

The essence of mankind refers to those characteristics which are essential to human beings as human beings, without which they would cease to be human.

Depravity is not an essential quality of humanity, but an accidental quality. Depraved mankind is still human; sinful human beings are still human beings.

(b) Depravity is not a •stuff or substance infused into the soul-spirit

It does not have an objective existence of its own, as something physically real. It is not a foreign substance in the blood or in the genes or in the physical heart. It is not a deadly virus or bacillus that courses through all arteries, veins, and capillaries of the human body, debilitating our physical well being as it goes. It does not have a color; and cannot be weighed and measured, analyzed for its atomic structure, or located on the periodic table of elements. It is not a "stuff" that God infused into the soul-spirit of Adam or the soul-spirits of Adam's descendants.

(c) Depravity is not merely a privation or loss of good

Augustine, in his polemic against the Manichaeans, not only denied that sin was a substance; he also appears to have asserted that sin was merely a privation of good (*privatio boni*).

However, original corruption is not merely a negative concept; it is also positive. It is not merely the absence of original righteousness; it is also the presence of a constitutional disposition or bent or inclination or tendency toward sin.

(2) What depravity is.

(a) It is truly of the nature of sin

(b) It flows from our first parents as the originators of our race

(c) It consists in the loss of original righteousness and consequent moral depravity of our nature, including and manifesting itself in an aversion to all spiritual good and to God, and an inclination to all evil.

(d) It affects the whole person, all the faculties and capabilities of human personality (total, holistic, or pervasive depravity)

(e) It renders the soul-spirit spiritually dead, so that the natural or unregenerate person is entirely unable of himself or herself to do any spiritual good in the sight of God (total inability)