THE DESPERATE NEED OF SALVATION

INTRODUCTION

- A proper understanding of the nature and work of God in saving sinners cannot be properly understood apart from a clear comprehension of the great need all people have of it
- Failure to comprehend the glories of salvation often stems from a failure to grasp just how desperate the human condition truly is
- The brilliant light of the Gospel is best seen against the black backdrop of human sinfulness which makes salvation necessary
- "For, if the case be such indeed, that all mankind are by nature in a state of total ruin,...then doubtless the great salvation by Christ stands in direct relation to this ruin, as the remedy to the disease; and the whole gospel or doctrine of salvation, must oppose it; and all real belief, or true notion of that gospel must be built upon it."
- "One degree off course here, according to the massive hamartiological compass of God's Word, will result in missing the theological destination of an understanding of biblical salvation by a million miles. And, not only will one be off course theologically because of his defective hamartiology, but also he will be errant in his ministerial methodology."²
- "The universal sinfulness of man is obvious and verifiable. Sin permeates every aspect of our existence. It impacts us individually and societally. It is deeply rooted within us and is manifested continually. Throughout history, societies have consistently acknowledged man's natural sinfulness. Since the Enlightenment, however, Western civilization has become increasingly antagonistic to the reality of sin, especially as it is defined biblically."
- 4 reasons contribute to the downplaying of sin in our modern culture:⁴

1. Modernity tends to view human beings as naturally good

• "With the coming of the modern era...the traditional view of man's sinfulness began to wane, and man was viewed as inherently good. Human problems and suffering were linked with ignorance. In the false euphoria of the Enlightenment, many concluded from the advances in education, science, and technology that man was inherently good and that as he was educated, the world would get better."

Humanistic View of Man	SIN
	GOODNESS
Biblical View of Man	SIN

¹ Jonathan Edwards, *Original Sin*, 102.

² George Zemek, A Biblical Theology of the Doctrines of Sovereign Grace, 45.

³ John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine*, 451.

⁴ Adapted from MacArthur and Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine*, 451-452.

2. Deterministic views of humanity have challenged the biblical understanding of sin

- People are viewed primarily as products of their environment, social upbringing, or psychological drives
- "Society has gone so far in accommodating its own depravity that it is reluctant to hold anyone morally culpable for almost any behavior. This accommodation is consistent with the view that man is basically a machine that does what he is preprogramed to do."
- Thus, mankind does what he does because of the external factors that have made him who and what he is

3. With the rise of postmodernism, our society has shifted toward moral relativism

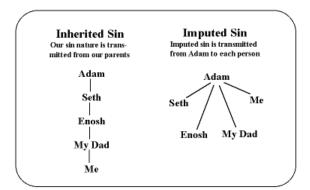
- "Today, right and wrong, good and evil, are not defined in absolute terms but are viewed subjectively. Individuals and societies, not God, are seen as having the authority to determine what is wrong. A strong majority of people now believe that truth and morals are flexible and subjective, not fixed."
- Thus, each person does what is right in his own eyes with little to no concern about whether there is an objective moral standard that makes such actions wrong

4. Sin is an unpleasant subject

- "In our age of self-esteem and subjectivity, people do not like to think of themselves as evil. Millard Erickson notes, 'To speak of humans as sinners is almost like screaming out a profanity or obscenity at a very formal, dignified, genteel meeting, or even in church. It is forbidden. This general attitude is almost a new type of legalism, the major prohibition of which is, "You shall not speak anything negative." "
- Few today want to deal seriously with this topic as it is uncomfortable to a society accustomed to hearing about its self-worth

THE TRANSMISSION OF ADAM'S SIN

- How did Adam's sin affect the human race? → In two ways:
 - o Inherited Corruption/Inherited Sin What we are
 - o Inherited Guilt/Imputed Sin What Adam did



- We are counted guilty because of Adam's sin...All mankind sinned in Adam and, therefore, inherit his guilt
 - 1 Corinthians 15:22 ~ For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ, all shall be made alive.

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

- Notice: "just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin"
 - o "sin" here does not refer to particular sins people commit everyday but the principle and nature of sin
 - o Sin and death came through one man, Adam...but his sin became the cause of sin and death
- Notice: "and so death spread to all men"
 - o Through Adam's sin death (spiritual, physical, and eternal) spread to the whole race
- Notice: "because all sinned"
 - This is past tense, not present tense...it is not saying that all presently sinned...it is saying that all DID (past tense) sin when Adam sinned
 - o The active voice indicates that all sinned when Adam sinned
 - o Death came to all men not because they were sinners but because they sinned with Adam
 - This phrase is the *crux interpretum*

Romans 5:13-14 ~ for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come

- The Law did not come until the time of Moses, so there was not a strict accounting of specific sins from the time of Adam to Moses
- Nevertheless, sin was in the world...this was clear from the fact that death reigned during that time
- Everyone from Adam to Moses died, not just because of sinful acts, but because of their own sin nature and guilt...this shows that God counted people guilty as a result of Adam's sin

Romans 5:15-19 ~ But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. The gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification. For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous

- The main purpose is to show: 2 men, 2 acts, 2 results
- Five times Paul describes the effect of Adam's sin on mankind: we died...we are under judgment...we are subject to death...we are condemned...we were made sinners...one sin IS the cause of death of all
- So all die because all sinned...AND...all die because one sinned
- The death of all is grounded in the sin of all...AND...the death of all is grounded in the sin of one

VIEWS OF THE IMPUTATION OF SIN				
Views	Romans 5:12	Adam	Humanity	Modern Adherents
Pelagian View	People incur death when they sin after Adam's example.	Sin affected Adam alone.	No one affected by Adam's sin.	Unitarians
Arminian View	All people consent to Adam's sin—then sin is imputed	Adam sinned and partially affected humanity	Depravity is not total; people received corrupt nature from Adam but not guilt or culpability.	Methodists Wesleyans Pentecostals Holiness groups
Federal View	Sin is imputed to humanity because of Adam's sin.	Adam alone sinned but human race affected	Depravity is total; sin and guilt are imputed.	Presbyterians Others holding to Covenant theology.
Augustinian View	Sin is imputed to humanity because of Adam's sin.	Humanity sinned in Adam.	Depravity is total; sin and guilt are imputed.	Reformers Later Calvinists

1. Pelagian View

- Pelagius was a British monk who was condemned by the Council of Carthage in 418 AD and again by the Council of Ephesus in 431 AD
- He viewed Adam as created neutral and mortal, neither holy nor sinful but with the capacity for both –
 his was the free choice
- This view understands that man is neither inherently or naturally depraved but becomes so by sinning, in the exercise of his own free choice
- Thus, Adam's sin affected only Adam
- "[Pelagius] taught that God holds man responsible only for those things that man is able to do. Since God warns us to do good, therefore, we must have the ability to do good that God commands. The Pelagian position rejects the doctrine of 'inherited sin'...and maintains that sin consists only in separate sinful acts."⁵
- This view holds that man is able to take the first steps toward God in salvation

2. Arminian View

- Jacob Arminius was professor of theology at the University of Leyden (1603)
- This view holds that man's entire being is affected by sin and that he commits evil continually
- This view holds that all people inherited a corrupted human nature as offspring of Adam...BUT it denies that mankind is condemned because of imputed sin or guilt from Adam...rather, they are condemned only because of individual sins
- "Arminians thus teach, according to Romans 5:16, that the free gift of the grace of Christ removed the condemnation and guilt from mankind so that no one is condemned eternally because of original sin or its consequences."
- Though Arminians recognize that mankind is sinful, they teach that the guilt of Adam's sin was erased in Christ
- Thus, through prevenient grace, the sinner is able to respond to God or cooperate with God by enabling him to choose (or reject) salvation...i.e. the free will of man is intact

3. Federal/Representative View

- This view holds that Adam was our representative (or federal head) and therefore stood the test for his posterity he stood in our place as our representative
- His act was considered their act and because he failed, we are guilty of sin as well (even though it was not our sin)
- "Adam's guilt is our guilt. While affirming that a corrupt nature is passed down from Adam, representative headship teaches that all people are condemned because of their direct relationship to Adam. The representative-headship view (often called federal headship) asserts that the action of a representative is determinative for all members united to him. When Adam sinned, he represented all people; therefore, his sin is reckoned to his descendants."

4. Augustinian/Seminal View

- This view says that man was not merely represented by Adam but was actually joined with Adam
- All were present in Adam in seminal form the human race is numerically one in Adam
- A biological and genealogical union between Adam and his descendants exists so that when Adam sinned all sinned by actual participation
- Thus, all participated in Adam's sin and are guilty because they are guilty...Adam's act is their act

⁵ Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, 499.

⁶ Paul Enns, The Moody Handbook of Theology, 495.

⁷ MacArthur and Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine*, 464.

- All men are co-sinners with Adam in the fullest sense of the word
- By propagation, race has become individualized with sinful kind reproducing sinful kind (undifferentiated → [through propagation] → individuals)
- The whole human race is thus seen as numerically one in Adam but over time has become individualized with sinful kind reproducing sinful kind
- Critique: Can a person act before they exist?

Hebrews 7:9-10 ~ And, so to speak, through Abraham even Levi, who received tithes, paid tithes, for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him"

- Perhaps the best solution is a combination of the federal and seminal views
- Bottom line: Adam's posterity can never claim to be innocent...they come into existence as sinners by nature and are thus guilty before God...all die because all sinned...AND...all die because one sinned

TOTAL DEPRAVITY

- Definition: The Fall has rendered all people corrupt such every part of man's being and nature have been affected by sin resulting in that nature being completely hostile to God. Thus, they are unable to trust God unless he changes their hearts so they believe.
- Total depravity does not mean:
 - 1. That every person is as wicked as they could be certainly sinful man could do more evil acts than they actually do
 - 2. That an unsaved person cannot do good deeds those without Christ can perform relative acts of goodness doing good things for society, their friends, and their family...these actions all correspond with what Jesus said: "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children..." (Matt 7:11)
 - **3.** That the image of God in an unsaved person is destroyed even in the greatest sinner, the *imago Dei* is still intact, albeit marred from its original design
- The doctrine of total depravity indicates that mankind rests under the curse of sin such that he is unable to do anything to merit salvation
- This means that there is no spiritual good, that is, good in relation to God, in the sinner at all, but only perversion
- As such, perhaps a better term is Total Inability

The Depravity is Universal

- Depravity is true of all men past, present, future...none are exempt
 - **1 Kings 8:46** ~ When they sin against Thee (for there is no man who does not sin)

Romans 3:9-10 ~ What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; as it is written, 'There is none righteous, not even one'"

Romans 11:32 ~ For God has shut up all in disobedience

- Paul's argument in Romans 1:18-3:20 makes it clear that all people are sinners and unable to save themselves
 - o Rebellious Gentiles are guilty before God (Rom 1:18-32)
 - He gives them over to sexual immorality (1:24-25)
 - He gives them over to homosexual perversion (1:26-27)
 - He gives them over to deprayed living or moral insanity (1:28-32)
 - o Moral Gentiles and moral Jews are guilty before God (Rom 2:1-16)
 - o Religious Jews are guilty before God (Rom 2:17-3:8)
 - o In fact, all are guilty of sin before a holy God (Rom 3:9-20)

Romans 3:23 ~ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

The Depravity is Total

- It extends to every part of the person...no part has escaped the impact of sin
- All components of a person are polluted by sin
- "Just as smoke from a fire permeates everything in a room, the whole person is corrupted by sin. No part of man escapes. This includes both the material and immaterial aspects of a person—body and soul. The body decays and is headed for physical death, and along the way, the body functions as an instrument for evil activity. The spiritual part of man is also fully corrupt. This includes all of man's thinking, reason, desires, and affections."
- Paul makes it clear in his spiritual autopsy report that our body, head, throat, tongue, mouth, lips, feet, ears, heart and mind have all been destroyed by sin

Romans 3:10-18 ~ as it is written, "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE; 11 THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD; 12 ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE." 13 "THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE, WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING," "THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS"; 14 "WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS"; 15 "THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD, 16 DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS, 17 AND THE PATH OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN." 18 "THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES."

Heart

• The heart of man is portrayed in Scripture as evil

Genesis 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

Jeremiah 17:9 ~ The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?

Romans 1:21 ~ For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Mark 7:21-23 ~ For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, 22 deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. 23 All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.

⁸ MacArthur and Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine*, 467.

Mind

- Lost mankind is plagued by corrupt thinking
 - 1 Corinthians 2:14 ~ But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised
 - 2 Corinthians 4:4 ~ in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God
 - **Ephesians 4:17-18** ~This I say therefore, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, 18 being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;
 - Colossians 1:21 ~ And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds
 - Titus 1:15 ~ To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled.
- "Therefore let us hold this as an undoubted truth which no siege engines can shake: the mind of man has been so completely estranged from God's righteousness that it conceives, desires, and undertakes, only that which is impious, perverted, foul, impure, and infamous. The heart is so steeped in the poison of sin, that it can breathe out nothing but a loathsome stench. But if some men occasionally make a show of good, their minds nevertheless ever remain enveloped in hypocrisy and deceitful craft, and their hearts bound by inner perversity."

Will

Romans 1:32 ~ and, although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them

Romans 3:11 ~ There is none who seeks for God

Ephesians 4:18 ~ being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;

• "We are so entirely controlled by the power of sin, that the whole mind, the whole heart, and all our actions are under its influence." 10

The Depravity is Comprehensive

- Everything unregenerate man does is sin
 - 1 Corinthians 10:31 ~ Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God
- That means that doing things that are not for God's glory is sin

Romans 14:23 ~ But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin

⁹ John Calvin

¹⁰ John Calvin

• Everything not done from faith in Christ for the glory of God is sin...even good/kind things

Hebrews 11:6 ~ And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him

• Nothing done apart from faith is pleasing to the Lord...this is because everything we do apart from Christ is done in the flesh and for the flesh

Romans 8:6-8 ~ For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so; and those who are in the flesh cannot please God

- There are only two options...people are either "in the flesh" or "in the Spirit"
- Since unbelievers always operate "in the flesh," nothing they do is able to please the Lord

The Depravity is Deadly

• Unsaved man is dead in sin and that which is dead cannot act

Ephesians 2:1-3 ~ And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

1. We were dead (v. 1)

- Paul's point is that every person without Christ is spiritually dead even though they are physically alive (spiritual zombies)
- His point is to show that we were not just sick...but we were dead
- "[We] lay buried in a grave of trespasses, and wrapped up in a winding sheet of sins, as insensible of [our] situation as a corpse, and as completely cut off from all intercourse or communion with God and holy beings, as a corpse is from intercourse with the living; nor did [we] any more desire to rise from this state, than a corpse desires to rise from the slumbers of the grave." 11

2. We were disobedient (v. 2)

- Paul tells us how dead we were...our life was characterized by disobedience
- What characterized the world characterized us as well...we felt right at home in this wicked world
- We also lived according to the prince of the power of the air (Satan)
- We were subject to Satan's influence...we responded naturally to his leading...we were on the same spiritual wavelength as Satan...we shared his sinful nature and lived in the same sphere of rebellion against God as he did...Satan was our master
- Before Christ, we lived in conscious and active rebellion and opposition against God

3. We were deprayed (v. 3)

- We were controlled by the strong lusts and desires of our flesh and our mind
- Our mind conceived of the sin and our flesh passionately desired to carry it out

¹¹ Edward Payson, sermon "The Dead in Sin Made Alive"

4. We were doomed (v. 3)

- Paul says that our very nature made us children of wrath
- The word for "children" (tekna) suggests a close, intimate relationship to one's parents
- Before we came to Christ we had a close relationship, not with God, but with His wrath
- Clearly, then, the Scriptures teach that not that we sin and are therefore sinners...but rather that we are sinners and therefore sin
- "Therefore, man's spiritual state is not one of relative neutrality, in which he is able to accept or reject God and his gospel. He is an active hater of God (Rom. 8:7) who cannot accept spiritual truth (1 Cor. 2:14)."¹²

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

The Absence of a "Free" Will

- Nowhere in the Scripture does it say that man has a free will...and it is important to define free will before one can determine whether or not man has one
- Man does have a free will in that he does whatever he desires...he is free to do anything he chooses to do
- For example, he is free to choose what job to have, who to marry, what clothes to wear, where to eat, etc.
- However, free will does not mean that mankind can do anything he pleases...our choices are limited to what is in keeping with our nature
- Since Scripture clearly indicates that unregenerate man does not truly desire God, no unbeliever's will is "free" to make any move toward God

Romans 3:10-12 ~ As it is written, "There is none righteous, not even one; There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God; All have turned aside, together they have become useless; There is none who does good, There is not even one."

- Man does not have a free will in the sense that on his own strength he can choose God or do actions that please God
- His will is not free...it is in bondage to his evil nature; therefore, he will not indeed he cannot choose
 God
- Until a person is regenerated by the Holy Spirit, they are totally unable to repent or turn to God
- But when the Spirit regenerates, the person's will is made free in the sense of being able to exercise faith and repent
 - 2 Timothy 2:24-25 ~ The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.
- "[A] man may choose to walk across a bridge or not to walk across it; what he may not choose is to fly over the bridge his nature prevents him from flying. In a similar way, a man cannot choose to make himself

¹² MacArthur and Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine*, 468.

righteous – his (sin) nature prevents him from canceling his guilt (Romans 3:23). So, free will is limited by nature."¹³

- "Man has natural liberty to make voluntary choices (not coerced) but after the fall, while he still has natural liberty, he has lost the moral ability to choose what is good. He chooses evil of necessity due to a corruption of nature, and cannot do otherwise, so his will is in bondage to sin." 14
- "Originally, Adam's will was free from the dominion of sin; he was under no natural compulsion to choose evil, but through his fall, he brought spiritual death upon himself and all his posterity. He thereby plunged himself and the entire race into spiritual ruin and lost for himself and his descendants the ability to make right choices in the spiritual realm. His descendants are still free to choose every man makes choices throughout life but inasmuch as Adam's offspring are born with sinful natures, they do not have the ABILITY to choose spiritual good over evil. Consequently, man's will is no longer free (i.e., free from the dominion of sin) as Adam's will was free before the fall. Instead, man's will, as the result of inherited depravity, is in bondage to his sinful nature." 15

The Need for Divine Intervention

- If this is the condition of lost mankind, then the logical corollary to it is the need for sovereign grace
- Because of the Fall, mankind is unable on his own to believe the gospel
- He is dead, blind, and deaf to the things of God...his heart is deceitful and desperately corrupt
- Consequently, it takes much more than "prevenient grace" to bring a sinner to Christ...it takes regeneration by which the Spirit makes the sinner alive and gives him a new nature
- Faith is not something man contributes to salvation but is itself a part of God's gift of salvation...it is God's gift to the sinner, not the sinner's gift to God

Jeremiah 13:23 ~ Can the Ethiopian change his skin Or the leopard his spots? Then you also can do good Who are accustomed to doing evil.

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

- "The total depravity of man demonstrates the absolute sovereignty of God in salvation. Man can do nothing. God must accomplish all as a gift of sovereign grace." ¹⁶
- "In view of all that the Word of God has to say about total depravity and total inability, man's only hope of deliverance is the sovereign grace of a merciful God. In and of himself, man is spiritually hopeless and helpless apart from divine intervention." ¹⁷
- "Admitting the Scriptural statements of man's natural condition 'dead in trespasses and sins' 'having his understanding darkened' his mind the very principle of enmity to the truth even under its most attractive form and his stony heart insensible to its blessings how palpable is the need of power from on high! 'Can a well-composed oration,' (Charnock asks) 'setting out all the advantages of life and health, raise a dead man, or cure a diseased body? You may as well exhort a blind man to behold the sun, and prevail as much. No man ever yet imagined, that the strewing a dead body with flowers would raise it to life; no more can the urging a man spiritually dead with eloquent motives ever make him to open his eyes, and to stand upon his feet... Whenever therefore the gospel successfully influences the heart, it is 'not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts.'" 18

¹³ https://www.gotquestions.org/free-will.html

¹⁴ https://www.monergism.com/reformation-theology/blog/does-man-have-free-will

¹⁵ David Steele and Curtis Thomas, *Romans: An Interpretive Outline*, 153.

¹⁶ MacArthur and Mayhue, Biblical Doctrine, 468.

¹⁷ Zemek, A Biblical Theology of the Doctrines of Sovereign Grace, 95.

¹⁸ Charles Bridges, *The Christian Ministry*, 79-80.