

# The Total Depravity of Man Chapter 4

## CONSEQUENCES

by A.W. Pink

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### Transcript

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The key to the mystery of human depravity is to be found in a right understanding of the relations which God appointed between the first man and his posterity. As the grand truth of redemption cannot be rightly and intelligently apprehended until we perceive the close connection which God ordained between the Redeemer and the redeemed, neither can the tragedy of man's ruin be contemplated in its proper perspective unless we view it in the light of Adam's apostasy from his Creator. He was the prototype of all humanity. As he stood for the whole human race, in him God dealt with all who should issue from him. Had not Adam been our covenant head and federal representative, the mere circumstance that he was our first parent would not have involved us in the legal consequences of his sin. Nor would it have entitled us to the legal reward of his righteousness had he maintained his integrity and served his probation by giving his Maker and Lord that obedience which was His due and which he was fully capacitated to perform. The divinely constituted tie (connecting principle) and oneness of the first man with all mankind in the sight of the law explains the latter's participation in the penalty visited on the former. Consequences for Adam We have dwelt at some length on the origin of human depravity and the divine imputation of the guilt of Adam's transgression to all his descendants. We now consider the consequences entailed by the fall. Abominable indeed is sin, fearful are the wages it earns, dreadful are the effects it has produced. In sin's consequences we are shown the holy One's estimate of sin, the severity of His punishment expressing His hatred of it. Conversely the terrible doom of Adam makes evident the enormity of his offense. That offense is not to be measured by the external act of eating the fruit, but by the awful affront which was made against God's majesty. In his single sin there was a complication of many crimes. There was base ingratitude against the One who had so richly endowed him, and discontent with the good heritage allotted him. There was a disbelief of the holy veracity of God, a doubting of His word and a believing of the serpent's lie. There was a repudiation of the infinite obligations he was under to love and serve his Maker, a preferring of his own will and way. There was a contempt of God's high authority, a breaking of His covenant, a defiance of His solemn threat. The curse of heaven fell upon him because he deliberately and presumptuously defied the Almighty. Very much more was included and involved in Adam's transgression than is commonly supposed or recognized. Three hundred years ago that profound theologian James

Ussher pointed out that wrapped up in it was "the breach of the whole Law of God." Summarizing in our own language what the Bishop of Armagh developed at length, Adam's violation of all the Ten Commandments of the moral law may be set forth thus: He broke the first commandment by choosing another "god" when he followed the counsel of Satan. The second, in idolizing his palate, making a god of his belly by eating the forbidden fruit. The third, by not believing God's threatening, in that way taking His name in vain. The fourth, by breaking the sinless rest in which he had been placed. The fifth, by thus dishonoring his Father in heaven. The sixth, by bringing death on himself and all his posterity. The seventh, by committing spiritual adultery, and preferring the creature above the Creator. The eighth, by laying hands upon that to which he had no right. The ninth, by accepting the serpent's false witness against God. The tenth, by coveting that which God had not given to him. We by no means share the popular idea that the Lord saved Adam very soon after his fall; rather we take decided exception to that theory. We cannot find anything whatever in Holy Writ on which to base such a belief; in fact, we find much to the contrary. First it is clear that Adam's sin was not one of infirmity, but instead a presumptuous one, pertaining to that class of willful sins and open defiance of God for which no sacrifice was provided (Exodus 21:14; Num. 15:30-31; Deut. 17:12; Heb. 10:26-29), and which was therefore an unpardonable sin. There is not the slightest sign that he ever repented of his sin, nor any record of his confessing it to God. On the contrary, when charged with it, he attempted to excuse and extenuate it. Genesis 3 closes with the awful statement "So he drove out the man." Nothing whatever is mentioned to Adam's credit afterward: no offering of sacrifice, no acts of faith or obedience. Instead we are merely told that he knew his wife (4:1, 25), begat a son in his own likeness, and died (5:3-5). If the reader can see in those statements any intimation or indication that Adam was a regenerated man, then he has much better eyes than the writer—or possibly a more lively imagination. Nor is there a single word in Adam's favor in later scriptures; rather is everything to his condemnation. Job denied that he covered his transgressions or hid his iniquity in his bosom "as Adam" did (31:33). The psalmist declared that those who judged unjustly and accepted the persons of the wicked should die like Adam (82:7), for the Hebrew word there rendered "men" is Adam. In the New Testament he is contrasted in considerable detail with Christ (Rom. 5:12, 21; I Cor. 15:22, 45-47); and if he were saved, then the antithesis would fail at its principal point. Moreover, such an anomaly—that the great majority of those whom he represented should eternally perish, while the responsible head should be recovered—is quite out of keeping with what is revealed of God's justice. In I Timothy 2:14 specific mention is made of the fact that "Adam was not deceived," which emphasizes the enormity of his transgression. In Hebrews 11 the Holy Spirit has cited the faith of Old Testament saints, and though He mentions that of Abel, Enoch, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and others, He says nothing about Adam's! His being omitted from that list is solemnly significant. After his being driven out of Eden, Scripture makes no mention of God having any further dealing with Adam! Before taking up the consequences of Adam's defection upon his descendants, we will consider those consequences which fell immediately upon him and his guilty partner. These are recorded in Genesis 3. No sooner had Adam revolted from his gracious Maker and Benefactor than the evil effects became apparent. His understanding, originally enlightened with heavenly wisdom, became darkened and overcast with crass ignorance. His heart, formerly fired with holy veneration toward his Creator and warm with love to Him, now became alienated and filled with enmity against Him. His will, which had been in subjection to his rightful Governor, had cast off the yoke of obedience. His whole moral constitution was wrecked, had become unhinged, perverse. In a word, the life of God had departed from his soul. His aversion for the supremely excellent One appeared in his flight from Him as soon as he heard His approach. His crass ignorance and stupidity were evinced by his vain attempt to conceal himself from the eyes of Omniscience. His pride was displayed in refusing to acknowledge his guilt; his ingratitude, when he

indirectly upbraided God for giving him a wife. But let us turn to the inspired account of these things. "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked" (Gen. 3:7). Very, very striking is this. We do not read of any change taking place when Eve partook of the forbidden fruit, but as soon as Adam did so "the eyes of them both were opened." This furnishes definite confirmation of our previous statement that Adam was the covenant head and legal representative of his wife, as well as of the future children which were to issue from them. Therefore the penalty for disobedience was not inflicted by God until the one to whom the prohibition had been made, violated the same, and then the consequences began to be immediately felt by both of them. But what is meant by "the eyes of them both were opened"? Certainly not their physical eyes, for those had previously been open. We have here another intimation that we must not slavishly limit ourselves to the literal meaning of all the terms used in this chapter. The answer, then, must be the "eyes" of their understanding; or, more strictly, those of their conscience—which sees or perceives, as well as hears, speaks and chastises. In that expression, "the eyes of them both were opened," is to be found the key to what follows. The result of eating the forbidden fruit was not the acquisition of supernatural wisdom, as they fondly hoped, but a discovery that they had reduced themselves to a condition of wretchedness. They knew that they were "naked," and that in a sense very different from that mentioned in Genesis 2:25. Though in their original and glorious state they wore no material clothing, yet we do not believe for a moment that they were without any covering at all. Rather we agree with G. H. Bishop that they ...were not without effulgence shining from them and around them, which wrapped them in a radiant and translucent robe—and in a certain lovely way obscured their outlines. It is contrary to nature and it is repugnant to us that anything should be unclothed and absolutely bare. Each bird has its plumage and each animal its coat, and there is no beauty if the covering be removed. Strip the beautiful bird of its feathers, and, though the form remain unchanged, we no longer admire it. We conceive, then, that artists are wholly at fault and grossly offend against purity, when they paint the human form unclothed, and plead as an excuse the case of Adam in Eden. Could the animals in all their splendid covering coats have bowed down as the vice-regents of God (Gen. i, 28) before beings wholly unclothed? Should Adam, the crown and king of creation, be the only living thing without a screen? Impossible. To the spiritual sense there certainly is a hint of something about our first parents that impressed and overawed the animal creation. What was that thing? What, but that shining forth like the sun, which describes the body of the resurrection (Daniel xii, 3)? If the face of Moses so shone by reflection that the children of Israel were afraid to come nigh him, how much more must the [unimpeded] indwelling Spirit of God in Adam and Eve have flung around them a radiance which made all creation do them reverence at their approach—beholding in them the image and likeness of the Lord God Almighty—glorious in brightness—shining like a sun?

Supplementing the above, let it be pointed out that of the Lord God it is said: "Thou art clothed with honour and majesty: who coverest thyself with light as with a garment" (Ps. 104:1-2); and man was made, originally, in His image! God "crowned him with glory and honour," made him "to have dominion over the works of thy hands" (Ps. 8:5-6), and accordingly covered him with bright apparel, as will be the ultimate case of those recovered from the fall and its consequences, for "they are equal unto the angels" (Luke 20:36; cf. "two men stood by them in shining garments" [Luke 24:4]). Further, the implication of Romans 8:3 is irresistible: "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh." Note how discriminating is that language: not merely in the likeness of the flesh, but literally "sin's flesh." Robert Haldane explained those words thus: If the flesh of Jesus Christ was the likeness of sinful flesh, there must be a difference between the appearance of sinful flesh and our nature or flesh in its original condition when Adam was created. Christ, then, was not made in the likeness of the flesh of man before sin entered the world, but in the likeness of his fallen flesh.

And since Christ restored that which He took not away (Ps. 69:4), then its resurrected state shows us its primitive glory (Phil. 3:21). Following the statement "the eyes of them both were opened," we would naturally expect the next clause to read "and they saw that they were naked"; but instead it says, "they knew that they were naked"—something more than a discovery of their woeful physical plight. The Hebrew verb is rendered "know" in the vast majority of references, yet eighteen times it is translated "perceive" and three times "feel." As the opening of their eyes refers to the eyes of their understanding, so we are informed of what they now discerned, namely the loss of their innocence. There is nakedness of soul which is far worse than an unclothed body, for it unfits it for the presence of the holy One. The nakedness of Adam and Eve was the loss of the image of God, the inherent righteousness and holiness in which He created them. Such is the awful condition in which all of their descendants are born. That is why Christ bids them buy of Him "white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear" (Rev. 3:18). The "white raiment" is "the robe of righteousness" (Isa. 61:10), the "wedding garment" of Matthew 22:11-13, without which the soul is eternally lost. "They knew that they were naked." As Bishop expressed it, "Their halo had vanished, and the Spirit of righteousness who had been to them a covering of light and purity withdrew, and they felt that they were stripped and bare." But more; they realized that their physical condition mirrored their spiritual loss. They were made painfully conscious of sin and its dire consequences. This was the first result of their transgression: a guilty conscience condemned them, and a sense of shame possessed their souls. Their hearts smote them for what they had done. Now that the fearful deed of disobedience had been committed, they realized the happiness they had flung away and the misery into which they had plunged themselves. They knew that they were not only stripped of all the bliss and honor of paradise, but were defiled and degraded. Thus a sense of wretchedness possessed them. They knew that they were naked of everything that is holy. They might be rightly termed "Ichabod," for the glory of the Lord had departed from them. This is always the effect of sin; it destroys our peace, robs our joy and brings in its train a consciousness of guilt and a sense of shame. There is, we believe, a yet deeper meaning in the words "they knew that they were naked," namely, a realization that they were exposed to the wrath of an offended God. They perceived that their defense was gone. They were morally naked, without any protection against the broken law! This is very striking and solemn. Before the Lord appeared to them, before He said a word or came near to them, Adam and Eve knew the dreadful state they were in, and were ashamed. Oh, the power of conscience! Our first parents stood self-accused and self-condemned. Before the Judge appeared on the scene, man became as it were the judge of his own fallen and woeful condition. Yes, they knew of themselves that they were disgraced, that their holiness was defiled, their innocence gone, the image of God in their souls broken, their tranquillity disrupted, their protection against the law removed. Stripped of their original righteousness, they stood defenseless. What a terrible discovery to make! Such is the state into which fallen man has come—one of which he himself is ashamed. And what did the guilty pair do upon their painful discovery? How did they conduct themselves? Cry to God for mercy? Look to Him for a covering? No indeed. Not even an awakened conscience moves its tormented possessor to turn to the Lord, though it must do its work before the sinner flies to Him for refuge. A lost soul needs something more than an active conscience to draw him to Christ. That is very evident from the case of the scribes and Pharisees in His very presence, for "being convicted by their own conscience, they went out" (John 8:9). Instead of a convicted conscience causing them to cast themselves at the feet of the Saviour, it resulted in their leaving Him! Nothing short of the Holy Spirit's quickening, enmity-subduing, heart-melting, faith-bestowing, will-impelling operations brings anyone into saving contact with the Lord Jesus. He does indeed wound before He applies the balm of Gilead, make use of the law to prepare the way for the gospel, break up the hard soil of the heart to make it receptive to the seed. But even a conscience aroused by Him, accusing

the soul with a voice which cannot be stilled, will never of itself bring one into "the way of peace." No, instead of going to God, Adam and Eve attempted by their own puny efforts to repair the damage they had done in themselves. "They sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons." Here we see the second consequence of their sin: a worthless expedient, a futile attempt to conceal their real character and hide their shame from themselves and the other creatures. As others have pointed out, our first parents were more anxious to save face before each other than they were to seek the pardon of God. They sought to arm themselves against a feeling of shame and thereby quiet their accusing conscience. And thus it is with their children to this day. They are more afraid of being detected in sin than of committing it, and more concerned about appearing well before their fellowmen than about obtaining the approbation of God. The chief objective of the fallen sons of men is to quiet their guilty consciences and to stand well with their neighbors. Hence so many of the unregenerate assume the garb of religion. "And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden" (3:8). Here was the third consequence of their fall: a dread of God. Up to this point they had been concerned only with their own selves and their wretchedness, but now they had to reckon with another, their Judge. Apparently they did not see His form at this moment, but only heard His voice. This was to test them. But instead of welcoming such a sound, they were horrified and fled in terror. But where could they flee from His presence? "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD" (Jer. 23:24). In the attempt of Adam and Eve to seclude themselves among the trees, we see how sin has turned man into an utter fool; for none but an imbecile would imagine that he could conceal himself from the eyes of Omniscience. When Adam and Eve, by an act of willful transgression, broke the condition of the covenant under which they had been placed, they incurred the double guilt of disbelieving God's word and defying His will. Thereby they forfeited the promise of life and brought upon themselves the penalty of death. That one act of theirs completely changed their relation to God and, at the same time, reversed their feelings toward Him. They were no longer the objects of His favor, but instead the subjects of His wrath. As the effect of their sinfulness and the result of their spiritual death, the Lord God ceased to be the object of their love and confidence, and had become the object of their aversion and distrust. A sense of degradation and of God's displeasure filled them with fright and caused them to have awful enmity against Him. So swift and drastic was the change which sin produced in their relations and feelings toward their Maker that they were ashamed and afraid to appear before Him. As soon as they heard His voice in the garden, they fled in horror and terror, seeking to hide from Him among the trees. They dreaded to bear Him pronounce formal sentence of condemnation upon them, for they knew in themselves that they deserved it. Each action of our first parents after the fall was emblematic and prophetic, for it predicted how their descendants too would conduct themselves. First, upon the discovery of their nakedness, or loss of their original purity and glory, they sewed themselves aprons of fig leaves in an attempt to preserve their self-respect and make themselves presentable to one another. Thus it is with the natural man the world over. By a variety of efforts he seeks to conceal his spiritual wretchedness, yet at best his religious exercises and altruistic performances are just things of time, and will not endure the test of eternity. Second, Adam and Eve tried to hide from the One they now feared and hated. So it is with their children. They are fallen and depraved; God is holy and righteous; and despite their self-manufactured coverings of creature-respectability and piety, the very thought of a face-to-face meeting with their Sovereign renders the unregenerate uneasy. That is why the Bible is so much neglected—because in it God is heard speaking. That is why the theater is preferred to the prayer meeting. This is proof that all shared in the first sin and died in Adam, for all inherit his nature and perpetuate his conduct. How clearly the actions of the guilty pair made evident the serpent's lie. The more closely verses 4 and 5 are scrutinized in the light of the immediate sequel, the

more their falsity appears. The serpent had assured them, "Ye shall not surely die," yet they had done so spiritually; and now they fled in terror lest they lose their physical lives. He had declared that they would be advanced—for that was the evident force of his "your eyes shall be opened"; instead, they had been abased. He had promised that they would be increased in knowledge, whereas they had become so stupid as to entertain the idea that they could conceal themselves from the omniscient and omnipresent One. He had said they should "be as gods," but here we see them as self-accused and trembling criminals. We do well to bear in mind the Lord's pronouncement concerning the devil: "He is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44), the perverter and denier of the truth, the promoter and instigator of falsehood of every kind throughout the earth, always employing dissimulation and treachery, subtlety and deception, to further his evil interests. Consider the terrible consequences of listening to the devil's lies. See the awful ravage which sin works. Not only had Adam and Eve irreparably damaged themselves, but they had become fugitives from their all-glorious Creator. He is ineffably pure; they were polluted, and therefore sought to avoid Him. How unbearable the thought to a guilty conscience that the unpardoned sinner will yet have to stand before the thrice holy One! Yet he must. There is no possible way in which any of us can escape that awful meeting. All must appear before Him and render an account of their stewardship. Unless we flee to Christ for refuge, and have our sins blotted out by His atoning blood, we shall hear His sentence of eternal doom. "Seek ... the LORD while he may be found, call ... upon him while he is near" in His gracious overtures of the gospel (Isa. 55:6). For "how shall we escape" the lake of fire "if we neglect so great salvation?" Do not assume that you are a Christian, but examine your foundations; beg God to search your heart and show you your real condition. Take the place of a hell-deserving sinner and receive the sinner's Saviour. In the verses that follow we are given a solemn preview of the day to come: "And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?" (Gen. 3:9). It was the divine Judge summoning him to an account of what he had done. It was a word designed to impress upon him the distance from God to which sin and guilt had removed him. His offense had severed all communion between them, for "what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and what communion hath light with darkness?" Observe that the Lord ignored Eve and confined His address to the responsible head. God had plainly warned him about the forbidden fruit: "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." This death is not annihilation but alienation. Spiritual death is the separation of the soul from the holy One: "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you" (Isa. 59:2). This is the terrible plight of us all by nature—"far off" (Eph. 2:13)—and unless divine grace saves us, we shall be "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord" (II Thess. 1:9). "And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden [which suggests that He was now seen in theophanic manifestation], and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself" (Gen. 3:10). Note how utterly unable sinful man is to meet the divine inquisition. Adam could offer no adequate defense. Hear his sorry admission: "I was afraid." His conscience condemned him. This will be the woeful plight of every lost soul when, brought out from "the refuge of lies" in which he formerly sheltered, he appears before his Maker—destitute of that righteousness and holiness which He inexorably requires, and which we can obtain only in and from Christ. Weigh those words: "I was afraid, because I was naked." Adam's heart was filled with horror and terror. His apron of fig leaves was of no avail! Thus it is when the Holy Spirit convicts a soul. The garb of religion is discovered to be naught but filthy rags when one is given to see light in God's light. The soul is filled with fear and shame as he realizes he has to do with One before whom all things are naked and opened. Have you passed through this experience, seen and felt yourself to be a spiritual bankrupt, a moral leper, a lost sinner? If not, you will in the day to come. "And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked?" (v.11). To this inquiry Adam made no reply. Instead of humbling himself before his aggrieved Benefactor, the culprit failed to answer. Whereupon the Lord said, "Hast thou eaten

of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?" It is striking to notice that God made no reply to the idle and perverse excuses which Adam had at first proffered. They were unworthy of His notice. If the words of Adam in verse 10 are carefully pondered, a solemn and fatal omission from them will be observed: He said nothing about his sin, but mentioned only the painful effects which it had produced. As another has said, "This was the language of impenitent misery." God therefore directed him to the cause of those effects. Yet observe the manner in which He framed His words. The Lord did not directly charge the offender with his crime, but instead questioned him: "Hast thou eaten?" That opened the way and made it much easier for Adam contritely to acknowledge his transgression. But he failed to avail himself of the opportunity and declined to make brokenhearted confession of his iniquity. God did not put those questions to Adam because He wanted to be informed, but rather to provide Adam with an occasion to own penitently what he had done. In his refusal to do so we see the fourth consequence of the fall, namely, the hardening of the heart by sin. There was no deep sorrow for his flagrant disobedience, and therefore no sincere owning of it. To the second inquiry of God, the man said, "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat" (v.12). Here was the fifth consequence of the fall: self-justification by an attempt to excuse sin. Instead of confessing his wickedness, Adam tried to mitigate and extenuate it by throwing the onus upon another. The entrance of evil into man produced a dishonest and deceitful heart. Rather than take the blame upon himself, Adam sought to place it upon his wife. And thus it is with his descendants. They endeavor to shelve their responsibility and repudiate their culpability by attributing the wrongdoing to anyone or anything rather than themselves, ascribing their sins to the force of circumstances, an evil environment, temptations or the devil. But in those words of Adam we may discern something still more heinous, a sixth consequence of his fall, namely, a blasphemous challenging of God Himself. Adam did not simply say, "My wife gave me of the tree, and I did eat," but "The woman whom thou gavest me. . . ." Thus he covertly reproached the Lord. It was as though he said, "Hadst Thou not given me this woman, I had not eaten. Why didst Thou put such a snare upon me?" See here the pride and stout-heartedness which characterize the devil, whose kingdom has now been set up within man. So it is with his children to this day. That is why we are warned, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man" (James 1:13). The depraved mind of the fallen creature is so prone to think that very thing and seek shelter in that excuse. "If God had not ordered things that way, I never would have been so strongly tempted. If He had arranged things differently, I would not have been enticed, still less overcome." Thus, in our efforts at self-vindication, we cast reflection on the ways of Him who cannot err. "The foolishness of man perverteth his way: and his heart fretteth against the Lord" (Prov. 19:3). This is one of the vilest forms in which human depravity manifests itself: that after deliberately playing the fool, and discovering that the way of transgressors is hard, we murmur against God instead of meekly submitting to His rod. When we pervert our way—through self-will, carnal greed, rash conduct, hasty actions—let us not charge God with the bitter fruits of our wrongdoing. Since we are the authors of our misery, it is reasonable that we should fret against ourselves. But such is the pride of our hearts, and our unsubdued enmity against God, that we are foolishly apt to fret against Him, as though He were responsible for our troubles. We must not expect to gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles! Do not charge the unpleasant reaping to the severity of God, but to your own perversity. Do not say, "God should not have endowed me with such strong passions if I may not indulge them." Do not ask, "Why did He not give grace so that I could have resisted the temptation?" Do not impeach His sovereignty, do not question His dispensations, harbor no doubts about His goodness. If you do, you are repeating the wickedness of your first father. "And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." Adam indeed recited the facts of the case, yet in so doing he made it worse rather than better. He was the woman's head and

protector, and therefore should have taken more care to prevent her falling into evil. When she had succumbed to the serpent's wiles, far from following her example, he should have rebuked her and refused her offer. To plead allurements by others is no valid excuse, yet it is commonly offered. When Aaron was charged with making the golden calf, he admitted the fact, but sought to extenuate the fault by blaming the congregation (Exodus 32:22-24). In like manner, disobedient King Saul sought to transfer the onus to "the people" (I Sam. 15:21). So too Pilate gave orders for the crucifixion of Christ, and then charged the crime to the Jews (Matt. 27:24). Here we learn yet another consequence of the fall: It produced a breach of affection between man and his neighbor—in this case his wife, whom he now loved so little as to thrust her forth to receive the stroke of divine vengeance. "And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done?" (v. 13a). Here we see both the infinite condescension of the Most High and His fairness as Judge. He did not act in high sovereignty, disdainful to parley with the creature; nor did He condemn the transgressors unheard, but gave them opportunity to defend themselves or confess their crime. So it will be at the great hearing. It will be conducted in such a manner as to make it transparently evident that every transgressor receives "the due reward of his iniquities," and that God is clear when He judges (Ps. 51:4). "And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat" (v. 13b). Eve followed the same course and manifested the same evil spirit as her husband. She did not humble herself before the Lord, gave no sign of repentance, made no brokenhearted confession. Instead, she vainly attempted to vindicate herself by casting the blame on the serpent. It was a weak excuse, for God had capacitated her with understanding to perceive his lies, and with rectitude of nature to reject them with horror. It is equally useless for her children to plead, "I had no intention of sinning, but the devil tempted me"; for he can force no one, nor prevail without one's consent. As Adam and Eve stood before their Judge, self-accused and self-condemned, He proceeded to pronounce sentence upon the guilty pair. But before doing so He dealt with the one who had been instrumental in their fall: "And the LORD God said unto the serpent, because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (vv. 14-15). Observe that no question was put to the serpent. Rather the Lord treated him as an avowed enemy. His sentence is to be taken literally in its application to the serpent, mystically in relation to Satan. Scott said The words may imply a visible punishment to be executed on the serpent, as the instrument in this temptation; but the curse was directed against the invisible tempter, whose abject, degraded condition, and base endeavours to find satisfaction in rendering others wicked and miserable, might be figuratively intimated by the serpent's moving on his belly, and feeding on the dust.

The Lord began His denunciations where sin began—with the serpent. Each part of the sentence expresses the fearful degradation which should henceforth be his portion. First, it was "cursed above all cattle"; the curse has extended to the whole creation, as Romans 8:20-23 makes clear. Second, thereafter it would crawl in the dust; this infers that originally it stood erect (cf. our remarks on Gen. 3:1). Third, God Himself now put enmity between it and the female, so that where there had been intimate converse there should now be mutual aversion. Fourth, passing from the literal snake to "that old serpent, the devil," God announced that he should ultimately be crushed, not by His hand dealing immediately with him, but by One in human nature, and—what would be yet more humiliating—by the woman's seed. Satan had made use of the weaker vessel, and God would defeat him through the same medium! Wrapped up in that pronouncement was a prophecy and a promise. However let it be carefully noted that it was in the form of a sentence of doom on Satan, not a gracious declaration made to Adam and Eve—intimating that they had no personal interest in it! The sentences pronounced upon our first parents need not detain us, for the

language is so plain and simple that it needs neither explanation nor comment. Since Eve was the first in the transgression, and had tempted Adam, she was the next to receive sentence. "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (v.16). Thus she was condemned to a state of sorrow, suffering and servitude. "And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; ...in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread" (vv. 17-19). Sorrow, toil and sweat were to be the burden falling most heavily upon the male. Here we see the eighth consequence of the fall: physical suffering and death—"Unto dust shalt thou return." "And Adam called his wife's name Eve ['living']; because she was the mother of all living" (v.20). This is manifestly a detail communicated by God to Moses the historian, for Eve gave birth to no children until after she and her husband had been expelled from Eden. It seems to be introduced here for the purpose of illustrating and exemplifying the concluding portion of the sentence passed upon the woman in verse 16. As Adam had made proof of his dominion over all the lower creatures (1:28) by giving names to them (2:19), so in token of his rule over his wife he conferred a name upon her. "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them" (v.21). We are not told the design of the coats; each reader is free to form his own opinion. Many have supposed these words to intimate that God dealt (typically, at least) in mercy with the fallen pair, and that emblematically they were robed in Christ's righteousness and covered with the garments of salvation. To the contrary, the writer sees in this the ninth consequence of the fall: that man had thereby descended to the level of the animals. Observe how in Daniel 7 and Revelation 17, where God sets before us the character of the leading kingdoms of the world (as He sees them), He employs the symbol of beasts! "And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil" (v.22), which is obviously the language of sarcasm and irony. See the one who vainly imagined that by defying God he should "be as gods" (v.5), now degraded to the level of the beasts! "Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken" (v.23). God bade him leave the garden. But, as Matthew Henry intimates, such an order did not at all appeal to the apostate rebel. "So he drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life" (v.24), thereby effectually preventing his return. Hence we note the tenth consequence of the fall: man as an outcast from God, estranged from His favor and fellowship, banished from the place of delight, sent forth a fugitive into the world. Observe how this closing verse corroborates our interpretation of verse 21. The Lord does not drive from Him any child of His! And this is the finally recorded act of God in connection with Adam! As He cast out of heaven the angels that sinned, so He drove Adam and Eve out of the earthly paradise, in proof of their abhorrence to Him and their alienation from Him. Consequences for Mankind Having considered those consequences which fell more immediately upon our first parents for their original offense, we shall now look at the consequences they brought upon their descendants. We do not have to go outside of Genesis 3 to find proof that the penal consequences of their transgression are inherited by their posterity. What God said to them was said to all of mankind, for since the sin was common to all, so was the penalty also. "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children" (v.16). And such has been the lot of all Eve's daughters. "Cursed is the ground for thy sake: in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; ...in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground ...for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (vv. 17-19). And such has been the portion of Adam's sons—in every generation and in all parts of the earth. The calamity of evil which then descended upon the world continues to this hour. All of Adam and Eve's children are equally

involved in the sentence of the pain of childbirth, the curse on the ground, the obligation to live by toil and sweat, the decay and death of the body. But the things just mentioned above, though severe and painful, are trivial in comparison with the divine judgment which has been visited on man's soul. They are but the external and visible marks of the moral and spiritual calamity which overtook Adam and his race. By his disobedience he forfeited the favor of his Maker, fell under His holy condemnation and curse, received the awful wages of his sin, came under the sentence of the law, was alienated from the life of God, became totally depraved and, as such an object of abhorrence to the holy One, was driven from His presence. Since the guilt of Adam's offense was imputed or judicially charged to all those he represented, it follows that they participate in all the misery that came upon him. Guilt consists of an obligation or liability to suffer punishment for an offense committed, and that in proportion to the aggravation of the offense. In consequence, every child is born into this world in a state of antenatal disgrace and condemnation, with entire depravity of nature and makeup which inevitably leads to and produces actual transgression, and with complete inability of soul to change his nature or do anything pleasing to God. "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies" (Ps. 58:3). First, from the moment of birth every child is morally and spiritually cut off from the Lord—a lost sinner. Matthew Henry described it thus: "estranged from God and all good: alienated from the Divine life, and its principles, powers, and blessings." Adam lost not only the image of God but His favor and fellowship too, being expelled from His presence. And each of his children was born outside Eden, born in a state of guilt. Second, in consequence of this, Adam's children are delinquents, warped from the beginning. Their very being is polluted, for evil is bred in them. Their "nature" is inclined to wickedness only; and if God leaves them to themselves they will never turn from it. Third, they quickly supply evidence of their separation from God and of the corruption of their hearts—as every godly parent perceives to his sorrow. While in the cradle they evince their opposition to truth, sincerity, integrity. "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child" (Prov. 22:15), not childishness but foolishness—leaning toward evil, entering upon an ungodly course, forming and following bad habits. It is "bound in the heart"—held firmly there by chains invincible to human power. But in all ages there have been those who sought to blunt the sharp edge of Psalm 58:3 by narrowing its scope, denying that it has a race-wide application; these are determined at all costs to rid themselves of the unpalatable truth of the total depravity of all mankind. Pelagians and Socinians have insisted that that verse is speaking only of a particularly reprobate class, those who are flagrantly wayward from an early age. Rightly did J. Owen point out: It is to no purpose to say that he speaks of wicked men only; that is, such as are habitually and profligately so. For whatever any man may afterwards run into by a course of sin, all men are morally alike from the womb, and it is an aggravation of the wickedness of men that it begins so early and holds on in an uninterrupted course. Children are not able to speak from the womb, as soon as they be born. Yet here are they said to speak lies. It is therefore the perverse acting of depraved nature in infancy that is intended, for everything that is irregular, that answers not the law of our creation and rule of our obedience, is a lie.

"And were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. 2:3). That statement is, if possible, even more awful and solemn than Psalm 58:3. It signifies much more than that we are born into the world with a defiled constitution, for it speaks of not simply "children of corruption," but "children of wrath"—obnoxious to God, criminals in His sight. Depravity of our natures is no mere misfortune; if it were, it would evoke pity, not anger. The expression "children of wrath" is a Hebraism, a very strong and emphatic one. The original rendering of I Samuel 20:30 and II Samuel 12:5 mentions "the son of death," that is, one deserving death. In Matthew 23:15 Christ used the fearful term "the child of hell"—one whose sure portion is hell; while in John 17:12 He designated Judas "the son of perdition." Thus "children of wrath" connotes those who are deserving of wrath, heirs of wrath, fit for it. They are born to wrath, and under it, as their heritage. They are

not only defiled and corrupt creatures, but the objects of God's judicial indignation. Why? Because the sin of Adam is imputed to them, and therefore they are regarded as guilty of having broken God's law. Equally forcible and explicit are the words "by nature the children of wrath," in designed contrast with that which is artificially acquired. Many have insisted (contrary to the facts of common experience and observation) that children are corrupted by external contact with evil, that they acquire bad habits by imitation of others. We do not deny that environment has a measure of influence. Yet if any baby could be placed in a perfect setting and surrounded only by sinless beings, it would soon be evident that he was corrupt. We are depraved not by a process of development, but by genesis. It is not "on account of nature" but "by nature," because of our nativity. It is innate, bred in us. As Goodwin solemnly pointed out, "They are children of wrath in the very womb, before they commit any actual sin." The depraved nature itself is a penal evil, and that is because of our federal union with Adam, as sharing in his transgression. We are the children of wrath because our federal head fell under the wrath of God. Calvin stated, "There would be no truth in the assertion of Paul that all are by nature the children of wrath if they had not been already under the curse before their birth." But a greater than Calvin has informed us: "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth, it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (Rom. 9:11-13). This goes back still further, before birth. Esau was an object of God's hatred before he was born. Obviously a righteous God could not abominate one who was pure and innocent. But how could Esau be guilty prior to doing any good or evil? Because he shared Adam's criminality; and for precisely the same reason, all of us are by nature the children of wrath—obnoxious and subject to divine punishment—not only by virtue of our own personal transgressions, but because of our constitution. Deviation is coexistent with our very being. We are members of a cursed head, branches of a condemned tree, streams of a polluted fountain. In a word, the guilt of Adam's sin lies on us. No other explanation is possible; since our guilt and liability to punishment are not, in the first place, due to our personal sins, they must be because of Adam's sin being imputed to us. For the same reason infants die naturally, for sin is not merely the occasion of physical dissolution but the cause of it. Death is the wages of sin, the sentence of the broken law, the penal infliction of a righteous God. Had Adam never sinned, neither he nor any of his descendants would have become subject to death. Had not the guilt of Adam's offense been charged to his posterity, none would die in infancy. Yet it does not necessarily follow that any who expire in early childhood are eternally lost. That they are born into this world spiritually dead, alienated from the life of God, is clear; but whether they die eternally, or are saved by sovereign grace, is probably one of those secret things which belong to the Lord. If they are saved it must be because they are among the number elected by the Father, redeemed by the Son and regenerated by the Spirit—without which none can enter heaven; but concerning these things Scripture appears to us to be silent. The Judge of all the earth will do right, and there we may submissively yet trustfully leave it. Parenthood is an unspeakably solemn matter. In the opening verses of Ephesians 2 the Holy Spirit has described our fallen state. First, we are dead in trespasses and sins (v. 1): dead judicially, under sentence of the law; dead experientially, without a spark of spiritual life. Second, our outward course is depicted (vv. 2-3): as completely dominated by "the flesh" or evil principle, inspired to an ungodly walk by Satan, so that our every action is sinful. Third, the resultant punishment is detailed (v.3): we are obnoxious to the divine Judge, born in such a condition, and remaining so while in this fallen state. Until the sinner believes, "the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36). Though the sentence is not yet executed, it is suspended over him. The word "abideth" here denotes perpetuity: as Augustine said, "It hath been upon him from his birth, and remains to this day upon him." "The children of wrath, even as others": this is the case of all of Adam's descendants, and it is equally so. It is a common heritage: by nature no man is either better or worse than

his fellows. The very fact that this awful visitation is universal can only be accounted for by our relation to the first man, our covenant head and legal representative. It would hardly be fair not to take some notice of those who attempt to dismiss all which has been pointed out above by dogmatically insisting that "Christ made atonement for original sin" so that the guilt of our first father's transgression does not rest on his sons. But such an arbitrary assertion is manifestly contrary to those facts which confront us on every side. The judgment which God pronounced upon Adam and Eve is as surely visited upon their children today as it ever was before the Son of God died on the cross. The curse upon the ground, the ordeal of women in childbirth, the necessity to toil for our daily bread, the universal reign of death, including the demise of so many infants, are all just as evident and prevalent in the New Testament era as they were in the Old. Obviously such things could not be if the Arminian view were sound, for if the guilt of original sin had been removed, the effects of it could no longer continue. Such an affirmation is baseless, unconfirmed by a single clear statement in Scripture, though some do make a farfetched attempt to substantiate it by appealing to John 1:29: "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." We wonder how anyone can perceive anything in those words which strikes them as relevant to the point. Our Lord's forerunner was there presenting the Messiah to the people in that sacrificial character which both type and prophecy had prepared them to look for; he was not raising an abstruse question in theology which is nowhere else mentioned in Scripture. Had those words occurred in one of Paul's profound doctrinal discussions, we should be ready to look for a deeper meaning in them, though we would require something very specific in the context obliging us to define "the sin of the world" as the sin of Adam. John was the herald of a new dispensation, one which would be radically different in its scope from the previous one, and one which would be inaugurated by breaking down the "middle wall of partition." For two thousand years the grace of God had been restricted almost entirely to a single nation; but now it was on the point of flowing out to all. John the Baptist was there announcing Christ as the heaven-appointed sacrifice which was to expiate the sin not of believing Jews only but of Gentiles also. Though "the world" is a general expression, it is not to be regarded as comprehending a universality of individuals, as synonymous with mankind. It is an indefinite expression, as "The glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together" (Isa. 40:5) and "all flesh shall know that I the LORD am thy Saviour" (Isa. 49:26). "The sin of the world" signifies all the sins of all God's people as a collective whole, as one great and heavy burden—as in Isaiah 53:6: "The LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." It was the entire penalty and punishment of sin, which Christ took on Himself, and bore away from the divine Judge. As Hebrews 9:26 tells us, "But now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." And since that sacrifice was a vicarious one, it necessarily removed the guilt of all those in whose stead it was made. Not only is the theory we are here controverting without any scriptural evidence to support it, but it is refuted by every considerable evidence to the contrary. If attention is paid to the relations which Christ sustained to those in whose stead He obeyed and suffered, it at once appears that His work was no mere indefinite and general one, but had a particular and restricted design. He transacted as a Shepherd on behalf of His sheep (John 10:11; cf. 10:26). If He died also for the goats and the wolves, then there was no point in saying He laid down His life for the sheep. He served in the relation of a Husband (Eph. 5:25-27), showing singleness of affection, the exclusiveness of conjugal love! He sustained the relation of Head to His beneficiaries, there being a federal and legal unity between them (Heb. 2:11). The redemptive work of Christ was like His coat, "without seam," one complete and indivisible whole, so that what He did for one He did for all—not merely taking away the guilt of original sin. If it were true that Christ atoned for Adam's offense, then it would necessarily follow that the government under which the human race is now placed does not recognize the original curse. But such is far from being the case. From the fall until now, all are born dead in sin, the

objects of God's displeasure. That is very evident from the teaching of Romans 3 where, in unequivocal language, the whole world is pronounced under condemnation, "guilty before God" (vv. 10-19)—not merely as possible condemnation, but an actual one; not one which may be incurred, but which has been incurred already, and under which all are now lying; and the only way of deliverance is by faith in Christ. Precisely the same representation is given in the New Testament of the condition of all when first visited by the gospel. They are described as those who are sinners, lost, lying beneath the curse of a broken law, for the dark background of the gospel is that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness" (Rom. 1:18); and until the terms of that gospel are met, men have no hope (Eph. 2:12). The very scene into which we are born confronts us with innumerable evidences that the earth is under the curse of its Maker. To quote J. Thornwell: The frowning aspect of Providence which so often darkens our world and appalls our minds, receives the only adequate solution in the fact that the Fall has fearfully changed the relations of God and the creature. We are manifestly treated as criminals under guard. We are dealt with as guilty, faithless, suspected beings that cannot be trusted for a moment. Our earth has been turned into a prison, and sentinels are posted around us to awe, rebuke, and check us. Still, there are traces of our ancient grandeur; there is so much consideration shown to us as to justify the impression that those prisoners were once kings, and that this dungeon was once a palace. To one unacquainted with the history of our race, the dealings of Providence in regard to us must appear inexplicably mysterious. But the whole subject is covered with light when the doctrine of the Fall is understood. The gravest theological errors with respect alike to the character of God and the character of man have arisen from the monstrous hypothesis that our present is our primitive condition, that we are now what God originally made us.

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