

Ecclesiastes 7:29: “Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.”

“In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. And Solomon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people? And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment; Behold, I have done according to thy words: **lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.**” (Emphasis supplied). 1 Kings 3:5-12. These words that I have highlighted are not idle words from the Holy Spirit. “And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment.” (1 Kings 3:28). “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.” James 3:17. And look at Ephesians 3:10: “To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.” That is to say that the God of all wisdom will instruct the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ at Topeka, Kansas, commonly called Westboro Baptist Church, concerning all facets of the Gospel, for the glory of God’s grace and mercy, and for the honor of his justice and holiness; and wherein Satan is mortified, sin is condemned, and the sinner saved. Amen.

Today, the Lord willing, we will look into some of the many inventions (or devices) which man has sought out contrary to being made upright by God beginning in the Garden of Eden with Adam.

“Whatever comes to pass, comes to pass by virtue of [the] absolute omnipotent will of God, which is the primary and supreme cause of all things.” “Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created” (Rev. 4.11). “Our God is in the heavens; He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased” (Psalm 115.3). “He doeth according to His will, in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?” (Dan. 4.35). “Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did He in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places” (Psalm 135.6). “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father” (Matt. 10.29).” (***Absolute Predestination***, Page 16, by Jerome Zanchius).

“The Deity is possessed not only of infinite knowledge, but likewise of absolute liberty of will, so that whatever He does, or permits to be done, He does and permits freely and of His own good pleasure.

Consequently, it is His free pleasure to permit sin, since, without His permission, neither men nor devils can do anything. Now, to permit is, at least, the same as not to hinder, though it be in our power to hinder if we please, and this permission, or non-hindrance, is certainly an act of the Divine will. Hence Augustine says, ‘Those things which, seemingly, thwart the Divine will are, nevertheless, agreeable to it, for, if God did not permit them, they could not be done, and whatever God permits, He permits freely and willingly. He does nothing, neither suffers anything to be done, against His own will.’ And Luther observes that ‘God permitted Adam to fall into sin because He willed that he should so fall.’” (***Absolute Predestination***, Page 12, by Jerome Zanchius).

“God is, in the most unlimited and absolute sense of the word, Almighty. ‘Behold Thou hast made the heaven and the earth by Thy great power and stretched-out arm, and there is nothing too hard for Thee’ (Jer. 32.17). ‘With God all things are possible’ (Matt. 19.26). The schoolmen, very properly, distinguish the omnipotence of God into absolute and actual: by the former, God might do many things which He does not; by the latter, He actually does whatever He will. For instance, God might, by virtue of His absolute power, have made more worlds than He has. He might have eternally saved every individual of mankind, without reprobating any; on the other hand, He might, and that with the strictest justice, have condemned all men and saved none. He could, had it been His pleasure, have prevented the fall of angels and men, and thereby have hindered sin from having footing in and among His creatures. By virtue of His actual power He made the universe; executes the whole counsel of His will, both in heaven and earth; governs and influences both men and things, according to His own pleasure; fixes the bounds which they shall not pass, and, in a word, worketh all in all (Isa. 45.7; Amos 3.6; John 5.17; Acts 17.26; 1 Cor. 12.6).” (***Absolute Predestination***, Pages 28-29, by Jerome Zanchius).

Last week we started looking at the Doctrine of the Total Depravity of man. After exploring many of the verses which articulate the doctrine we then set upon to describe how 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 consequence of woe on his posterity. He is a ruined creature as the result of his apostasy from God. So we considered, first, man in his original state, perceived his folly in so lightly valuing it and formed a better conception of the vastness and vileness of his downward plunge, Today, we need to carefully consider the Holy Spirit’s record about the fall itself, pondering each detail described in Genesis 3. Our goal is to be in a better position to view the fearful consequences of the fall and perceive how the punishment was made to fit the crime.

We at Westboro Baptist Church are in imminent danger in this evil world because we tell this generation that the conduct of sodomites and their enablers in the acceptance and glorification of their filthy sin in going after strange flesh has never been and never will be acceptable to God. Worse, he will destroy this world for this sin, as promised by our Lord Jesus Christ in such places in the Bible as Luke Chapter 17. Indeed from one end of the Bible to the other Sodom is set forth as an example of suffering the vengeance of eternal fire for all those that would thereafter live ungodly by “giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh.” Jude 7. Every faithful New Testament preacher, from John the Baptist to the present has adhered to that position. John the Baptist was executed by decapitation because he preached this doctrine to King Herod. Saying to him, it is wrong for you, sir, to be married to the woman who used to be the wife of your brother. She is strange flesh. She now has two living husbands. Divorced does not count. Your brother that married her first is the only husband she can ever lawfully have through all eternity. It is wrong, said John, for you to have her. Mark 6:18. This course of conduct which has culminated into an entire world population reaching the bottom rung of the ladder of human depravity by chasing sodomite sin began its path in the Garden of Eden by Adam’s rebellion. In the meantime we live on the promise from our Lord Jesus Christ: “I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” (Matthew 16:18).

“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 2:17. That particular restriction in this contract laid upon our first parent has been a favorite subject of ridicule by the opponents of divine revelation. Those who are wise in their own conceits have considered it unworthy of the Almighty to interpose His authority in a matter so insignificant, and have insisted it is incredible to believe that He exposed Adam and Eve to the hazard of ruining themselves and all their descendants by eating the food of a particular tree. But a little reflection ought to show us that nothing in that prohibition was unbecoming to God’s wisdom and goodness. Since He had been pleased to give Adam dominion over all creatures here below, it was surely fitting that He should require some peculiar instance of respect and loyalty to Him as a token of Adam’s dependence and an acknowledgment of his subjection to his Maker-to whom he owed absolute submission and obedience. And what mark of subjection could be more proper than being prohibited from eating one of the fruits of paradise? Full liberty was granted him to eat all the rest. That single abstention was well suited to teach our first parents the healthy lesson of self-denial and of absolute acceptance of the good pleasure of the Most High. It pleased God to establish this rule: that should be enough to follow it without question.

This prohibition taught Adam and Eve to keep their senses or appetites in subjection to their reasoning faculty. It showed them they must subordinate their bodily inclinations to finding their highest delight in God alone. (Two verses come to mind: 1 Corinthians 9:27: “But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.” Psalm 73:25: “Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.”) It suggested that their desire after knowledge must be kept within proper bounds, that they must be content with what God knew to be really proper and useful for them, and not presume to pry with unwarranted curiosity into things which did not belong to them, and which God had not thought well to reveal to them. (Deuteronomy 29:29: “The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.”) It was not sinful per se for Adam and Eve to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, but only because the Lord God had expressly forbidden them to do so. Accordingly, solemn warning of the dire consequences that would certainly follow their disobedience was given, for even in Eden man was placed under the holy fear of divine threatening, which was a hedge placed around him for his protection. Man’s supreme happiness lies in God Himself and the enjoyment of His favor, and in Eden he was forbidden to seek satisfaction in any other degree. His integrity was put to the test in that single restriction of his liberty.

Man is forever pretending, at the urging of Satan, that they can determine good and evil using their defective reasoning of what harm is and is not. Thus, the sodomites and their enablers easily win the debate over same-sex marriage against equally disobedient serial divorced and remarried so-called “Christians.”

Whatever the act of disobedience is, it is rebellion against the Lawgiver (Isa 33:22: “For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; he will save us”): it is a refusal of His authority, it breaks off that moral dependence upon Him which is founded on the nature of things, and is necessary to maintain the order and happiness in the universe. (That should have been the winning argument in the decision by the Supreme Court on same-sex marriage). The order therefore to abstain from the tree of knowledge of good and evil was a proper trial of our first parent, and the violation of it deserved the dreadful punishment which was threatened and executed. He was put to the test whether the will of God was sacred in his eyes and he was punished because he gave preference to his own will.

Adam’s obligation to render such obedience to God lay, first, in his relations to Him. As his Maker and King it was fitting for him to render full subjection to His revealed will. Second, in the privileges and favors bestowed on him: these required that he should express his gratitude and thanksgiving by doing those things which were pleasing in His sight. (1 Samuel 15:22: “Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.”) Third, in the gifts given to him by God: he was created in God’s image, with a nature that inclined his will to obedience--ability and obligation were both present with him at the same time and to the same extent. Fourth, he owed to his race to be obedient: as the head and father of all his descendants, their welfare or ruin was bound up in how he conducted himself, thus greatly increasing his responsibility to abstain from wrongdoing. Fifth, in that the command forbidding Adam to eat of the tree of knowledge was accompanied by a solemn threat of dire punishment in case of disobedience. Not only should that have acted as an effective deterrent, but the penalty necessarily implied a promise: since death would be the sure result of disobedience, life would be the reward of obedience--not only a continuation of the blessedness and happiness which he then enjoyed in fellowship with his Maker, but an increase of these blessings. That also ought to have served as a powerful incentive to continued faithfulness. Thus there was every reason why Adam should have preserved his integrity. Now, friends, all of these same principles of why we should obey the revealed will of God are applicable to us today.

Abominable indeed is sin, fearful are the wages it earns, and 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 deliberate act of disrespect which was made against God’s

sovereignty. 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. (So, the admonition in Hebrews 13:5: "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.") There was a disbelief of the holy truth of God, a doubting of His word and a believing of the serpent's lie. There was a refusal of the infinite obligations he was under to love and serve his Maker, and a preferring of his own will and way. There was 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.

"Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. 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. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat." Genesis 3:1-6.

"And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked" (Genesis 3:7(a)). How 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 provides confirmation that Adam was the covenant or federal head and legal representative of his wife, as well as of the future children which were to issue from them, including his children sitting in this congregation today. 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. What is meant by "the eyes of them both were opened"? Certainly not their physical eyes, for those had previously been open. The answer, then, must be the "eyes" of their understanding; those of their conscience-which sees or perceives, as well as hears, speaks and accuses (Romans 2:15). 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 shouldn't believe for a moment that they were without any covering at all. The commentators suggest that they had effulgence, or shining forth like the sun, as a covering; which describes the body of the resurrection in Daniel 12:3: "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament." If the face of Moses so shone by reflection that the children of Israel were afraid to come near him (Exodus 34:30), how much more must the unimpeded indwelling Spirit of God in Adam and Eve that cast 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? "Thou art clothed with honour and majesty: who coverest thyself with light as with a garment" (Psalm 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 [His] hands" (Psalm 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). See how angels are described in Luke 24:4: "two men stood by them in shining garments." Further, the implication of Romans 8:3 is irresistible: "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh." Note how discriminating the language is: not merely in the likeness of the flesh, but literally "sin's flesh." Robert Haldane explains these words in this way: "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." The resurrected body shall shine in its original beauty. "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." Philippians 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 condition. As the opening of their eyes refers to the eyes of their understanding, so they also discerned the loss of their innocence. There is nakedness of soul which is far worse than an unclothed body, for the naked soul is unfit for 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" (Revelation 3:18). The "white raiment" is "the robe of righteousness" (Isaiah 61:10), which is the same as the "wedding garment" of Matthew 22:11-13, without which the soul is eternally lost.

"They knew that they were naked." 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," (1 Samuel 4:21) 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.

What settled down deep into them was 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. 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! Thomas Brooks, in the last part of his famous and powerful book concerning the covenant of grace, expounds what is meant in Revelation 20:12 on the Day of Judgment when it is said: "and the books were opened." His explanation of the "Book of Conscience" is exquisite in describing the compelling nature of this book. 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. Stripped of their original righteousness, they stood defenseless. What a terrible discovery to make. Such is the state into which fallen man has come and 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. Instead of a convicted conscience causing them to cast themselves at the feet of the Savior, it resulted in their leaving Him. Nothing short of the Holy Spirit's quickening, enmity-slaying, heart-melting, faith-bestowing, will-impelling operations brings anyone into saving contact with the Lord Jesus. 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." (Genesis 3:7(b)). Here we see the second consequence of their sin: a worthless invention, a futile attempt to conceal their real character and hide their shame from themselves and the other creatures. 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 fellow men than about obtaining the approving love of God. The chief objective of the fallen sons of men is to quiet their guilty consciences and to stand well with their neighbors. Therefore so many of the unregenerate sew together the fig leaves of false 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" (Genesis 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" (Jeremiah 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 hatred 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 hear 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 very uneasy. That is why the Bible is so much neglected--because in it God is heard speaking. That is why nearly every so-called preacher prevaricates about what the Bible says and what the Bible clearly means. 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 to them. The more closely verses 4 and 5 of Genesis Chapter 3 are closely examined in the light of the immediate consequences, 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 demoted. 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 inexpressibly 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 God! 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. (2 Corinthian 5:10). 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 (Isaiah 55:6). For "how shall we escape" the lake of fire "if we neglect so great salvation?" (Hebrews 2:3).

In the verses that follow we are given a solemn preview of the Day of Judgment to come: "And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?" (Genesis 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?" (2 Corinthians 6:14). 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." (Genesis 2:17). 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" (Isaiah 59:2).

"And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden [This suggests now a physical appearance by our Lord Jesus Christ], and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself" (Genesis 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" (Isaiah 28:17) in which he formerly sheltered, he appears before his Maker--destitute of that righteousness and holiness which He 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. The garb of religion is discovered to be nothing but filthy rags when one is given to see light in God's light. (Isaiah 64:6) 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. (Hebrews 4:13).

"And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked?" (Genesis 3:11(a)). 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?" (Genesis 3:11(b)). It is conspicuous that God made no reply to the idle and perverse excuses which Adam had at first offered up. 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. Is this 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. (Psalm 51:17: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou

wilt not despise.”) But he failed to avail himself of the opportunity and declined to make brokenhearted confession of his iniquity. Proverbs 28:13: “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.”

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 admission 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" (Genesis 3:12). 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 his wife under the bus. 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 dismiss their responsibility and refuse to acknowledge their culpability by attributing the wrongdoing to anyone or anything rather than themselves, ascribing their sins to the force of circumstances, an evil environment, or temptations of 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.

"The foolishness of man perverteth his way: and his heart fretteth against the Lord" (Proverbs 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, 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 unslain enmity against God (Ephesians 2:16), 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 accuse His sovereignty, do not question His divine ordering of the affairs of the world, and 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." (Genesis 3:12). 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 blame to "the people" (1 Samuel 15:21). So too Pilate gave orders for the crucifixion of Christ, and then charged the crime to the Jews (Matthew 27:24). Here we learn the *seventh* 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 he did so without warning and correction in love to help her avoid it.

"And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done?" (Genesis 3:13). Here we see both the condescension of the Most High and His fairness as Judge. He did not act in high sovereignty, disdain to confer 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 on the Day of Judgment. It will be conducted in such a manner as to make it transparently evident that every transgressor receives "the due reward of his iniquities," (Luke 23:41) and that God is clear when He judges (Psalm 51:4). "And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat" (v. 13(b)). 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, and 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 given her full capacity of 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. There will be no "the devil made me do it" defense on the day when the books are opened, "and the dead [are] judged out of those things which [are] written in the books, according to their works." (Revelation 20:12).

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" (Genesis 3:14-15). 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. 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 utterly hopeless, degraded condition, and base endeavors to find satisfaction in rendering others wicked and miserable, might be figuratively demonstrated by the serpent's moving on his belly, and feeding on the dust. Satan is the proverbial "snake in the grass" forever.

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. Third, God Himself now put enmity between it and the female, so that where there had been personal interaction there should now be mutual hatred. 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 were a prophecy and a promise. A sentence of doom on Satan, and a gracious declaration made to the elect of God who inherit the benefit of the promise: "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." Romans 16:20. An accomplishment of Christ, who will not only destroy the works of the devil, but the devil himself...shortly.

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" (Genesis 3:16). 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" (Genesis 3:17-19). 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." (Genesis 3:19).

"And Adam called his wife's name Eve ['living']; because she was the mother of all living" (Genesis 3:20). 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 (Genesis 1:28) by giving names to them (Genesis 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" (Genesis 3:21). Many commentators have supposed these words to indicate 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. Others see 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" (Genesis 3:22), which is obviously the language of sarcasm and irony. See the one who vainly imagined that by defying God he should "be as gods" (Genesis 3:5), now demoted 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" (Genesis 3:23). God bade him leave the garden. But, as Matthew Henry suggests, 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" (Genesis 3:24), 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.

The punishment fits the crime, indeed. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? ... There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Romans 7:24-Romans 8:1).

Beloved of the Lord, I thank you for offering me this time to speak and my hope is that you have been edified. I love you. Amen.