dependence on God. Sinful man has the tendency to shut God out of his life until he is driven to seek help by forces which threaten to destroy him. The natural evil of nature provides a proper environment for sinful man whose eyes are blinded to the truth. God's grace promises the restoration of nature when man as sinner is redeemed (cf. Rom. 8:19ff.).

Sin as Guilt

Sin or sickness

Psychiatrists who claim a scientific study of human nature and sickness are divided on the question of guilt with regard to wrongdoing. Some psychiatrists have accepted a deterministic philosophy and conclude that no human being should be blamed for anything he does. The determinist says that man's actions are controlled by his instincts and the influences from his environment; therefore, the individual is not responsible for what he does. He further concludes that there is no such thing as moral responsibility and social accountability. Man's wrong acts are not sin but the expression of his normal nature. Dr. Albert Ellis, a New York psychiatrist, exemplifies the position in the statement: "No human being should be blamed for anything he does. On the contrary, the concept of sin is the direct and indirect cause of virtually all neurotic disturbances."²

²Dr. Albert Ellis, "Sin and Psychology," Time, LXXIV (September 14, 1959), p. 69.

Total depravity means that every area of man's life is affected by his _____.

(sinful nature)

Thorns and thistles in nature resulted from man's _____.

(sin)

Is this statement true or false?

The determinist rejects the concept of sin. _____.

The determinist says that man's actions are controlled by his _____ and influences from his _____; therefore, a person is not responsible for his _____.

(true, instincts, environment, actions)

Those who hold to a deterministic philosophy believe that people affected by excessive anxiety are victims of unreasonable religious moral standards. When their actions deviate from the moral standard they have been taught, tension and mental illness result. The anxiety is caused by 'guilt feelings', but there is no real guilt since the person is not deliberately doing wrong but simply expressing the instincts and desires which control him.³

Deterministic oriented psychiatrists agree that real guilt is necessary before man is considered a sinner. Since his actions are determined by circumstances beyond himself, they conclude that man actually should not blame himself for his wrongs. He simply needs insight into the fact that actions of which society disapproves are expressions of the normal nature of man. Man should not apologize for what his normal nature desires and advocates.

On the other hand, many psychiatrists agree with theologians that man has freedom of choice. Although external conditions influence his decisions and actions, man's ability to choose makes him responsible for what he actually does. When he knows an action is wrong but does it anyway, he experiences an emotional disturbance or a sense of guilt. Part of his disturbance arises from the fear that those who are important to him (significant persons) will find out about his wrongdoing and will reject him, or at least adopt a lower opinion of him. In addition to the fear of exposure, man becomes emotionally disturbed because of the awareness that he has wronged someone. He has a moral nature and without moral sensitivity society cannot function. The Christian view of man holds that man has been created in the image of God with a moral nature and the capacity of responsible freedom. When man misuses his freedom by wronging God or his fellow-man, he experiences a feeling of failure and of having betrayed one by whom he desires to be accepted. Guilt is the emotion or anxiety which results when man knowingly wrongs God or his fellow-man.

To take the position of the determinist that man is not free but his actions are determined by external circumstances or instinctive impulses is to consider man on the level of animal existence. However, the wrong actions of animals do not compare with the wickedness which man devises. The reading of any newspaper reveals that the evil deeds of men are not in the same category with animal activities which are for the purpose of survival. Man is different from animals because he has been given freedom of choice and has been made responsible for the choices he

³ 'Guilt feelings' refers to a person's belief that he is guilty for an action which was actually beyond his control.

To the determinist, moral standards are unreasonable requirements imposed by

_____.

(religion)

The feeling of failure man experiences when betraying one by whom he desires to be accepted is called the _____ of

_____.

(emotion, guilt)

makes. Guilt is the result of wrong decisions and actions made knowingly.

Real guilt is always related to actual wrongs which are done in the light of a knowledge of what is right. Guilt feelings may be defined as the emotion of anxiety which results from the mistaken idea that a person has done wrong. It is questionable whether Paul would make such a distinction. For him, man is responsible for doing that which pleases God. When man pleases God, obedience and submission to God are foremost in his activities. Whatever he does should be an expression of what he believes to be God's will for his life. When he thinks an action is wrong but does it anyway, he is guilty of an attitude of rebellion against God (cf. Rom. 14; 1 Cor. 8-9).

Freedom of choice and guilt

Whether a wrong deed of man is considered sin or not depends on whether the responsibility for the action rests on him or on uncontrollable circumstances. Responsibility is based on the question of whether a person has real freedom of choice or whether his actions are conditioned and determined by his environment. Unless a person is willing to sacrifice human freedom and personal responsibility, he will have to conclude that wrong deeds are sin and the resulting guilt is real rather than guilt feelings. The degree of a person's guilt depends on the extent to which his actions and behaviour are of his own choice. Personal choice of actions contrary to convictions results in guilt and emotional disturbance.

Knowledge and guilt

If a person commits a moral fault but does not know that he has done wrong, he makes a mistake rather than committing a sin. The mistake may be called sin but it does not carry guilt unless a person has knowledge of what is right and wrong and deliberately chooses the wrong. In discussing the situation of pagans who had little knowledge of Biblical revelation, Paul emphasized that they were inexcusable for their wrongdoing because they had some knowledge of God and His will (cf. Rom. 1:19ff.). The Jews carried greater responsibility for their actions because they had more knowledge of what is right (cf. Rom. 2:1ff.). Knowing what is wrong yet deliberately choosing to do it preconditions man's wrong actions to result in guilt and inexcusability.

The question is often raised concerning children who die in infancy before they have repented of their sins. Catholics teach that infants are guilty of sin at birth because of the imputation of Adam's sin; therefore, if they die before they are admitted into

Match each of the following statements with the word it defines. (guilt, guilt feelings)

_____ 1. Anxiety which results from the mistaken idea that a person has done wrong.

_____ 2. Result of actual wrongs which are done in the light of knowledge of what is right.

(guilt feelings, guilt)

Is this statement true or false?

A person is responsible for his wrongdoings and is guilty when he knows what is wrong and deliberately chooses the wrong.

_____ (true)

the Church by baptism, they are without redeeming grace. This view is inconsistent with Paul's teaching that man is responsible for deeds which he does knowingly. Paul stated that he "was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died" (Rom. 7:9). Most Protestants interpret this statement to mean that a person is not held accountable for wrong deeds committed in ignorance or without a knowledge of the Law. When the Commandments are known and are transgressed, man becomes guilty and inexcusable. Infants and mentally-retarded persons may do wrong but not know that their deeds are wrong. They are not responsible for their actions because they have not deliberately chosen to do that which is not right. When the child becomes old enough to know the difference between right and wrong, he becomes responsible for his actions and is guilty and inexcusable for his sins.

Degrees of guilt

Guilt is measured by the degree of light possessed. Those who have never heard of Jesus Christ are guilty of sin they commit, but they are not as responsible as those who have received greater knowledge. In sending the Apostles on a mission, Jesus instructed them to enter the cities and towns and lodge with those who were worthy. If a city refused to receive them or to hear their words, they were to depart and shake off the dust of their feet as a sign of judgement against the city. Jesus stated that "it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrhah in the day of judgment, than for that city" (Matt. 10:15). People who hear the Gospel and reject its message are under greater condemnation than those who never hear and continue in their wickedness. In Luke 12:47-48, Jesus taught:

that servant, which knew his lord's will, . . . neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.

The unpardonable sin

According to Matthew 12:31, Jesus said, "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men." The sin which Jesus described is usually called the 'unpardonable sin'. There is lack of agreement concerning its nature.

A. H. Strong considered the sin against the Holy Spirit not to be regarded simply as an isolated act



Children are responsible for their sins when they know the difference between _____ and wrong and choose the _____.

(right, wrong)



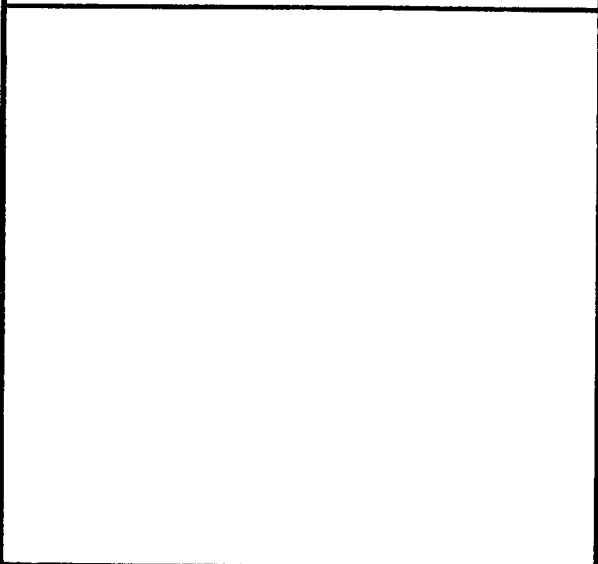
Are these statements true or false?

Guilt is measured by the degree of light possessed. _____.

Those who have never heard of Jesus are as responsible as those who have heard. _____.

People who hear the Gospel and reject it are under greater condemnation than those who never hear and continue in wickedness. _____.

(true, false, true)



but as the external symptom of a heart radically and finally set against God.⁴ Roark seems to agree with Herbert G. May and Bruce Metzger that it is the utter rebellion against God that denies Him as the doer of His own acts.⁵

The Pharisees opposed Jesus because He condemned their concept of legalistic and superficial righteousness. They as religious leaders enjoyed the acknowledgement of their piety by the common people. They were very meticulous to keep rules and regulations, especially regarding the Sabbath. They disliked Jesus because He scorned their self-righteousness and exposed their hypocrisy. They were jealous of Him because He was popular with the people.

Jesus cast a devil out of a blind and dumb man. The people were greatly impressed by this action. The Pharisees retorted, "This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils" (Matt. 12:24). Jesus claimed that the work done through Him was by the Spirit of God and indicated that the Kingdom of God had arrived (Matt. 12:28). It is understandable that the Pharisees would have questioned the power and divinity of Jesus since His own disciples had not understood His divine nature at that time. However, there was no excuse for their denying that the miracle of healing was by the power of God. It was obvious that the devil had been cast out by the Spirit of God, but since the Pharisees strongly opposed Jesus they attributed the miracle to the devil. Jesus warned them that such obstinacy was unforgivable. There is no hope for the man who deliberately rejects what is obviously God's work. There is no way that he can be forgiven and be saved.

Some people are troubled by the fear that they have committed the unpardonable sin. It is not likely that they are guilty of the act if they continue to be concerned about their relationship to God. The very desire to be accepted by God indicates that the Holy Spirit continues to woo the heart of the sinner. When the conscience is no longer concerned about salvation and a man sets his heart against God, he will not worry about having committed the unpardonable sin.

⁴A. H. Strong, Systematic Theology, Vol. II: The Doctrine of Man (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1956), p. 650.

⁵Dallas Roark, The Christian Faith, p. 220.

To reject deliberately what is obviously God's work is called 'the _____ sin'.

(unpardonable)

If one is concerned about his relationship to God, is it likely that he has committed the unpardonable sin? _____

(no)

Home Study Exercise

Basic activity (Levels 1, 2, and 3). After reading the study guide text, answer the following questions.

1. What two Scriptures are the basis of the theory that Adam's sin has been transmitted to his descendants? _____

2. Is this question true or false? The Psalmist states in 51:5 that he inherited the guilt of Adam's sin and was accountable for the misdeeds of Adam. _____

3. Name two traditional teachings of the Church concerning the transmission of sin which are misinterpretations of the Bible. _____

4. What did Pelagius teach concerning original sin? _____

5. What is the Augustinian view of the imputation of Adam's sin? _____

6. State the Arminian view of original sin. _____

7. List four factors to consider in an imputation theory. (1) _____

(2) _____
(3) _____
(4) _____

8. How does a sinful society contribute to man's sinful nature? _____

9. What is Satan's role in every man's sin? _____

10. How has the Fall affected man's nature? _____

11. How does sin affect man's life? _____

12. How does sin affect one's relationships? _____

13. How does sin affect nature? _____

14. Why do determinists reject the concept of sin? _____

15. How do determinists interpret moral standards? _____

16. What causes the emotion of guilt? _____

17. Distinguish between real guilt and guilt feelings. _____

18. How are freedom of choice and knowledge related to guilt? _____

19. When do children become condemned for sins? _____

20. What is the 'unpardonable sin'? _____

Supplementary activity (Level 2):

1. Read pages 213-219 in Christian Doctrine by Guthrie.
2. What two apparently contradictory truths underlie the problem of original sin?
3. Summarize the views of original sin as inherited and Adam as the "federal head" of the human race.
4. Explain what Guthrie means by "total depravity."

Advanced activity (Level 3):

1. Read pages 28-49 in The Gospel of Redemption by W. T. Conner.
2. State the Augustinian and Federal theories of original sin.
3. Answer the question, "If I am not responsible for my nature, how can I be responsible for the deeds which inevitably grow out of it?"
4. Explain how sin degrades the sinner.
5. Explain how sin is related to the suffering caused by natural evil.
6. Define the death which is the wages of sin.

Seminar Discussion

1. What factors require a doctrine of original sin?
2. How does the sin of each individual relate to the sin of Adam?
3. Should a child be baptized at birth because of inherited original sin?
4. How is man's social environment related to his sinful nature?
5. What effects does sin have on man?
6. What conditions are required for man to have real guilt for his wrong deeds?
7. What is the 'unpardonable sin'?