

TOTAL DEPRAVITY OF MAN

Nowadays people do not know of this doctrine of the Total Depravity of Man and those who have some knowledge of it hate it (or at least lightly esteem it). The first half of Isaiah 60:2 applies here: “For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people.” Hosea bemoaned the similar condition of gross ignorance in his day of preaching: “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.” Hosea 4:6 Through the lack of knowledge the people, who are ignorant of God, his mind, and will, and worship, and without fear and reverence of him, which is the cause of all the abominations they run to (for example, today they are manifestly mad upon their Easter idols [Jeremiah 50:38]), for which they are threatened with ruin. Because of their willful ignorance, here is the picture of their condition: “God is angry with the wicked every day. If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready. He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors.” (Psalm 7:11-13) “This is not to be understood of those who are the Lord’s people by special grace; for they cannot be everlasting destroyed. God’s love to them, his choice of them, covenant with them, the redemption of them by Christ, and the grace of God in them, secure them from such destruction: nor can they perish through want of knowledge; for though they are by nature as ignorant as others, yet it is the determinate will of God to bring them to the knowledge of the truth, in order to salvation; and that same decree which fixes salvation as the end, secures the belief of the truth as the means; and the covenant of grace provides for their knowledge of spiritual things, as well as other spiritual blessings; in consequence of which their minds are enlightened by the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, and they have the knowledge of God and Christ given them, which is life eternal.” (John Gill’s exposition of Hosea 4:6).

It is our deep conviction at Westboro Baptist Church that the vital question most requiring to be raised today is this: Is man a totally and thoroughly depraved creature by nature? Does he enter the world completely ruined and helpless, spiritually blind and dead in trespasses and sins? According as is our answer to those questions so will be our views on many others. It is on the basis of this dark background that the whole Bible proceeds. Any attempt to modify or abate, repudiate or tone down the teaching of Scripture on the matter is fatal. Put the question in another form: Is man now in such a condition that he cannot be saved without the special and direct intervention of the triune God on his behalf? In other words, is there any hope for him apart from his personal election by the Father, his particular redemption by the Son, and the supernatural operations of the Spirit within him? Or, putting it in still another way: If man is a totally depraved being, can he possibly take the first step in the matter of his return to God? I’m looking at you, Billy Graham.

I want to thank Brother Ben for his help in this sermon: he put together a list of verses a long time ago which helped catalogue several of the key Bible verses which establish this important doctrine. I was talking with our brother Ken last Friday about my sermon today. He told me upon hearing the topic of my sermon that people act amazed with disbelief when they see our sign that says, “God Hates Fags.” “But,” he said, “what I find incredible and hard to believe is our sign that says: ‘God Loves His Elect.’” Amen. If you understand the doctrine of the total depravity of man, and especially Adam’s rebellion in the Garden of Eden, you too will wonder, how can it be that there is any reserve of grace and mercy for such a rebellious people, whose legal representative, Adam, did such dastardly things in the Garden of Eden. How could there be any atonement for such rebels?!? We know, thank God, that there is plenteous atonement and efficacious to accomplish the purpose for which our Sovereign God intends. Isaiah 53:10: “Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his

days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.” Thank God that that verse puts to silence the ignorance of foolish men and their hellish notions of universal atonement.

Simply stated, this doctrine teaches that man is totally depraved with emphasis on both words. Man’s depravity is total. Man’s inability to seek and know the truth of God is total. The favorite Scriptural metaphor to describe man’s condition is death. My friend, you came into this world spiritually dead, dead, dead: In the absolute sense and meaning of that word, dead. “You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.” Ephesians 2:1. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and [only] they that hear shall live.” John 5:25. “Son of man, can these [dry] bones live?” Ezekiel 37:3. Every son of Adam who has not been quickened or brought to life by a supernatural act of a sovereign God is as spiritually dead as the dry bones of Ezekiel’s vision. He has no life; he has no ability whatsoever to hear, to believe, to repent, or to do anything else spiritually. This modern notion that man is really good at heart, or at least has a little good in him, is a lie straight from hell and a doctrine of devils.

Every false religious system utterly fails because first they do not get this doctrine of the total depravity of man straight. Call the roll and see how they account for this doctrine. All get it wrong. Their sycophants are judicially blinded to the right answer.

But look at the giants of the Christian faith through the centuries, and with one accord they believed and roundly preached that the fundamental doctrine of Christianity is the doctrine of Total Depravity. Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Knox, Augustus Toplady. Thus, every Lutheran, every Presbyterian, every Episcopalian, to name but a few, who do not believe the doctrine of Total Depravity are betraying the very faith they profess. Their founders believed it; and virtually every ancient, honorable and widely-accepted and believed creed and confession of faith from then until now plainly expounds the doctrine of Total Depravity as bedrock Christianity. The Westminster Confession of Faith; the First London Baptist Confession of Faith; The Savoy Confession of Faith, the Philadelphia Confession of Faith. They all set forth in substantially the same terms this grand old doctrine, this fundamental doctrine, of Christianity

I quote from the First London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1646, Article IV: “In the beginning God made all things very good; created man after His own image, filled with all meet perfection of nature, and free from all sin; but long he abode not in this honor; Satan using the subtlety of the serpent to seduce first Eve, then by her seducing Adam; who without any compulsion, in eating the forbidden fruit, transgressed the command of God, and fell, whereby death came upon all his posterity; who now are conceived in sin, and by nature the children of wrath, the servants of sin, the subject of death, and other miseries in this world, and for ever, unless the Lord Jesus Christ set them free.”

Here are sample Bible verses related to this doctrine to help amplify and explain:

Genesis 6:5: “And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” Considering where Adam, our federal head and representative of the human race, had started in Genesis Chapter 1: this is a truly sad state of affairs.

Genesis 8:21: “And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake; for the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.”

Job 15:14-16: “What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous? Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight. How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?”

Psalms 14:1-3: “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good. The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.”

Psalms 51:5: “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.”

David Clarkson, one of the Puritans, pointed out this fact in his sermon on Psalm 51:5: “The end of the ministry of the Gospel is to bring sinners unto Christ. Their way to this end lies through the sense of their misery without Christ. The ingredients of this misery are our sinfulness, original and actual; the wrath of God, whereto sin has exposed us; and our impotency to free ourselves either from sin or wrath. That we may therefore promote this great end, we shall endeavour, as the Lord will assist, to lead you in this way, by the sense of misery, to Him who alone can deliver from it. Now the original of our misery being the corruption of our nature, or original sin, we thought fit to begin here, and therefore have pitched upon these words as very proper for our purpose: ‘Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.’”

Psalms 58:3: “The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.”

Psalms 94:11: “The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity.”

Proverbs 20:9: “Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?”

Ecclesiastes 7:20: “For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.”

Ecclesiastes 7:29: “Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.” Later, we will look at the inventions Adam immediately began to generate upon his deliberate rebellion against God in Eden.

Ecclesiastes 8:11: “Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.”

Isaiah 6:5: “Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.”

Isaiah 53:6: “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” The key word there is “sheep.” Not goats. Not dogs. Not swine.

Isaiah 64:6: “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.”

Jeremiah 10:14: “Every man is brutish in his knowledge.”

Jeremiah 13:23: “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.”

Jeremiah 17:9: “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” Who, indeed! Thus, the folly of the entire psychiatric and psychological industry, which is pure witchcraft and idolatry. Not to mention a racket.

Matthew 7:11: “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?”

Matthew 15:19: “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.”

John 3:36: “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

John 6:44: “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.”

John 15:5: “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.”

John 15:16: “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.”

Acts 3:16: “And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.” That “perfect soundness” is opposed to that natural condition described by Isaiah (1:6): “From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.”

Acts 16:14: “And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.”

Romans 3:9-20, 23: “What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes. ... For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”

Romans 5:12-21: “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed

when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

Romans 7:18-20: "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."

Romans 8:7: "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Note those words: "is enmity," not simply "has enmity." Enmity is "a feeling or condition of hostility; hatred; ill will; animosity; antagonism."

1 Corinthians 2:14: "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

1 Corinthians 12:3: "Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."

2 Corinthians 3:5: "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God."

2 Corinthians 4:3: "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost."

2 Corinthians 11:3: "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." Important note: Adam was not beguiled. His actions were deliberate, willful, and born out of contempt for a gracious and sovereign God, not content with such things that he had although it was the Garden of Eden, in-the-clear-light-of-a-day-rebellion.

Ephesians 2:1-6: "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

Ephesians 4:17-19: “This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.”

Colossians 2:13: “And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.”

1 Timothy 6:5: “Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.”

2 Timothy 2:25: “In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.”

Titus 1:15: “Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.”

James 2:10: “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.”

Revelation 9:20-21: “And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.”

Revelation 16:9: “And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.”

That something is radically wrong with the world of mankind requires no labored argument to demonstrate. That such has been the case in all generations is plain from the annals of history down to the present headlines of every news publication in the world. Why is it that none is able to keep God’s law perfectly or do anything which is acceptable to Him while in a state of nature? The only satisfactory answer must be obtained from God’s inspired Word, and so I recommend we look in detail at the beginning. “God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.” (Ecclesiastes 7:29).

Man is not now as God made him. He has lost the crown and glory of his creation, and has plunged himself into an awful pit of sin and misery. By his own perversity he has wrecked himself and placed a sentence of woe on his posterity. He is a ruined creature as the result of his apostasy from God. This requires that we consider, first, man in his original state, that we may perceive his folly in so lightly valuing that original state and that we may form a better conception of the vastness and vileness of his dive, for that can only be measured as we learn what he fell from as well as into. Second, we need to carefully consider the Holy Spirit’s record about the fall itself, pondering each detail described in Genesis 3, and the amplifications of them supplied by the later scriptures. Third, we shall be in a better position to view the fearful consequences of the fall and perceive how the punishment was made to fit the crime. Our job in this age is to make sin exceeding sinful. (Romans 7:14.) And, we take our job seriously. Satan has set up a full time and world-wide industry to make light of sin and to even make it appear as no sin; and he has had six thousand years to spin out lies to cover those he started in the Garden of Eden. Genesis 3:4-5: “And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God

doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." We live on this promise: "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." (Romans 16:20). So we stand flat-footed and oppose his messengers alive with us today, with the words of Jesus Christ: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." (John 8:44).

"And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Genesis 1:26). God is a trinity in unity, and so also is the man He made, consisting, in his entirety, of "spirit and soul and body" (1 Thessalonians 5:23). The fact that the plural pronoun occurs three times in the brief declaration of the Deity in Genesis 1:26 supplies confirmation that the one made in Their likeness was also a threefold entity. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Genesis 1:27). This announces the actual accomplishment of the divine purpose and counsel referred to in the preceding verse. It tells of the excellence of man's original nature, though it must be distinguished from that glory which is peculiar to Christ who, far from being said to be "made in the image of God," "is the image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15), and "the express image of his person" (Hebrews 1:8). The oneness and equality between the Father and the Son in no way pertain to any likeness between God and the creature.

Examining the term more closely, "the image of God" in which man was made refers to his moral nature. Calvin believed that it "includes all the excellence in which the nature of man surpasses all the other species of animals" and "denotes the integrity Adam possessed." He stated further that it may be more clearly specified "in the restoration which we obtain through Christ." This "image of God" is moral rectitude, a nature in perfect accord with the divine law. It could not be otherwise; for the holy One to make a creature after His likeness would be to endow him with holiness. The statement that the regenerate has been "renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him," Colossians 3:10, clearly implies the same image in which man was originally made, and which sin has defaced. Not only did that image consist of knowledge (i.e., of God) but, as Ephesians 4:24 informs us, of "righteousness and true holiness" also.

"And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Genesis 2:7). This supplies us with additional information on the making of Adam. First, the matter from which his body was formed, to demonstrate the wisdom and power of God in making out of such material so wonderful a thing as the human body, and to teach man his humble origin and dependence upon God. Second, the quickening principle bestowed on Adam, which was immediately from God, namely, an intelligent spirit, of which the fall did not deprive him. (See Ecclesiastes 12:7). That "the breath of life" included reason, or the faculty of understanding, is clear from "the life was the light of men" (John 1:4). When Christ, the Word, breathed into man the breath of life, and he became a living soul, he filled him with rational light and knowledge. Third, the effect on Adam. His body was now animated and made capable of vital acts. Man's body out of the dust was the workmanship of God, but his soul was an immediate communication from "the Father of spirits" (Hebrews 12:9), and thereby earth and heaven were united in him.

And the LORD God said, It not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh thereof; and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man (Genesis 2:18-22). It seems that God chose this mode of making the woman, instead of forming her also out of the dust, to express the intimate union which was to take place between the sexes, to denote their mutual relation and dependence, and to show the superiority of man. Those two were so made that

the whole human race, physically considered, were contained in them and to be produced from them, making them all literally "of one blood" (Acts 17:26).

God endowed Man with great gifts. "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Genesis 1:28). Those words intimate that there was yet another meaning to "the image of God," for the position of headship and authority which He conferred upon Adam showed the divine sovereignty. Psalm 8:5 and 6 tell us, "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet." Adam was constituted God's viceroy on earth, the government of all inferior creatures being conferred upon him. That was further demonstrated when the Lord brought all before Adam for him to give names to them (Genesis 2:19-20), which not only evidenced that he was a rational creature, endowed with the power of choice, but manifested his superiority over all worldly creatures, his ownership/management in/of them, and his liberty to use them for God's glory and his own good.

But more. God not only endowed Adam with righteousness and holiness, thereby fitting him to fulfill the end of his creation by glorifying the Author of his being. He also bestowed on him the gift of reason, which distinguished him from and elevated him above all the other inhabitants of the earth, conferring on him the charter of dominion over them. Further, He brought him into a pure and beautiful environment. "And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden [which the Septuagint renders 'the paradise of joy'] to dress it and to keep it" (Genesis 2:8-15). Genesis 3:24 confirms the fact that the Garden of Eden was distinct from the earth. The whole world was given Adam for a possession, but Eden was the special seat of his residence, a place of preeminent delight. It epitomized all the beauties of nature, and was as it were a conservatory of its fairest vegetation and a storehouse of its choicest fruits.

That the Garden of Eden was a place of surpassing beauty, excelling all other parts of the earth for fertility, is evident from other scriptures. Ezekiel, when prophesying in a day of wretchedness and barrenness, foretells of the bountiful spiritual blessings which would attend the gospel era, by using this figurative but graphic language: "This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden" (Ezekiel 36:35). Still plainer was the promise of Isaiah 51:3: "For the Lord shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody." It is clear that nothing was wanting in Eden, in its pristine glory, to give the most complete happiness to man. That it was a place of perfect bliss is further evident from the fact that heaven itself, the habitation of the blessed, is called "paradise" in Luke 23:43, 2 Corinthians 12:4 and Revelation 2:7. It is an allusion to the pledge for the complete satisfaction of the glorified man's spirit, soul and body.

Several things are signified and implied in the statement that the Lord God put the man into the Garden of Eden "to dress it and to keep it." First, and most obvious, God takes no pleasure in idleness, but in active industry. That such an appointment was for Adam's good cannot be doubted. Regular employment preserves us from those temptations which so often attend idleness. (Most of my 33 years of practicing law has been spent defending persons accused of crime. Most of the crime can be traced to not working. If you are not putting in a full day's work you're getting into trouble.) Second, secular employment is by no means inconsistent with perfect holiness, or with a person's enjoying intimate communion with God and the blessings resulting from it. Of course Adam's work would be performed without any of the fatigue and disappointment which accompany ours today. The holy angels are not inert, but "ministering spirits" (Hebrews 1:14). Of the divine Persons Themselves our Lord declared, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John 5:17). Thus this employment assigned Adam was also a part of his conformity to God. Third it implied the duty of keeping his own heart-the garden of his soul-with all diligence (Proverbs 4:23), tending its faculties and graces so that he might always be

in a condition to pray, "Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits" (Song of Solomon 4:16).

Further, in the words "dress it" (Hebrew is "serve," "till it") we are taught that God's gracious gifts are to be highly treasured and carefully cultivated by us. "Neglect not the gift that is in thee" (1 Timothy 4:14). "Stir up the gift of God, which is in thee" (2 Timothy 1:6). In the Genesis phrase "and to keep it" we believe there was a tacit warning given by God to Adam. Not only does the English term convey that thought, but the Hebrew word here used requires it. Nineteen times the Hebrew word (Shamar) is rendered "preserve," twelve times "take heed," four times "watch," and once it is actually translated "beware." Thus the phrase signified a caution against danger, putting Adam on his guard, warning him to be on the lookout against the encroaching enemy. Who is this enemy? The Dutch Puritan, Herman Witsius, pointed out that the "keeping of paradise virtually engaged him of all things to be anxiously concerned not to do anything against God, lest as a bad gardener he should be thrust out of the garden, and in that discover a melancholy symbol of his own exclusion from heaven." Finally, since paradise is one of the names of heaven, we may conclude that the earthly one in which Adam was placed was a pledge of celestial blessedness. Had he survived his probation and preserved his integrity, he would have enjoyed "heaven" on earth.

In addition to the institution of marriage (Genesis 2:23-25; 1:28), God appointed the weekly Sabbath. "On the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all His work which God created and made" (Genesis 2:2-3). The word "blessed" signifies to declare blessedness; God would have every reader know that special divine blessing attends the observance of the Sabbath. The word "sanctified" means that it was a day set apart for sacred use. For Adam it would be a means for his more intimate communion with God, in which he would enjoy a recess from his secular employment and have opportunity of expressing his gratitude for all those blessings of which he was the partaker.

"And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God, to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil" (Genesis 2:8-9). That is the first mention of those two notable trees, and it is to be observed that, like all the others surrounding them, they were both pleasing to the eye and suitable for eating. Thus God provided not only for Adam's profit but for his pleasure also, that he might serve Him with delight. "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:16-17).

Herman Witsius stated: "The tendency of such a Divine precept is to be considered. Man was thereby taught: (1) That God is Lord of all things, that it is unlawful for man even to desire an apple but with His leave. In all things, therefore, from the greatest to the least, the mouth of the Lord is to be consulted as to what He would or would not have done by us. (2) That man's true happiness is placed in God alone, and nothing to be desired but with submission to God, and in order to employ it for Him. So that it is He only on whose account all other things appear good and desirable to man. (3) If God so command: and to think that there is much more good in obedience to the Divine precept than in the enjoyment of the most delightful thing in the world. (4) That man was not yet arrived to the utmost pitch of happiness, but to expect a still greater good after his course of obedience was over. This was hinted by the prohibition of the most delightful tree, whose fruit was, of any other; greatly to be desired; and this argued some degree of imperfection in that state in which man was forbidden the enjoyment of some good."

In forbidding Adam to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil his Maker asserted His dominion and enforced His authority. That it was proper for Him to do so cannot be lawfully questioned, and as the sole Proprietor of the garden it was fitting that He should emphasize His rights by this restriction. Trial of Adam's obedience was made to discover whether the will of God was sacred to him. It was both fit and just that man

should remain in the state of holiness in which God had made him, if he would continue to enjoy His favor. Thus he was placed on probation and made the subject of divine government. Adam was not an independent creature, for he did not create himself. Being made by God, he owed a debt to Him; he was a moral being, and therefore responsible to serve and please God. The commandment given to him was no arbitrary infliction, but a necessary injunction for evidencing and enforcing man's relationship to God.

The Lord willing next week we will examine the fall of Adam and what it constituted, in detail. Here's a little foretaste. Very much more was included and involved in Adam's transgression than is commonly supposed or recognized. Three hundred years ago theologian James Ussher pointed out that wrapped up in it was "the breach of the whole Law of God." Summarizing what the Bishop of Armagh developed at length, Adam's violation of all the Ten Commandments of the moral law may be set forth in this way: 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.

I love you. Amen.