

Chapter 4, Section 2: The Imago Dei

In what three ways does the confession understand the "image" of God?

What do you think "dominion" references? (Note vocational image in Gen. 1:2-28)

How does the image of God relate to human calling?

*Thus, as made in the image of God... all men are made so far artists as to desire the integrity of the work...*

Dorothy Sayers, "Postscript, The Worth of Work," *The Mind of the Maker*,

*We need a thorough going revolution in our whole attitude to work.. not as a necessary drudgery to be undergone for the purpose of making money, but as a way of life in which the nature of man should find its proper exercise and delight and so fulfill itself to the glory of God. That it should, in fact, be thought of as a creative activity undertaken for the love of the work itself; and that man, made in God's image, should make things as God makes them, for the sake of doing well a thing that is worth doing.*

*Unless we do change our whole way of thought about work, I do not think we shall ever escape from the appalling squirrel cage... in which we landed ourselves by acquiescing in a social system based upon envy and avarice.*

Dorothy Sayers, "Why Work" in *Creed or Chaos?*

Notice **Genesis 2:7**,

*the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and the man became a "nephesb."*

What does it mean that unlike any other creature, humanity is described as "nep;hesh?"

*We must think of humanness as a soul rather than one who simply has a soul.*

*We may say that we never encounter in the Bible an independently existing, abstract, ontological, structural interest in man. In the Bible, man is indeed analyzed, but in a very special sort of analysis... This man, now in the impossibility of his being isolated and independent, is the whole man.*

G.C. Berkouwer, *Man: The Image of God*

"What is man in relation to God"

*It is certain that man never achieves a clear knowledge of himself unless he has first looked upon God's face and then descends from contemplating him to scrutinize himself."*

John Calvin

What are some of the indications that there is a "death of the soul" in our culture?

Original Sin and the Fallenness of Humanity: Chapter 6

Can Love be Sinful?

What is Henry Fairlie's point on his perspective of life without the concept of sin...

*"One cannot ask anything interesting about such a life, whether it has been good or bad, because the only standard by which it is lived is the drive to do "what I have to do." A life that is self-justifying is one that is uninteresting because there are no questions one can put from one's own experience, or from the whole human experience over the centuries to which the answer will not be given that "I did what I had to do" One is here at the lowest common denominator that an existence can reach.. arguing against the kinds of psychology that do away with the categories of "good" and "bad..." Henry Fairlie, Seven Deadly Sins*

What is the title we give to the doctrine contained in paragraph 2 of the confession?

How does paragraph 3, explain this? Compare to other views!

*"It has been supposed by many that there is a covenant made with Adam such as this, that if he continued to obey the law for a limited period of time, all his posterity should be confirmed in holiness and happiness for ever. What reason is for this belief I am unable to ascertain: In am not aware that the doctrine is taught in the Bible.... Adam was the natural head of the human race, and his sin has involved them in its consequences; but not on the principle that his sin is literally accounted their sin." Charles Finney*

What is the title we give to the doctrine taught in paragraph 4 of the confession?

Is it exaggeration to say that we are "utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil"?

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

What is Sin according to Romans 1?

What is Sin according to 2 Tim.3:2-4 (c.f. John 3:19)

Why do we sin according to James 1:13-16

Why is there sin in the world according to Romans 1 and Romans 5? E.g. What is "original sin" and why is it in the world?

Can the doctrine of Sin be "good news?" E.g. What does the Genesis 3 description of the fall presuppose about humanity? What does sin as a category accomplish in the world?

The Bible takes *sin* seriously because it takes man seriously... Christians do not deny the fact- in some circumstances- of diminished responsibility, but we affirm that diminished responsibility always entails diminished humanity. To say that somebody "is not responsible for his actions" is to demean him or her as a human being. It is part of the glory of being human that we are held responsible for our actions.  
John Stott, *The Cross of Christ*

And extreme *pollution* which infects the whole soul and which is directly contrary to the glorious beauty of the Divine image. A *power* of tyrannical domination by which it deprives men of all that liberty and dignity which are worthy of the sons of God and wreathes about their neck a galling a oppressive yoke setting no bounds or measure to their labor, but with the daughter of the horseleech, incessantly crying, Give, give. A *guilt* which renders the sinner obnoxious to every kind of punishment in soul and body, to be undergone through eternity.  
Herman Witsius

Confession of Sin is a prerequisite to authentic Christianity and Spiritual Conversion./Renewal

Those who were brought to the Savior were all prepared for it by a sharp law-work of conviction, in discovering to them, in a heart-affecting manner, their sinfulness both by nature and practice, as well as their liability to damnation for their original and actual transgressions. Neither could they see any way in themselves by which they could escape the divine vengeance. For their whole past lives were not only a continued act of rebellion against God, but their present endeavors better their state, such as prayers and the life were so imperfect, that they could not endure them, and much less they concluded, would a holy God. They all confessed the justice of God in their eternal perdition; and thus were shut up to the blessed necessity of seeking relief by faith in Christ alone.

The leading characteristic of this work were a deep conviction of sin, arising from clear apprehensions of the extent and spirituality of the divine law. This conviction consisted in an humbling sense of both guilt and corruption. It led to the acknowledgment of the justice of God in their condemnation and of their entire helplessness in themselves.

Charles Hodge's *The Constitutional History ...*, Chapter 4, pp.21-23

Modern issues in Anthropology:

How does modern individualism impact our view of

- Christian Identity?

According to Peter Berger et al. in *The Homeless Mind* (1973), our identity as “self” was being reconstructed to become “an anonymous functionary” within an increasingly technological and bureaucratized mode of life-- what Berger described as “anomie” or “homelessness” relative to a crisis in self identity and significance. This at once made us more self-absorbed, if not also less communal and especially suspicious of organization.

Again, Peter Berger observed how “the conception of the naked self, beyond institutions and roles as the *ens realissimum* [the most real] of human being is at the very heart of modernity.”<sup>1</sup> Modernity was generally suspicious of organized and social parenting wherein the “heretical imperative” was to break from social constraints in order to discover the naked self, and even the true spiritual self, through individual autonomy. Thomas Oden described this aspect of modernity this way:

*The rhetoric of unrestrained, individual freedom is a prominent earmark of the spirit of modernity. The goal of modern life is to be liberated from restrictions, constraints, traditions, and all social parenting, all of which are self-evidently presumed to be dehumanizing... the social, psychological and political strategies and rhetoric of modernity all focus on a highly abstract notion of individual freedom... sustained covenant accountability is misplaced in the interest of subjective self-expression.*<sup>2</sup>

And so modernity, by its very nature, trended toward being individualistic and anti-organizational.

- Christian Conversation?

c.f Robert Bellah’s remarkable 1970’s study entitled *Habits of the Heart, Individualism and Commitment in American Life* where the modernist “reversal” of pre-modern sociology was nicely summed up as follows.

*For Americans, the traditional relationship between the individual and the religious community is to some degree reversed. On the basis of our interviews, we are not surprised to learn that a 1978 Gallup poll found that 80 percent of Americans agreed that ‘an individual should arrive at his or her own religious beliefs independent of any church or synagogue.’ From the traditional point of view, this is a strange statement — it is precisely within the church or synagogue that one comes to one’s religious beliefs — but to many Americans it is the Gallup finding that is normal.*<sup>3</sup>

Foundationist Materialism:

What sorts of things are “debunked” by “nothingbut” materialist view of humanity?

- Sin?
- Love?
- Faith?

e.g. If the program was to place epistemic confidence in *nothing but* the rational and/or empirical “island of truth” as foundational to pure reason, the prevailing praxis was therefore to present *all* “true” knowledge as *limited* to the kind of knowledge that could be verified upon the *foundationalist* premise of irrefutable syllogism (*rationalism*) and/or verifiable observation per the scientific method (*positivism*). It produced what Donald MacKay once described as *nothing but* style epistemology wherein certain things were debunked merely by reducing it to its rationalist and/or naturalist components. For if the program was to explain a thing within the bounds of “pure reason,” much in life-- love, mystery, romance, bravery, sin, and of course faith-- was more often than not being explained away! In its more militant expressions per the use of modern science, David Brooks has summarized it with respect to the modern trend:

*The idea of a spirit world, God, the soul, etc was ridiculous—modern science declared that everything arises from atoms, genes shape temperament, brain chemicals shape behavior, assemblies of neurons create consciousness—free will is an illusion—basically human beings are hard wired to do this or that and religion is an accident, a freak of the evolutionary process... In this materialist view, people perceive God’s existence because their brains have evolved to confabulate belief systems. You put a magnetic helmet around their heads and they will begin to think they are having a spiritual epiphany. If they suffer from temporal lobe epilepsy, they will show signs of hyper-religiosity, an overexcitement of the brain tissue that leads sufferers to believe they are conversing with God.*<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Homeless Mind, 213

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Oden, *Beyond Modernity... What?* p.47

<sup>3</sup> Gallop Poll taken in 1978 and quoted in Robert Bellah, *Habits of the Heart, Individualism and Commitment in American Life*.

<sup>4</sup> DAVID BROOKS, *The Neural Buddhists* Published: May 13, 2008. [www.nytimes.com/2008/05/13/opinion/13brooks.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/13/opinion/13brooks.html)