

Belgic Confession Article 15-Inherited and Personal Sins

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: **What causes physical death?** Some argue poverty, adultery (通奸), sickness, disasters and wars cause physical death. And there is a degree of truth to this answer, but only a degree. All of these terrible things that lead to death occur because of the sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden a long time ago. Man would have lived forever if he had not sinned there. Sin is the great enemy! **Sin also causes spiritual death** – death of the soul, a far more serious death. Sin puts each one born on the path to eternity in hell. Because sin affects every area of your life, body and soul, you need to have a good understanding of it and learn how to negate its effects. And you will hear God's Word speak to you on this matter today.

Our headings are:

What is the extent of Sin?

How do we eradicate (根除) sin?

Are there errors concerning sin?

Our goals are **that God will impress on you the seriousness of your sin**, that **you will praise him for eradicating your sin**, and **that you will fight to avoid errors regarding a false view of sin**, and through these things, you will be protected.

We believe that through the disobedience of Adam original **sin is extended to all mankind**; which is a **corruption of the whole nature and a hereditary disease**, wherewith even **infants in their mother's womb are infected**, and which produces in man all sorts of sin, being in him as a root thereof, and therefore is **so vile and abominable** in the sight of God that it is **sufficient to condemn** all mankind. Nor is it altogether abolished or wholly eradicated even by regeneration; since sin always issues forth from this woeful source, as water from a fountain; **notwithstanding it is not imputed to the children of God unto condemnation, but by His grace and mercy is forgiven them**. Not that they should rest securely in sin, but that a sense of this corruption should make believers often to sigh, desiring to be delivered from this body of death. Wherefore we reject the **error of the Pelagians, who assert that sin proceeds only from imitation**.

我们相信由于亚当的悖逆，原罪就延伸到全人类 1，就是全人性的败坏，而且是一种遗传的病症，就是连婴孩，甚至在母腹中也感染到各种的罪 2，罪在人心中如同毒根 3，在神面前显为如此邪恶与可憎，全人类都当被定罪 4。原罪用什么方法也不能除去，洗礼不能洗掉原罪；罪既然从此可悲的源头而出，如水发自源头；虽然不归与神的儿女被定罪，为借着神的恩慈与怜悯蒙赦免。并不是说他们要甘居罪中，但是这种败坏感应使信者时常悲叹，盼望脱离这取死的身體 5。因此我们拒绝伯拉纠派的谬误，他们说罪只是从效法别人而来的。(Translated by Rev. Charles Chao D.D.)

What is the Extent of Sin?

1. Every man, woman, boy, girl, and baby has received sin from Adam. Adam was your federal head, naturally and covenantally (契约定义下的)。Naturally=physically; Covenantally =representative head. Children are infected with sin even when they are in their mother's womb. Paul shows that sin touches everyone.

Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—

Romans 5:18 ... the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men ... (因一次的过犯，众人都被定罪)

Romans 5:19 ... through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners ... (因一人的悖逆，众人成为罪人)

You not only receive his sinful nature (罪性), but you also receive the full guilt of your sin. This means that even if you had never sinned at all in your life, God had the right to condemn you to hell forever on account of Adam's sin.

2. So you say: "How can a baby sin?" In order to answer that question, let's first define sin as God defines it.

Sin is rebellion against God by **being or doing what he forbids and not being or doing what he commands**. (We call these commission or transgressions, and omission or sins.)

King David taught us that sin was present in his soul at the time of his conception (怀孕) and gestation (受孕) in his mother's belly.

Psalms 51:5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And **in sin my mother conceived me**.

The act of conception wasn't sinful, but that which was conceived (the child) was sinful.

Psalms 58:3 The **wicked are estranged from the womb**; They go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies. (恶人一出母胎，就与神疏远；一离母腹，便走错路，说谎话。)

3. But how is sin passed on to the child? If a new child (body and soul) is sinful, does it mean that God made something sinful? **Some answer this with the belief that God indeed created a brand new soul. This is called creationism (创造论)**. But the soul is evil, surely God cannot make evil. **Some argue that the child's soul is a product of the souls of the parents**. This may explain that even though a child may have been raised away from his parents he might evidence remarkable attitudes and proclivities (性情) of the parents. **This is called Traducianism (灵魂遗传论)**. There is an element of difficulty here. I tend toward Traducianism.

4. Sin not only extends to all men, but it extends to man's whole nature – his person (位格) . This is sometimes called “total depravity,” (全然败坏) or “total inability.” Sin begins in the heart and radiates to the outside; you sin in thought, word, and actions.

Jeremiah 17:9 "The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it? Man's will has become sinful and he only wants to sin. You are like the clock that sometimes ran fast, sometimes slow, that had a sign put over it: "Don't blame my hands. The trouble lies deeper." (Or like a good onion bagel.) You sin as naturally as a polluted spring (fountain) gives polluted water.

5. Does this mean that all men are as sinful as they can get? No. God would not permit men to be as sinful as they want. Some men are permitted to become really sinful, but even they are limited. Sin caused Stalin to kill 43,000,000 in Russian. Sin caused Tutsis and the Hutus to get machetes (砍刀) and chop each other to death. Sin causes Indian midwives (接生婆) to suffocate and kill baby girls and feed their bodies to crocodiles so their parents won't have to pay a dowry (嫁妆) . But God can stop it at any time. You aren't Hitler because God stops you!

Job 14:4 Who can **bring a clean thing out of an unclean?** No one!

Ephesians 2:1-3 And you **He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins**, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the **desires of the flesh and of the mind**, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

6. This sinful nature is enough for God to condemn you for eternity. The payment for sin, any sin, one sin, is death.

Everyone is guilty before God. Those who deny that all men are guilty and under condemnation from birth, **which is every religion and philosophy outside of Christianity, are being used by the Devil to rob men of salvation (救赎, 拯救)** . If you can't see the sin, you can't get the salvation. Do you see how important you are to the world?

7. Furthermore, this sinful nature that causes man to commit his own personal sins is called “actual sins.” Man breaks all of God's 10 laws – in thoughts, words, and actions. Knowing this, you have **no reason to boast about your goodness. Like Adam, you willfully sin.** No one was holding a gun to Adam's head; no one was twisting his arms. It was willful and free. On his own, Adam and Eve performed a reckless (胆大妄为的) disobedience in the Garden. This is still true today: you willfully sin against God and commit many actual sins.

8. Even when one becomes a Christian he still has remnants (残渣余孽) of sins.

Romans 7:15 For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do.

This means that throughout your life you must learn to depend upon God. There is no room for arrogance, especially in thinking that you are better than any other person! Hitler can be on your horizon.

How Do We Eradicate Sin?

1. God in his grace imputes (将...归于) Christ's purity and holiness to some and he imputes their selfishness and impurity to Christ. “Imputes” means to count something as someone else's. God counts the death of Christ as your death...so you don't have to die.

Romans 5:15 For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the **gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!** (只是过犯不如恩赐。若因一人的过犯，众人都死了；何况神的恩典，与那因耶稣基督一人恩典中的赏赐，起步更加倍地临到众人吗?)

Romans 5:17- For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more **will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.**

The Psalmist declares blessed is the man to whom God does not impute his sins. This is the result of God's work.

2. This work of imputing your sin to Christ and imputing Christ's righteousness to you is done by the Holy Spirit.

John 3:6 "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

This is why you must sincerely pray for the Holy Spirit to work in the hearts of those you are evangelizing (传福音) .

To think you can make someone a Christian by your cogent (有说服力的) argumentation without the working of the Holy Spirit is self-deception that will lead to frustration (沮丧, 挫败感) and disappointment.

3. Knowing that your sins are forgiven through Christ's grace alone does not mean that you may continue in sin. To do this is contempt of (轻慢) God.

Romans 6:1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?

2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? (1 这样，怎么说呢？我们可以仍在罪中，叫恩典显多吗？2 断乎不可！我们在罪上死了的人，岂可仍在罪中活着呢？)

Instead, Christians are to sigh in disgust (厌恶) when he sees his sins rising in his heart. He should work to suffocate those thoughts and let them die a shameful death.

4. You can see from this that Christianity is not a system of “right and wrong.” Rather, Christianity is God’s plan for redeeming (救贖) man through grace that comes from the Lord Jesus.

Are there Errors Concerning sin?

1. There are some people who believe that man only becomes sinful when he is externally influenced by sin and he starts to imitate sinners. This error was promoted by Pelagius (伯拉纠), a British monk who lived between the 4th and 5th centuries. He challenged Augustine (who taught the Biblical truth) on this matter. Further, the truth of the Bible is evidence in the life of children. You can see sinfulness (罪) in the youngest child who commits sins he has never seen before. Sinning is as natural – even more natural than – eating. To further disprove this fallacious (错谬的) argument, there are people who see bad behavior (sin) and yet they do not imitate them. Pelagius was a deceiver of many. His theory is false and has been proven so.

2. Look at the danger of Pelagius’ argument.

a. Sociologically (从社会学角度) : Blaming the environment for sin has been used to excuse for all kinds of bad behavior. Much of what you hear about in violence in the US is based on the argument that the environment is the cause of violence. “Our young people need more jobs, if they have job they won’t rob.” **“We look because we are poor.”** “If we have after school programs our young people be in gangs.” “If we had higher minimum wage we won’t have so many teenage pregnancies (少女怀孕) and abortions (流产).”

The truth is, everyone must take personal responsibility for his actions. You must never blame your bad behavior on other people’s bad behavior.

b. Religion: Western religions are basically Pelagian or semi-Pelagian. Arminian churches are semi-Pelagian in thinking. This is why much of their worship does go for the heart but for the imitation. They believe that if you are in the right environment they would be able to be better. Churches need to repent of teaching this!

c. Psychology: Modern psychology is based on this faulty premise (前提) that man was born as a “clean sheet of paper.” (人之初，性本善) Therefore, it is held, that children are not responsible for their wrong until they are personally responsible. So when a child does wrong, it is easy and proper to blame his environment – especially his parents – since that is the child’s most common environment. Pelagianism is from the pits of hell. And since the premise is wrong, much of modern psychology is wrong, and would have been laughable if its consequences were not so severe.

3. To not look to the one who created us to find out how to fix our problems, but rather, looking to ourselves for answers, is the height of insanity (极端愚蠢，荒唐).

Conclusion:

What is man’s biggest problem today? Is it war, pollution, unemployment, crime, poverty, nuclear energy, or Muslim terrorism? No, the Bible teaches that man’s biggest problem is sin – **original sin (原罪) and actual sins which result in death – physical and spiritual death (肉体 and 灵魂 的死亡).** Man is sinful from birth. Man is sinful throughout his entire being. His heart is sinful. Because of sin, man lost the ability to do good. His became corrupted in his body and soul. And because of this, man is under the condemnation of God, he will die, and he will spend eternity in hell.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. God made it possible for man’s sin to be eradicated—erased through Jesus Christ and for peace to come again between man and God.

2. How? Jesus took the **punishment for man’s sin and removed God’s anger.** He loved you enough to die for you! So you don’t have to go to hell. And even though you physically die, it is not a punishment for sin but the means by which you receive eternal life in fullness.

3. Rejoice in this. Thank him for it. Love him for it.

4. Share this to the world. Fight against the falsehood all around, falsehood from the Devil that has infiltrated (使渗透) every false religion and philosophy in this world.

So if you are not a Christian, you are still under the heavy weight of sin that will crush you. Why not ask our gracious Lord to take the load of sin that is crushing you. He says: Come unto me all who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest.

(凡劳苦担重担的人到我这里来，我必使你们得安息。) Come to him today.