

# **Sin, Nothingness, the Liar Paradox, and the Contamination of Creation**

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## **Introduction**

When we merely analyze the mechanics of sin, we find that it is *located* only in one place: at the heart of human free-will, inside the consciousness of humans, which the Word is clear in pointing-out, such as in verses like Mark 7:15. Following this, it will be shown that this inner-sin origination reveals that the human sinner lives a sort of dream-like, simulated existence, and where the sin has a specific sort of mathematics that can be applied to it, to map-out its contradictory “existence”, called the Liar Paradox. Sin will be shown to be contradiction, and therefore will be labeled as “nothingness.” In this article, by calling sin “nothingness,” I do not mean to suggest it's *not real*, or that it's not the most pressing and important issue there is outside of salvifically worshiping God. Rather, I merely mean that sin is a *state*, an inner state of a human, a void-state of “nothingness,” a state of contradiction, that a human exists in when they are of sin, and where their inner “state” of sinfulness is an *inner void*. Overall, I view this as a very important topic, especially the mathematical outlaying of the contradictory nature of sin, due to the fact that it is a genuine mystery as to why sin exists, given verses like Colossians 1:16-17:

16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. (NKJV)

With verses like this, the Christian has no way at all to account for the existence of sin in a Cosmos that was fully created by God. God created free-willed humans, who can, in turn, create their own free-willed events, and with those free-willed events, create evil and sin, wherein the atheist and skeptic of Christianity can voice the following powerful objection:

Your Bible is wrong, since God cannot create sin, yet sin exists, so either your God created it, and he creates sin, wherein your Bible falls into contradiction, or God does not create it, and He is not all powerful and did not create all things, as Colossians 1 tells us, so therefore, your Bible is wrong.

This is a commanding objection an atheist can force upon Christianity, and it can only help the theologian to have a sound response to use to counter the atheist's objection. Giving that response is what this paper is about, and the response can be summarized as follows:

The human mind is supernatural, since it contains free-will events. These events are used to generate evil *ex nihilo* by the sinful human. But sin is a contradiction, which cannot exist, but it obviously *does* exist, and we can see its origins within us, and its affects inside of us and in Creation. Sin has a contradictory status, and therefore is like a nothingness at the heart of the human sinner, where, importantly, this contradictory existence is describable in terms of the Liar's Paradox from mathematical logic. We can also see evidence of this Lair Paradox mathematics all at the quantum level in the structure of Creation, which is not surprising, since Creation has been contaminated by sin, and Creation thereby has, to a degree, taken on the image of sin.

The simplest way to summarize this article is stated as follows: without God we are nothing. We can see how the theology of nothingness is built into Scripture, in the following verses:

1 Corinthians 13:1-3 King James Version (KJV)

13 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

John 15:5 King James Version (KJV)

5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

Galatians 6:3 King James Version (KJV)

3 For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.

### **Sin Only Exists in Supernatural Human Free-Willed Consciousness**

Sin is not part of actual (true) reality; it is part of a dream (a nightmare) created by human free will. It is not a dream that is make-believe, nor is it a dream that denotes external physical reality. Rather, it is a dream that originates *solely* within the supernatural realm of the free-willed human inner-mind, in untruth and darkness, separated from God's being, not created by God, who is the creator of all (Col. 1:16-17), wherein the sin spreads out from deep within the creature, contaminating all of nature around it. A sin is not an isolated event: if I sin where were I am, it affects

you where you are, and all of Creation, just as was the case with the first sin via the apple-event.

For these reasons, we cannot classify sin as “factual” or “true.” Something that is factual, or true, is something that has a *truth value*: it has word-world correspondence, and therefore must be an existent item, a *thing*, in physical reality. But sin is not like that, because God did not create sin, but God created everything (Col. 1:16-17), so sin has a contradictory status defining its negative presence, as we will be exploring below. One can point to the *effects* of sin, but not to sin itself, because sin is not in the world (if it were, then Creation could not be *good*, as it says it is in 1 Tim. 4:4). Creation and the creature are damaged, cursed by sin, but the sin is not where that damage and cursing happens; sin is isolated in the free-will points inside human subjectivity. God created Creation, but did not create sin, so sin is not in the world, and quite the opposite, the world is a mighty overflow of the love of Christ:

Isaiah 6:3 New International Version (NIV)

3 And they were calling to one another:

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty;

the whole earth is full of his glory.”

In referring to sin as a dream, I don’t necessarily intend to assert that sin is not real—but I absolutely cannot assert that it is real, either, given the crushing contradictions that define its “makeup.” Sin has Liar Paradox status (discussed below): we can see it, witness it, create it out of nothing deep in our consciousnesses, but it nevertheless cannot exist and therefore is *a nothing*: a pre-salvific sinner, at their nucleic core, *is a nothing*. By saying sin is nothing, not real, I mean that it has an alternative, inverted negation in its manifestation: it has a different sort of “being” than anything else is

all of reality: and it is a lie, where God is Truth, it is the opposite of God, fully separated and untouched by God, uncreated by God, and thus more resembling a dreamy morass of the dreamtime of an inner-created “maze” or “funhouse,” a “dark circus,” appears at-first-glance like a logical, mathematical game, but in reality is *an appearance*, a hyperspace, emerging out of inner contradiction-points, out of uncaused subjectivity event-atoms from within the creature’s dreamy inner-world, *solely in the creature’s reality, of their minds*, and not of the Mind of Christ and its overflowing of love that led to Creation, and which sustains it at every moment.

### **The Dream of Sin and It’s Contamination of Creation**

But note that where the logic of this paper has led is to the following conclusion, which emphasizes that sin-nothingness, unsurprisingly, *has an imaginative facet to it*, in being originated in inner-life of the creature:

Sin is a self-creation/auto-creation of the *imagination*, *ex nihilo*, from within the free-will mental event-field of non-Godly decision-points in the creature’s subjectivity, which serve as the atoms of the autonomous and pre-salvific creature’s teratological soul. These uncaused singularity-moments (non-Godly decision-points) within the creature’s nonphysical mental space, supernaturally coming into existence, out of nothing, constitute the atoms of the feral anti-God field of *impossibility*—inner/mental impossibility (nothingness)—which is what the creature’s dark and inverted self is: *the pre-salvific creature is a soul, a self, that is an impossible nothing*.

The previous paragraph centers around the idea that sin-nothingness is a form of human *imagination*, as if it is some sort of a simulated reality, to some degree, deforming all of actual, non-imaginal reality surrounding it and which it comes in contact with—like a boil that spreads pain throughout the body to such a degree that the entire body is cursed with misery.

As stated, by considering sin a dream, and as imagination, I do not mean it is pure make-believe: I do not mean that it is like a dream you had as a child, where, for example, you were flying over a city in in your pajamas, as a vision of pure fiction, that is purely pretend, with no correlation to anything in reality outside of the mind, and as only holding a real-ness in the sense that it is an inner mental picture cinema.<sup>1</sup> Rather, the sin-nothingness is of the human imagination is more of a nightmare inflicted *upon* reality, from a mysterious sin-void from deep within, and thus, since it is purely of human mental origination with no referent in all of reality anywhere, sin is thus analogous to a dream-like hyperspace or virtual reality computer simulation, solely existing in the mind, but which has deep effects on the creature that is auto-generating the monstrosity of sinfulness from deep within.

### **Sin is a Simulated Anti-Reality**

And this mind-dependent, auto-simulated inner nature of sin leads to a clear picture of how this inner-nothingness of sin can distort creature and Creation, in a way where the auto-created, self-generated quasi-simulated reality of human sinful daily-life leads to the creature, in part, *manufacturing their personal reality from moment-to-moment*, in a sin-generated (self-interested) way that does not correlate to the physical exteriority that the creature interacts with. In simpler terms: the pride, ego, and petty fears and desires of the self-absorbed, self-interested pre-salvific sinner the distort perception of the creature, leading to their moment-to-moment daily life being such that their perceptions of reality don't match reality, being tainted by self-will, and where from moment-to-moment the creature lives in an auto-simulated inner reality combined with their experience of exteriority. This further drives-home

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<sup>1</sup> I do not mean this sentence to deny shamanic religions, including some Christian shamanism, which involves the idea that some portion of dreams are actual OBE travels of some sort. I just don't want to discuss that issue here, and I mean, in this example of the dream, the case where a dream really is and only is pure fictional mental cinema with no dream-to-reality correspondence.

the simulated nature of the sinner's life: sin-nothingness, being the contaminating engine powering the simulated self-willed existence, is actually to live in a state of anti-reality, since it leads to non-correlations between sinner's ideas of reality, and external physical reality itself. Let me give an imperfect but simple thought-experiment which will clarify and expand on what is meant by this:

Consider two roughly proximate primitive tribes that develop fears over one another, as being threats to each other's survival. Tribe A fears that tribe B will steal its food and women, and likewise tribe B fears A will do the same to it. Let's say that each tribe has no evidence for this, just a fear that such could happen, especially in the future if there were, say, a drought—hence the element of human imagination, human aberration from reality, sets in, driven by self-interest and consequent fear of an interruption to the self's comfort. Out of desire to preserve the self (rather than to be a sacrifice), the fearful humans of A initiate a preemptive attack and war on B, leading to a slaughter of much of each tribe.

So, in this example, sin is represented by the fear and desire for non-sacrificial self-preservation by the tribes, and therefore it originated within, not from anywhere in the world (Mark 7:15). The sin originated internally, inwardly, in the free space of human subjectivity, in the inner-space of the free-willed human, and for that reason, while being of that inner-imagination, stemming from within it originates in the actuality of that mental space. It has effects *on* nature/Creation, but is not *in* Creation—a Creation which the Bible tells us is “good” (Genesis 1, and 1 Tim. 4:4), and therefore the initial contamination of nature by the apple event continues to the present. Sin only comes from the points of self-autonomous inner decision-making in a way that is defiant of God, against God's ways, in the human subjectivity-space, and thus detached from what is real, and from Truth, self-caused in its inner-

isolation. That is why I refer to sin as part of human *imagination*, since that's where it comes from, before it unleashes pain and suffering into Creation. Summarizing:

Sin originates in the supernaturalness of the uncaused decision-moments inside human free will, which are not caused by God, not created by God. This inner-space of the human subjectivity, which originates uncaused sinfulness, originates aspects of reality that are not real, and thus are a "simulated imagination," and they are the only "places" that sin can originate:

Mark 7:15 (KJV)

There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man.

### **Sin is not in the World, but Affects the World (and the Creature)**

The creature can originate the dream of sin willfully, *ex nihilo*, from within, but the outcome of this inner reaction is inner nothingness: unreality, untruth, negation, illogicality, and where a void-cavity of nonbeing<sup>2</sup> grows into the nucleic heart of the creature. But ontologically, then, where is sin to be placed? What is the ontological status of "void-cavity of nonbeing"? Into which ontological category does the nothingness, or nonbeing, of sin fit?

Sin, "being" nothingness, is not an *existent item* in the world, it is not a verb or noun. It is truly unlike anything else. It is uncategorizable, other than being categorized as nothing. This is, again, because God created all, but he did not create sin, so sin has existence, in the free-will of a human, but it is a contradiction that should not exist.

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<sup>2</sup> Barth and others writing about sin and nothingness have, in places, resisted going as far as saying sin is *nonbeing*, as if that is some sort of additional stretch far past labeling sin as "nothingness," but I will take that dive into referring to sin and nonbeing, a real-nonbeing, that is only contradiction, since non-being is not real, just like the liar in the Liar's Paradox is also telling the truth: "everything I say is false."



And for these reasons, sin is not a truthmaker,<sup>3</sup> it is not a substance in the world, and it is not an entity that can exist. Rather, sin is an “entity” that originates from the invisibility<sup>4</sup> of deep human subjectivity, which being a free-will zone, is supernatural (since free-will is supernatural, given that it is uncaused and/or self-caused), and, *ipso facto*, not of the material world.<sup>5</sup> Sin is a contradiction, since it can originate in human inner mental reality, but also *cannot* exist, since all that exists is created by God—so sin does and does not exist. And if one combines all the reasons given above, sin can be described as follows:

Sin: pure negation and contradiction deriving from supernatural free-will events that are not part of God’s reality and Creation, originating deep in the core of human subjectivity, that generates separation of the creature’s being from God by re-shaping the creature in an image unlike God, and which has effect on Creation in producing disease throughout Creation.

The effects of sin are empirically viewed throughout Creation, but sin itself is locked again in the supernaturalism of human consciousness. So, the type of “dream” that sin is, is where it is an apparition of the human inner-will, a product of human consciousness, like a dream, but where this “dream” has the two affective powers: to separate from God and distort Creation. Sin is *an effect, a result, but it is not true*, since it is not part of God’s will, but only of the free-will points of aberrant human selfishness, which functions as a dream of unreality (unreal-ness) that self-autonomous humans live-out as inner-subjective forlornness (the Buddhist may call this “*dukkha*”, the First Noble Truth of Buddhism), and as painfulness and confusion

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<sup>3</sup> “[A] truth-maker is that in virtue of which something is true” (MacBride, 2016).

<sup>4</sup> If a human introspects, the sin can be viewed, in the mind, and is, strictly speaking, no longer invisible, at least not invisible solely for the introspecting individual.

<sup>5</sup> For this reason, as one can see, this paper rejects eliminativist and materialist theses of mind, as will be discussed below. This paper will side with some sort of platonic dualist or dualist view of mind (mind is spirit, body is matter, where mind is not a part of physical brain, and brain is part of the body), and it will be concluded that simple evidence for this thesis is easy to identify, and that evidence will be given below.

in the world (the aforementioned “funhouse” and “dark circus”, or what Karl Barth called “the strange land”).

### **Sin as a Liar Paradox**

But how can a contradiction, a point of nothingness, in the core of the human heart generate an effect in the world? How can a contradiction be *a cause*? Answer: because it “is” *nothingness*, an absence of reality, and its lack of truth and substance—its existing as a hollow shell-of-nothingness at the core of the sinner’s being—produces effects, analogous to the way a hole in the ground can produce effects (such as that you fall into it).

Sin is abnormality, and aberration, a contradiction, an illness, which cannot exist—like a light without brightness, or a soul without soulfulness. We can see sin, we all *know* it, but yet it can’t exist. Sin therefore is considerably like the following sentences, which are grammatical, even logical, but nevertheless are pure contradiction, and thus they should not exist: they should not have any coherence or logic, *yet they do*:

“This sentence is false.”

“This sentence is meaningless.”

“This is not true.”

You can see these sentences here on the page, you can sense that they are *not* gobbledygook, even that they are perfectly logical—but *they are pure contradiction*, and thus *cannot exist—at least they cannot exist in any logical fashion*—yet there they do! This is a rather astounding issue. These are examples of the so-called Liar

Paradox, which is considered an extremely “serious problem” in professional philosophy,<sup>6</sup> and which can be defined as follows:

Let L be the Classical Liar Sentence. If L is true, then L is false. But we can also establish the converse, as follows. Assume L is false. Because the Liar Sentence is just the sentence "L is false," the Liar Sentence is therefore true, so L is true. We have now shown that L is true if, and only if, it is false. Since L must be one or the other, it is both.

That contradictory result apparently throws us into the lion’s den of semantic incoherence. The incoherence is due to the fact that, according to the rules of classical logic, anything follows from a contradiction, even “ $1 + 1 = 3$ .”<sup>7</sup>

I believe this is the step that Barth wanted to, needed to, make, but did not arrive at, in order to make his theology of sin more consist, and more than a shrugging of the shoulders and saying, “well, humans are a paradox, no more to it than that.” The Liar Paradox is serious because it exhibits a true logical inference that leads to an irreducible contradiction,<sup>8</sup> and hence cannot logically exist—yet it does. I will assert that sin is, quite plainly, a form of, and describable by, the Liar’s Paradox also:

“I am of sin, so I presently cannot exist.”

This sentence is absolutely true (if the writer of it is not of Christian perfection), but the sinner who wrote this sentence *cannot* write the sentence, because he does not exist due to the impossibility of sin. So the sentence cannot exist to be written, but nevertheless the sinner who wrote it certainly did exist to write it, so this sentence takes on Liar Paradox themes. The sentence is perfectly logical, but exists as logic (or, better said, as nonlogic) that is contradiction, which is impossible. So this

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<sup>6</sup> Dowden 2018.

<sup>7</sup> Dowden 2018.

<sup>8</sup> Dowden 2018.

sentence is perfectly logical impossibility, and hence the chaos that spews out of contradiction is seen. When we write about or discuss sin, we come to contradiction, such as this. Any attempt to define sin, to my knowledge, leads to this contradiction.

“Sin contaminates the world.”

This is absolutely a true sentence, we know this happened with the apple event, and we see this still happening in the present, with sin’s effects in our personal lives, and in distancing us from our closeness to God. But this sentence *must be false*, however, since it is about something that cannot exist (sin), where something that does not exist cannot *do* anything (such as contaminate), so the sentence must be false. Similar Liar Paradox problems reside with these sentences:

“Sin separates the creature from God.”

“Sin is death.”

### **Sin’s Specific Way of Contaminating the World: Turn It into a Liar Paradox**

From the Liar Paradox comes chaos ( $1+1=3$ ), since from non-logic only can more non-logic come: order and consistency cannot emerge from contradiction. Likewise, from the contradiction of sin (sin’s effect on the creature and the world) comes chaos and illogic amid the meaninglessness of everything under the sun (Ecclesiastes), such as with the various degrees and the vast array of pervasive sadomasochistic and suicidism of sinful behavior (death behavior) that the fallen/sinful creature believes is normal. Creation and the sinful creature are under the curse of God, but ultimately it is the uncaused (supernatural) sin-nothingness at the nucleus of the human soul that is the reason the curse exists (it would not exist without free-will decisions generating sin).

All of Creation waits for the Eschaton to be freed from the curse, and the only place where in Creation where the curse can be lifted before then is, indeed, *inside the*

*nucleic void of nothingness that the human sinner's soul is*, when and if the sinning human finally loses interest in the self, in the hallow shell of inner-nothingness that the self is, gives up (surrenders) efforts and striving toward self-preservation—any sort of self-interest—and of self-survival, and genuinely loses interest in the petty desires and skirmishes the self is perpetually bogged down with, wherein this creature only desires the Trinity to fully possess the empty void of self, wherein which the nothing/sinner reaches back to Christ who is reaching-out to sinner, where, via personal Pentecost, the creature can recover *Imago Dei*, which replaces, deletes, and fills (Galatians 2:20 2 Cor. 5:17, Ez. 11:19, James 1:21) the inner nothingness that the person was.

The nothingness of sin is opposed to sacrificial, selfless, humble love, where the latter is true, correct, noncontradictory, and normal. “In a word, sin is the refusal of God’s will and of his love... Sin is our refusal to be what we were created to be— [children] of God” (Merton 1963, 4). Christ’s humble love is freedom (in Christ), and the suicidal nothingness of sin has no place within the human.

And it is possible that the nothingness-contradiction of sin has a specific way of infecting, contaminating, and distorting physical reality (Creation): by way of contradiction, turning logical reality into Liar-like contradiction. When one tries to define reality, describe reality, at the rudimentary level, the analysis apparently always leads to clear contradiction, for time, space, mind, energy, and matter.<sup>9</sup> Zeno’s paradoxes were the first known valiant effort to put tether a complete system of logic that showed, in simple terms, that the external physical plane reduces to contradiction. And quantum reality may be describable in terms of Liar Paradox mathematics,<sup>10</sup> which would indicate that the atoms and void of the rudimentary

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<sup>9</sup> See Grupp 2006a, 2006b, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c.

<sup>10</sup> Aerts, Broekaert, and D’Hooghe 2004

level of reality are contaminated with the nothingness of sin in that the nothingness of sin turns what it contaminates into something that resembles itself: *nothingness*.

If it were true that quantum reality was aligned with Liar Paradox mathematical logic, then it is also interesting is to note that the world of Satan (the surface of the earth, 2 Cor. 4:4), where Satan roams and does his work, and where he uses tricks and lies as his primary tools for conducting his total war on overrunning humanity, involves a mathematics which may describe all of physical reality *specifically* named “the Liar’s Paradox!”

### **Sin Comes From Nothingness, and From the Creature’s Subjectivity Ex Nihilo**

Sin did not originate from the one true Source of all things—Jesus. Since “in Him all things hold together” (see Col. 1:16-17), to assert that God created sin, is to violate the laws of what is possible, and is like saying  $0+0=1$ .<sup>11</sup> Sin came from, and still comes from, the only *other* place that creation *ex nihilo* occurs other than via God’s continuous creation of the Cosmos out of nothing, and that other domain where any sort of creating *ex nihilo* happens is within the activity of *specifically the sinful* human free-will (the salvific free-will is *ex nihilo* as God’s creation, since the salvific human is crucified with Christ and no longer lives—see Gal. 2:20), where creation of the sinful, prideful, abominable mental decisions originate *ex nihilo*. When the freedom of the creature aberrates from being like God (when it turns its interest to self rather than existing in non-self-interested sacrificial love), those free-will events in consciousness cease to be part of God’s continuous creation of

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<sup>11</sup> This is a point that Barth’s theology of sin and nothingness differs in, as compared to the theology of sin and nothingness in this article. According to Barth, “[t]o admit that it [sin] is grounded in created human nature, reasons Barth, is to imply it is grounded in the will of God as a means to the end of human nature. This is precisely what is denied by the cross of Jesus Christ” (Highfield 1988, 83). Barth is espousing the idea that humanity maintained *Imago Dei* after the Fall, but I am rejecting that position, and asserting that only after a personal Pentecost does that happen, and since those who sin are of the Devil (1 John 3:8), then humans cannot fully have *Imago Dei* until they are entirely sanctified (perfected). This will lead to a few differences from Barth’s theology of sin and nothingness of this paper.

Creation: the human subjectivity and soul is, amazingly, no longer fully created by Christ. Rather, at least in part,<sup>12</sup> the free will of the creature is created by the human sinful self and will, in a violation of the Order of things established by God.

The Liar Paradox of sin only originates *ex nihilo* from within the creature *as something that does not exist in God's time, the true time*, which includes post-Pentecost, and, more importantly, post-Eschaton. Because of the Cross, sin is defeated, is destroyed, originates in sinful human freedom, and therefore out of nothing, out of impossibility, like the impossible existence of the sentence, "I am a compulsive liar," *sin is thus nothingness*, since it does not originate from the one true Creator of all things. So, the supernatural origination of sin within the deviant subjectivity of the creature is not in accord with the transcendence of God's order and God's eternity.

Sin emerges from nothingness, and just no summation of zeroes (0+0+0+0...) can sum up to 1, can sum up to anything non-zero, likewise sin can never transform into non-nothingness. From its origin in the paradox of human self-autonomous inner-subjectivity, the non-salvific human is a subjective-self that is contaminated from its inner-core by the nothingness of being non-God-like (sinful), and being unworthy of living since it is unlike God, and it must die, and from that point of apple-sinfulness in all of us at conception (Ps. 51:5), we are nothingness in death.

### **Sin-as-Nothingness as Inner Black Hole (A Quasi-Substantialist View of Sin)**

In this section I will discuss the concept that the sin-as-nothingness view is a quasi-substantialist view of sin. The long-standing substantialist view has been largely put

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<sup>12</sup> The existence and cause of the human soul and subjectivity is caused by God continually, but the feedback loop of darkness of the inner mechanics of that system are caused by the darkened human amid a sinful existence, and no longer God's doing. In simpler terms, the human self in Christian perfection is fully the Mind of Christ, but sinners, who are of the Devil (1 Jn. 3:8) exist because God created them, but their lives are autonomous creations, not co-creations with Christ.

aside in recent decades by Wesleyan theologians, who consider sin to be *relational*, rather than to be an implanted change literally inside of the person. Relational holiness was introduced in its fullest form by feminist theologian and Church of the Nazarene pastor, Mildred Bangs Wynkoop (d. 1997), in her book *A Theology of Love*, where she “challenged many of the conventions that had dominated Holiness thought and practice for over a century” (Lowry 2008, 38). This includes challenging the idea that holiness is an inner substance *in* a person, which Wynkoop replaced with the concept of holiness only being a mostly one-way relationship *from* God *to* human. On the relational view, it is *exclusively the relationship* from God to humans that leads to a person having a holy life. This is in contrast to the substantialist view of holiness, where there is something *in* man that can be identified as *Imago Dei*, which would somehow have to be “taken-out” of the person,<sup>13</sup> if the internally-placed image were to be lost (such as if an perfected/entirely-sanctified person became an atheist, if that’s even possible).

It appears clear to me that the relational view is incorrect, in light of verses such as this:

Ezekiel 11:19 (ESV)

19 And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh,

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<sup>13</sup> In this paper I hold the thesis that the human self and soul, mind and spirit, are all non-physical, and thus the alteration just referred to would be in the non-physical domain of the make-up of the creature. There are many reasons to hold that a person (self) is not identical to parts of their brain or body, such as the following thought experiment: if I could download a mind into a computer, the mind would retain its qualia, but if I extract and destroy a person’s mind from association from their physical body, the person loses their qualia. For that reason, a person is not equal to any part of their body (incl. brain), but if not, then the person is, ultimately, best described as a non-physical spirit, just as is held in Christianity. Other reasons include how qualia, mental imagery, feelings, and so forth may correlate with brain cell activity, but are never seen in encephalograms, and thus there is no evidence, empirically speaking, that mind (phenomenology, qualia, intentionality) is a system of the brain.



I think it's reasonable to assert that "I will put within them" sounds much more like the substantialist view, and the Wynkoopian disagreement with the substance view was not so much due to conceptual and/or logical errors in the substance account, but more due to the "magical," metaphysical and trans-empirical basis of the substance view (Lowry 2006, 38-39). It is important to note that the substance view of holiness is, strictly speaking, the more Wesleyan of the two views discussed here. While Wesley had indications of a relational theology in his work, "Wesley never frees himself from the idea of sin as being a 'thing' [substance]" (Cheatle 124).

As stated, the theology of sin-as-nothingness outlined to this point appears to involve a quasi-*substantialist* ontology of sin (i.e., a non-relational view of sin). There are two reasons for this:

1. Sin-as-nothingness, in Barth's sense, lines up nicely with the substantialist theology of sin.
2. It will be asserted that the pre-salvific sinner does not have relationship with God, and thus is not relational to Him, contrary to popular belief (but where this view is aligned with Scripture).

So it is not surprising that Barth held a substance metaphysics in much of his theology,<sup>14</sup> much in-line with traditional theology. Barthian theology of sin-as-nothingness involves the thesis that sin is *inside* of the creature, since it has replaced *Imago Dei*, where the actual self of the creature exists as the diseased pre-salvific image of the Devil (1 Jn. 3:8)<sup>15</sup>, and which cannot be relational with God, since while God can only love this pre-salvific sinner (Rom. 8:38-39), God also

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<sup>14</sup> Tseng 2016, 271-273.

<sup>15</sup> I follow John Wesley on the concept that sinners are in the image of the Devil, as 1 Jn. 3:8 and other verses indicate. Wesley wrote:

So had he lost both the knowledge and the love of God, without which the image of God would not subsist. Of this, therefore, he was deprived at the same time, and became unholy as well as

- A. hates this sinner (Ps. 5:5), wherein in some transcendental way God's love can function as a hate-separation in some ineffable way, and where God also, and stunningly,
- B. does not listen to this sinner (Ps. 5:5, John 9:31), wherein which the sinner cannot have a relationship with God since prayer could not be heard, and thus there is no relation that can be had according to the relational view (Wynkoop), and lastly, since
- C. the sinner is in the image of the Devil (1 John 3:8), and quite simply, if one is in the image of the Devil, one cannot have Imago Dei, Christ cannot exist inside of him.

For these reasons, in my building on the Barthian model of sin-as-nothingness, I assert that we can conceptualize the pre-salvific sinner as a non-physical self composed of uncaused (free willed) atomic points of nothingness: the innermost constituents (nothingness) that *is* the pre-salvific creature (their self and their soul), is a hallow shell, unfilled by personal Pentecost, from the Holy Spirit, in Jesus. Thus, while sin, according to the theology discussed in this paper, is not a substance (i.e., a bare particular that exemplifies n-adic properties, and thus is a causal entity/thing in the world, rather than an n-adic relation to something else), but rather is the opposite, an anti-substance (by which I mean “a nothing”, as described above ), the aforementioned void (hallow shell) at the heart of the pre-salvific creature, functions just like a sinful substance at the heart of the pre-salvific creature. This is because the empty void, the hallow shell of nothingness, that functions as the “atom” of the self that *is* the pre-salvific creature: an inner-core (or, rather, the absence of any

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unhappy. In the room of this, he had sunk into pride and self-will, *the very image of the devil*, and into sensual appetites and distress, the image of the beasts that perish. (Cited in Wynkoop 1972, 108) (Itals added)

inner-core) of the creature, *affects* both creature (the mind and the body-shell of the creature) and on Creation (everything that is meaningless under the sun), causing disease and distortion in both.

On the traditional substance view this inner-core is an Aristotelian substance (bare particular exemplifying n-adic properties), and on the sin-as-nothingness view it is nothingness. But in either case, there is an inner-core of the creature—a base of the human, which is diseased, can be thought of as “at” that specific “location,” for lack of better words, *in* the creature (the inner-core), where when considered externally, when viewed from beyond (outside of it), they both appear very similar to each other: a sinful black hole exists in the creature, patulously, centrifugally affecting the entire creature, and all of Creation. The sinful substance, on the substantialist view, is a black hold that causes this patulous, centrifugal sickening of creature and Creation, and as for the hallow shell of the nothingness of the self in the Barthian view (sin-as-nothingness), the event-horizon of the black-hole-like void of sin-nothingness at the inner-core of the pre-salvific creature, affects creature and Creation by it’s lack of existence, where it is, ultimately, and at its peak, a suicidal-nihilist, that only craves evil and ultimately has “no tomorrow,” full of quiet or overt rage, and where their heart is a weeping and gnashing of teeth.<sup>16</sup>

For these reasons, we can assert that there is a black hole in the creature, at its core, a singularity containing its own laws (those against Truth), which are beyond comprehensibility (e.g., Liar’s Paradox, etc.), beyond logic, entirely destructive, invisible, with affects that stream into all of Creation, altering it completely. According to a substantial or quasi-substantialist metaphysics of sin, a verse such

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<sup>16</sup> If one doubts this, one merely need to view news headlines daily, about mass shootings, children being killed, sexual abuse, holocausts, sex trafficking, sadistic warfare, evil governments, to name a few.

as the following could possibly be argued as supporting the long-standing substantialist view:

Ezekiel 36:26 (ESV)

26 And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

James 1:21 (ESV)

21 Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

Hebrews 8:10 (ESV)

10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord:

I will put my laws into their minds,  
and write them on their hearts,  
and I will be their God,  
and they shall be my people.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV)

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Mark 7:21 (KJV)

For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders...

To add to this, consider the following verses, all of which, from what I can tell, point to the substantialist theological idea that God implants “something” (a new heart, the Word, etc.) into humans to therein give them holiness, to make them holy, to put

holiness into them, and to put the image of God into them, which deletes the old self / old man, wherein the new self: the crucified self which is Christ in me [Gal. 2:20], the Mind of Christ [Phil 2:5]):

2 Cor. 5:17 explicitly says our old self is deleted (my translation in place of “passed away”), and a new one exists. James 1:21 discusses how God literally implants things into us. Ez. 36:26 shows God informing that he will put something into us, as does Ez. 11:19. Heb. 8:10 discusses a multifaceted implanting of items into the human by God. With verses like these, I am not sure how I am to go against the word and say that in fact there is no implanting going on.

### **Conclusion.**

The void of the pre-perfected sinning human can only lead to a dark circus of nothingness, that spreads from within the creature’s deep consciousness, out into the world, changing creature and Creation into its image.

1 John 3:8 New International Version (NIV)

8 The one who does what is sinful is of the devil,

But the shell of nothingness can be filled, with the maker of all Reality. Jesus Christ.

-Jeffrey Grupp, May 3, 2018

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