

Canons of Dort–3rd Head: Article 1-3–The Effect and Extent of Man’s Sinfulness

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ: I heard a man who lived in a house infested with roaches say that he would eat his food in the dark because then he wouldn’t be able to see the roaches. In his mind, if he couldn’t see them, they weren’t there, and if they weren’t there, then there was no threat. But while truth is unsettling, it saves lives. Consider another example. If a doctor tells you your cancer is spreading, but you argue that since you aren’t feeling any pain, you wouldn’t seek treatment, the consequences are you will likely die. Similarly, you must learn the effect and extent of sin on your life and its consequences on you.

Our headings are:

The Effect of Sin

The Extent of Sin

Our goals are: That you will develop a full sense of the effect and extent of your sins, that you will love your Savior who removed your sins, and that you will work to rescue those who are still trapped in sin.

The Effect Sin

Article 1: The Effect of the Fall on Human Nature - Human beings were originally created in the image of God and were furnished in their mind with a true and sound knowledge of the Creator and things spiritual, in the human will and heart with righteousness, and in all the emotions with purity; indeed, the whole human being was holy. However, rebelling against God at the devil’s instigation and by free will, they deprived themselves of these outstanding gifts. Rather, in their place the humans brought upon themselves blindness, terrible darkness, futility, and distortion of judgment in their mind; perversity, defiance, and hardness in the hearts and wills; and finally impurity in all the emotions.

1. God made man very good-spiritually good.

While the animals, plants, and minerals were good, after God made man, God’s goal for creation was completed. That’s when God described his creation as “very good.”

God equipped man’s mind with truth. God made man with the ability to obey and live according to that truth. Man had no tendency (predisposition) to sin. Man was perfectly righteous in the full extent of his being. Man had everything he needed to do the job God assigned to him. God blessed man with abundance of everything.

Then man, of his own free will, rebelled against God, at the instigation of the Devil, and sinned against God.

2. Arminians (Pentecostal types) have strong opposition to this teaching in 2 ways.

a. They believe when God made man, that human heart had the inclination to sin to some degree. They believe the test God gave Adam would have been useless without man having an inclination to sin –a small desire to disobey God. So they reject the real definition of original sin which is enough to condemn man. Instead, they think original sin does not condemn; it only makes it difficult for man to repent. (So they believe all babies go to heaven when they die since they are innocent.)

b. They teach that God created man with a neutral will.

3. What’s wrong with what Arminians teach in these 2 things?

a. If God created man with an inclination (slight desire) to sin it would mean that God made man sinful. After all, the Bible teaches that the desire to sin (hate, lust, covetousness) is already a sin in God’s eyes. Look what God said!

Genesis 6:5 Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

b. If God created man with a neutral will, how could God call man “very good?” God created man with no appetite for sin. Man was positively holy and inclined to do good. There is no neutrality in man.

Genesis 1:31 And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.

If God created man with a neutral will, and therefore man is able to choose to serve Christ on his own free will, this denies the Scripture that the Holy Spirit must draw the sinner to the Savior. To say that man does not need to be drawn robs Christ of the work he does for the sinner and robs him of the glory that the sinner owes him.

John 6:44 “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him....

Having fallen from his state of perfection, man is actively fighting against God and has no interest in the things of God. He does not seek God but opposes him on every front. He can do nothing for his salvation. An old brother once rightly told a minister: “If I had to add even one sigh to my salvation, I would be forever lost.”

Arminians don’t see man has helpless and in need of Christ to make man alive and pull man to himself. They think man is literally “sick in sin” not “dead in sin.” Because he is sick and not dead, he can call for help of his own free will.

Ephesians 2:1 And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,

4. What exactly were the consequences of man’s fall?

Man developed spiritual blindness and groped about in terrible darkness... How difficult it is for a blind man in a crazy world! Imagine how impossible for a blind to see the truth.

Blindness led to futility. Man's life has no real purpose or direction anymore without God. He no longer lives for God's glory.

Blindness caused man's judgment to be distorted. He could not properly decipher between right and wrong. This is like Richard Dawkins saying recently that it is immoral if you don't kill a Down syndrome child. The murder of a baby for convenience is okay. Suicide becomes an option. Slavery isn't shameful. Adultery is appropriate. Worship is worthless. What distortion!

With a distorted view, man became more and more perverse...and embraced whatever pleased his flesh. Note how many self-plus words have come into the vernacular. What is the most popular? Selfie!

In order to continue in perverseness man became defiant/hardhearted in his will. This is like Hitler pursuing the merciless slaughter of the Jews. Or like Stalin killing innocent Ukrainians just to put terror in them. They lost feeling.

Sin has taken over so much that even man's emotions are affected.

Jeremiah 17:9 "The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?"

Sin affected man to his core. This is why this doctrine is called radical depravity. Radical, from "radix" means "root." Yes, man is not sinful as he wants to be because God stops him, yet he is sinful in every area of life.

The Extent of Sin

Article 2: The Spread of Corruption - Human beings brought forth children of the same nature as themselves after the fall. That is to say, being corrupt they brought forth corrupt children. The corruption spread, by God's just judgment, from Adam and Eve to all their descendants—except for Christ alone—not by way of imitation (as in former times the Pelagians would have it) but by way of the propagation of their perverted nature.

1. Adam passed on sin to all his natural descendants.

No one born in the normal way has ever been without sin. This is why Jesus was not born in the natural way.

2. This spreading of sin from parents to children was not simply by children imitating parents— though that is partly true.

The spreading of sin starts at the time of conception. Children are sinful because they were sinful from their mother's womb.

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

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

3. In fact, if you look at Leviticus 12, you will see that a mother who gave birth had to be purified.

She had to be purified because she was the source of putting a sinner into God's creation.

Leviticus 12:2 "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'If a woman has conceived, and borne a male child, then she shall be unclean seven days; as in the days of her customary impurity she shall be unclean. 3 'And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. 4 'She shall then continue in the blood of her purification thirty-three days. She shall not touch any hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary until the days of her purification are fulfilled. 5 'But if she bears a female child, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her customary impurity, and she shall continue in the blood of her purification sixty-six days.

Was God unfair to require a longer purification period for a girl? Was this proof of Jewish anti-feminine policy? No and no. God demanded a longer time for the purification of the woman who gave birth to a girl as a reminder that it was the woman who first sinned in Eden.

4. This passing on of sin from parent to child was just.

As the federal head, if Adam had passed the test in Eden, he would have been confirmed in righteousness and his children would have been confirmed in righteousness even before they were born. We were in Adam, like the Bible says Levi was in Abraham when Abraham worshipped with Melchizedek. (Hebrews 7:9-10) This is like how a father might speak for the family or elders speak for the church. This representative way was what God established. As the Creator, he had the right to do so. This is why believers don't worry about children dying in infancy. If God can condemn a child through his parents' failures, why could he not save a child through his parents' faith? After the Fall, God's demands did not change. Man simply lost the ability to do what God said. Muslims argue that God would be unfair if he demands man to do what man is unable to do. But God did not make man sinful.

Article 3: Total Inability - Therefore, all people are conceived in sin and are born children

of wrath, unfit for any saving good, inclined to evil, dead in their sins, and slaves to sin. Without the grace of the regenerating Holy Spirit they are **neither willing nor able to return to God**, to reform their distorted nature, or even to prepare themselves for such reform.

5. Because of man's sin, he is not willing (desire) or able to be reconciled to God.

John 8: 44 "**You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do**. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him...

Man consistently does what is opposite to what God says. Idolatry is promoted in society. **God's name is misused for jokes**. The **Sabbath is a day for sports**. **Children are trained to dishonor their parents**. **Murderers are protected**. You are a **prude if you don't commit adultery**. Men **use the law to steal from the rich**. The **poor are abused under the cover of capitalism**. **Lies are perpetuated by preachers and politicians**. We are **fed covetousness from birth**. No wonder man has no interest in reconciliation with God.

Remember when Jesus said it was easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God? Arminians teach that the "eye of the needle" was a place in Jerusalem that **one could pass through, if he came late at night, by getting down on his knees...**and taking off the load from his back. This is a nice story, but it is a lie. There was no such expression until the Middle Ages. Further, Jesus did not intend to teach of human ability, but to teach of the impossibility of human efforts to come into the kingdom. (Mt 19:26)

6. God must work faith in the heart of the non-believer so that he might receive what Christ offers.

What does Christ offer: Perfect covenant keeping, and the value of his death.

Isaiah 53: 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has **laid on Him the iniquity of us all**.

John 3: 3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." 4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" 5 Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, **unless one is born of water and the Spirit**, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

No Christ, no salvation.

Conclusion:

What was sin's effect? Sin was devastating to man. Man lost the ability to do good, becoming corrupt in his body, mind, and spirit. What was the extent of man's sin? Sin was passed on to the entire human race. Only the 2nd Adam, your Covenant Keeper could restore you to a relationship with God by keeping the covenant for you and taking your punishment for breaking the covenant.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. I expect you to be beaten down by this message – humbled –made to feel low – when you consider the extent of your sins. You are sinful from your root. But this diagnosis is lifesaving.

2. I also expect you will be lifted up on high – yes, you should be on a high when you recognize the greatness of the work the Lord Jesus did for you. This brings true happiness- happiness to the depths of the soul.

3. Along with your joy must come your job. You have been called to **spread that joy to the world** – starting in your home. **So pray for the spread of his joy, support the spread of this joy, speak so others can see their sins, embrace the Savior, and receive this joy.**

Finally, if you are not a Christian, God offers to change you...to draw you to himself...and clean you of all your sins. Would you receive what he offers, or do you want to remain in your sins?