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THE SINFULNESS OF MAN'S NATURAL STATE

Thomas Boston

DOCTRINE: MAN'S NATURE IS NOW WHOLLY CORRUPTED

I shall confirm the doctrine of the corruption of nature.

I shall hold the glass to your eyes, wherein you may see your sinful nature; which, though God takes particular notice of it, many quite overlook. Here we shall consult the Word of God, and men's experience and observation.

For Scripture proof, let us consider:

How the Scripture takes particular notice of fallen Adam's communicating his image to his posterity (Gen 5:3), "Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth." Compare with this the first verse of that chapter, "In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made He him." Behold here, how the image after which man was made, and the image after which he is begotten, are opposed. Man was created in the likeness of God; that is, the holy and righteous God made a holy and righteous creature, but fallen Adam begat a son, not in the likeness of God, but in his own likeness; that is, corrupt sinful Adam begat a corrupt sinful son. For as the image of God bore righteousness and immortality in it, as was shewn before; so this image of fallen Adam bore corruption and death in it (I Cor 15:49,50; compare verse 22). Moses, in that fifth chapter of Genesis, giving us the first bill of mortality that ever was in the world, ushers it in with this, that dying Adam begat mortals. Having sinned, he became mortal, according to the threatening; and so he begat a son in his own likeness, sinful, and therefore mortal. Thus sin and death passed on all. Doubtless he begat both Cain and Abel in his own likeness, as well as Seth. But it is not recorded of Abel, because he left no issue behind him, and his falling the first sacrifice to death in the world, was a sufficient document of it: nor of Cain, to whom it might have been though peculiar, because of his monstrous wickedness; and besides, his posterity was drowned in the flood: but

it is recorded of Seth, because he was the father of the holy seed; and from him all mankind since the flood have descended, and fallen Adam's own likeness with them.

It appears from that text of Scripture (Job 14:4), "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." Our first parents were unclean, how then can we be clean? How could our immediate parents be clean? How can our children be so? The uncleanness here referred to, is a sinful uncleanness; for it is such as makes man's days full of trouble: and it is natural, being derived from unclean parents: "Man that is born of a woman" (verse 1), "And how can he be clean that is born of a woman?" (Job 25:4). The omnipotent God, whose power is not here challenged, could bring a clean thing out of an unclean, and did so in the case of the man Christ: but no other can. Every person that is born according to the course of nature is born unclean. If the root be corrupt, so must the branches be. Neither is the matter mended, though the parents be sanctified ones; for they are but holy in part, and that by grace, not by nature, and they beget their children as men, not as holy men. Wherefore, as the circumcised parent begets an uncircumcised child, and after the purest grain is sown, we reap chaff with the corn; so the holiest parents beget unholy children, and cannot communicate their grace to them, as they do their nature; which many godly parents find true, in their sad experience.

Consider the confession of the psalmist David (Psa 51:5), "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." Here he ascends from his actual sin, to the fountain of it, namely, corrupt nature. He was a man according to God's own heart, but from the beginning it was not so with him. He was begotten in lawful marriage: but when the lump was shapen in the womb, it was a sinful lump. Hence the corruption of nature is called the "old man"; being as old as ourselves, older than grace, even in those that are sanctified from the womb.

Hear our Lord's determination of the point (John 3:6), "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." Behold the universal corruption of mankind—all are flesh! Not that all are frail, though that is a sad truth too: yea, and our natural frailty is an evidence of our natural corruption, but that is not the sense of the text. The meaning of it is—all are corrupt and sinful, and that naturally. Hence our Lord argues that because they are flesh, therefore they must be born again, or else they cannot enter into the kingdom of God (verses 3-5). And as the corruption of our nature shows the absolute necessity of regeneration, so the absolute necessity of regeneration plainly proves the corruption of our nature; for why should a man need a second birth, if his nature were not quite marred in his first birth?

Man certainly is sunk very low now, in comparison of what he once was. God made him but a "little lower than the angels": but now we find him likened to the beasts that perish. He hearkened to a brute, and is now become like one of them. Like Nebuchadnezzar, his portion in his natural state is with the beasts, "who mind earthly things" (Phil 3:19). Nay, brutes, in some sort, have the advantage of the natural man, who is sunk a degree below them. He is more negligent of what concerns him most, than the stork, or the turtle, or the crane, or the swallow, in what is for their interest (Jer 8:7). He is more stupid than the ox or ass (Isa 1:3). I find him sent to school to learn of the ant, which has no guide or leader to go before her; no overseer or officer to compel or stir her up to work; no ruler, but may do as she lists, being under the dominion of none; yet "provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest" (Prov 6:6-8); while the natural man has all these, and yet exposes himself to eternal starving. Nay, more than all this, the Scriptures hold out the natural man, not only as wanting the good qualities of these creatures, but as a compound of the evil qualities of the worst of the creatures; in whom the fierceness of the lion, the craft of the fox, the unteachableness of the wild ass, the filthiness of the dog and swine, the poison of the asp, and such like, meet. Truth itself calls them "serpents, ye generation of vipers"; yea, more, even children of the devil (Matt 23:33; John 8:44). Surely, then, man's nature is miserably corrupted.

We are "by nature the children of wrath" (Eph 2:3). We are worthy of, and liable to, the wrath of God; and this by nature: therefore, doubtless, we are by nature sinful creatures. We are condemned before we have done good or evil; under the curse, before we know what it is. But, "will a lion roar in the forest, when he hath no prey?" (Amos 3:4); that is, will the holy and just God roar in His wrath against man, if he be not, by his sin, made a prey for His wrath? No, He will not; He cannot. Let us conclude then, that, according to the Word of God, man's nature is a corrupt nature.

If we consult experience, and observe the case of the world, in those things that are obvious to any person who will not shut his eyes against clear light, we shall quickly perceive such fruits as discover this root of bitterness. I shall propose a few things that may serve to convince us in this point.

Who sees not a flood of miseries overflowing the world? Whither can a man go where he shall not dip his foot, if he go not over head and ears, in it? Every one at home and abroad, in city and country, in palaces and cottages, is groaning under some one thing or other, distasteful to him. Some are oppressed with poverty, some chastened with sickness and pain, some are lamenting their losses, every one has a cross of one sort or another. No man's condition is so soft, but there is some thorn of uneasiness in it. At length death, the wages of sin, comes after these its harbingers, and sweeps all away. Now, what but sin has opened the sluice of sorrow? There is not a complaint nor sigh heard in the world, nor a tear that

falls from our eye, but it is an evidence that man is fallen as a star from heaven; for “God distributeth sorrows in His anger” (Job 21:17). This is a plain proof of the corruption of nature: forasmuch as those who have not yet actually sinned, have their share of these sorrows; yea, and draw their first breath in the world weeping, as if they knew this world at first sight to be a Bochim, the place of weepers. There are graves of the smallest, as well as of the largest size, in the churchyard; and there are never wanting some in the world, who are, like Rachel, weeping for their children because they are not (Matt 2:18).

Observe how early this corruption of nature begins to appear in young ones. Solomon observes, that “even a child is known by his doings” (Prov 20:11). It may soon be discerned what way the bias of the heart lies. Do not the children of fallen Adam, before they can go alone, follow their father's footsteps? What a vast deal of little pride, ambition, sinful curiosity, vanity, wilfulness, and averseness to good, appears in them? And when they creep out of infancy, there is a necessity of using the rod of correction, to drive away the foolishness that is bound in their hearts (Prov 22:15), which shows that, if grace prevail not, the child will be as Ishmael—“A wild ass-man,” as the word is (Gen 16:12).

Take a view of the manifold gross outbreaks of sin in the world: the wickedness of man is yet great in the earth. Behold the bitter fruits of the corruption of our nature (Hos 4:2). “By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out [like the breaking forth of waters], and blood toucheth blood.” The world is filled with filthiness, and all manner of lewdness, wickedness, and profanity. From whence comes the deluge of sin on the earth, but from the breaking up of the fountains of the great deep, the heart of man? out of which proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, etc. (Mark 7:21,22). You will, it may be, thank God with a whole heart, that you are not like these other men; and indeed you have more reason for it than, I fear, you are aware of; for “as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man” (Prov 27:19). As, looking into clear water, you see your own face; so, looking into your heart, you may see other men's there; and, looking into other men's, in them you may see your own. So that the most vile and profane wretches that are in the world, should serve you for a looking-glass, in which you ought to discern the corruption of your own nature: and if you were to do so, you would, with a heart truly touched, thank God, and not yourselves, indeed, that you are not as other men in your lives; seeing the corruption of nature is the same in you as in them.

Cast your eye upon those terrible convulsions which the world is thrown into by the lusts of men! Lions make not a prey of lions, nor wolves of wolves: but men are turned lions and wolves to one another, biting and devouring one another. Upon how slight occasions will men sheath their swords in one another! The world is a wilderness, where the clearest fire that men can carry about with them will not frighten away the wild beasts that inhabit it (and that because they are men and not brutes); but one way or other they will be wounded. Since Cain shed the blood of Abel, the earth has been turned into a slaughter-house; and the chase has been continued since Nimrod began his hunting; on the earth, as in the sea, the greater still devouring the lesser. When we see the world in such a ferment, every one attacking another with words or swords, we may conclude there is an evil spirit among them. These violent heats among Adam's sons show the whole body to be distempered, the whole head to be sick, and the whole heart to be faint. They surely proceed from an inward cause (James 4:1), “lusts that war in our members.”

Consider the necessity of human laws, guarded by terrors and severities; to which we may apply what the apostle says (I Tim 1:9), that “the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners.” Man was made for society; and God Himself said of the first man, when He had created him, that it was “not meet he should be alone”; yet the case is such now, that, in society, he must be hedged in with thorns. And that from hence we may the better see the corruption of man's nature, let us consider: (1.) Every man naturally loves to be at full liberty himself; to have his own will for his law; and, if he were to follow his natural inclinations, he would vote himself out of the reach of all laws, divine and human. Hence some, the power of whose hands has been answerable to their natural inclination, have indeed made themselves absolute, and above laws; agreeably to man's monstrous design at first, to be as gods (Gen 3:5). (2.) There is no man that would willingly adventure to live in a lawless society: therefore even pirates and robbers have laws among themselves, though the whole society casts off all respect to law and right. Thus men discover themselves to be conscious of the corruption of nature; not daring to trust one another, but upon security. (3.) How dangerous soever it is to break through the hedge, yet the violence of lust makes many daily adventure to run the risk. They will not only sacrifice their credit and conscience, which last is lightly esteemed in the world; but for the pleasure of a few moments, immediately succeeded with terror from within, they will lay themselves open to a violent death by the laws of the land wherein they live. (4.) The laws are often made to yield to men's lusts. Sometimes whole societies run into such extravagances, that, like a company of prisoners, they break off their fetters, and put their guard to flight; and the voice of laws cannot be heard for the noise of arms. And seldom is there a time, wherein there are not some persons so great and daring, that the laws dare not look their impetuous lusts in the face; which made David say, in the

case of Joab, who had murdered Abner, “These men, the sons of Zeruah, be too hard for me” (II Sam 3:39). Lusts sometimes grow too strong for laws, so that the law becomes slack, as the pulse of a dying man (Hab 1:3-4). (5.) Consider what necessity often appears of amending old laws, and making new ones; which have their rise from new crimes, of which man's nature is very fruitful. There would be no need of mending the hedge, if men were not, like unruly beasts, still breaking it down. It is astonishing to see what a figure the Israelites, who were separated unto God from among all the nations of the earth, make in their history; what horrible confusions were among them, when there was no king in Israel, as you may see from the eighteenth to the twenty-first chapter of Judges: how hard it was to reform them, when they had the best of magistrates! And how quickly they turned aside again, when they got wicked rulers! I cannot but think, that one grand design of that sacred history, was to discover the corruption of man's nature, the absolute need of the Messiah, and His grace; and that we ought, in reading it, to improve it to that end. How cutting is that word which the Lord has to Samuel, concerning Saul (I Sam 9:17), “The same shall reign over” (or, as the word is, *shall restrain*), “my people!” O the corruption of man's nature! The awe and dread of the God of heaven restrains them not; but they must have gods on earth to do it, “to put them to shame” (Judg 18:7).

Consider the remains of that natural corruption in the saints. Though grace has entered, yet corruption is not expelled: though they have got the new creature, yet much of the old corrupt nature remains; and these struggle together within them, as the twins in Rebekah's womb (Gal 5:17). They find it present with them at all times, and in all places, even in the most retired corners. If a man has a troublesome neighbour, he may remove; if he has an ill servant, he may put him away at the term; if a bad yoke-fellow, he may sometimes leave the house, and be free from molestation that way: but should the saint go into a wilderness, or set up his tent on some remote rock in the sea, where never foot of man, beast, or fowl had touched, there will it be with him. Should he be with Paul, caught up to the third heaven, it will come back with him (II Cor 12:7). It follows him as the shadow does the body; it makes a blot in the fairest line he can draw. It is like the fig-tree on the wall, which however closely it was cut, yet still grew, till the wall was thrown down: for the roots of it are fixed in the heart, while the saint is in the world, as with bands of iron and brass. It is especially active when he would do good (Rom 7:21), then the fowls come down upon the carcasses. Hence often, in holy duties, the spirit of a saint, as it were, evaporates; and he is left before he is aware, like Michal, with an image in the bed instead of a husband. I need not stand to prove to the godly the corruption of nature in them, for they groan under it; and to prove it to them, were to hold out a candle to let them see the sun: as for the wicked, they are ready to account mole-hills in the saints as big as mountains, if not to reckon them all hypocrites. But consider these few things on this head: (1.) “If it be thus in the green tree how must it be in the dry?” The saints are not born saints, but made so by the power of regenerating grace. Have they got a new nature, and yet the old remains with them? How great must that corruption be in others, in whom there is no grace! (2.) The saints groan under it, as a heavy burden. Hear the apostle (Rom 7:24), “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” What though the carnal man lives at ease and quiet, and the corruption of nature is not his burden, is he therefore free from it? No, no; it is because he is dead, that he feels not the sinking weight. Many a groan is heard from a sick bed, but never any from a grave. In the saint, as in the sick man, there is a mighty struggle; life and death striving for the mastery: but in the natural man, as in the dead corpse, there is no noise, because death bears full sway. (3.) The godly man resists the old corrupt nature; he strives to mortify it, yet it remains; he endeavours to starve it, and by that means to weaken it, yet it is active. How must it spread then, and strengthen itself in that soul, where it is not starved, but fed! And this is the case of all the unregenerate, who make “provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.” If the garden of the diligent afford him new work daily, in cutting off and rooting up, surely that of the sluggard must needs be “all grown over with thorns.”

I shall add but one observation more, and that is, that in every man, naturally, the image of fallen Adam appears. Some children, by the features and lineaments of their face, do, as it were, father themselves: and thus we resemble our first parents. Every one of us bears the image and impression of the fall upon him: and to evince the truth of this, I appeal to the consciences of all, in these following particulars:

Is not sinful curiosity natural to us? And is not this a print of Adam's image (Gen 3:6). Is not man naturally much more desirous to know new things, than to practise old known truths? How much like old Adam do we look in this eagerness for novelties, and disrelish of old solid doctrines? We seek after knowledge rather than holiness, and study most to know those things which are least edifying. Our wild and roving fancies need a bridle to curb them, while good solid affections must be quickened and spurred on.

If the Lord, by His holy law and wise providence, puts a restraint upon us, to keep us back from any thing, does not that restraint whet the edge of our natural inclinations, and make us so much the keener in our desires? And in this do we not betray it plainly, that we are Adam's children? (Gen 3:2-6). I think this cannot be denied, for daily observation evinces, that it is a natural principle, that “stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant” (Prov 9:17). The very

heathens were convinced that man was possessed with this spirit of contradiction, though they knew not the spring of it. How often do men let themselves loose in those things, in which, had God left them at liberty, they would have bound up themselves! But corrupt nature takes a pleasure in the very jumping over the hedge. And is it not a repeating of our father's folly, that men will rather climb for forbidden fruit, than gather what is shaken off the tree of good providence to them, when they have God's express allowance for it?

Which of all the children of Adam is not naturally disposed to hear the instruction that causeth to err? And was not this the rock our first parents split upon (Gen 3:4-6)? How apt is weak man, ever since that time, to parley with temptations! "God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not" (Job 33:14), but he readily listens to Satan. Men might often come fair off, if they would dismiss temptations with abhorrence, when first they appear; if they would nip them in the bud, they would soon die away, but, alas! Though we see the train laid for us, and the fire put to it, yet we stand till it runs along, and we are blown up with its force.

Do not the eyes in our head often blind the eyes of the mind? And was not this the very case of our first parents (Gen 3:6)? Man is never more blind than when he is looking on the objects that are most pleasing to sense. Since the eyes of our first parents were opened to the forbidden fruit, men's eyes have been the gates of destruction to their souls; at which impure imaginations and sinful desires have entered the heart, to the wounding of the soul, wasting of the conscience, and bringing dismal effects sometimes on whole societies, as in Achan's case (Joshua 7:21). Holy Job was aware of this danger from these two little rolling bodies, which a very small splinter of wood can make useless; so that, with the king who durst not, with his ten thousand, meet him that came with twenty thousand against him (Luke 14:31,32), he sendeth and desireth conditions of peace, "I made a covenant with mine eyes" (Job 31:1).

Is it not natural to us to care for the body, even at the expense of the soul? This was one ingredient in the sin of our first parents (Gen 3:6). O how happy might we be, if we were but at half the pains about our souls, that we bestow upon our bodies! If that question, "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30), ran but near as often through our minds as these questions do, "What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" (Matt 6:31), then many a hopeless case would become very hopeful. But the truth is, most men live as if they were nothing but a lump of flesh: or as if their soul served for no other use, but, like salt, to keep their body from corrupting. "They are flesh" (John 3:6); "they mind the things of the flesh" (Rom 8:5); "and they live after the flesh" (verse 13). If the consent of the flesh be got to an action, the consent of the conscience is rarely waited for: yea, the body is often served, when the conscience has entered a protest against it.

Is not every one by nature discontented with his present lot in the world, or with some one thing or other in it? This also was Adam's case (Gen 3:5,6). Some one thing is always wanting; so that man is a creature given to changes. If any doubt this, let them look over all their enjoyments; and, after a review of them, listen to their own hearts, and they will hear a secret murmuring for want of something; though perhaps, if they considered the matter aright, they would see that it is better for them to want than to have that something. Since the hearts of our first parents flew out at their eyes, on the forbidden fruit, and a night of darkness was thereby brought on the world, their posterity have a natural disease which Solomon calls, "The wandering of the desire," or, as the word is, "The walking of the soul" (Eccl 6:9). This is a sort of diabolical trance, wherein the soul traverses the world; feeds itself with a thousand airy nothings; snatches at this and the other created excellency, in imagination and desire; goes here, and there, and every where, except where it should go. And the soul is never cured of this disease, till conquering grace brings it back to take up its everlasting rest in God through Christ. But till this be, if man were set again in paradise, the garden of the Lord, all the pleasures there would not keep him from looking, yea, and leaping over the hedge a second time.

Are we not far more easily impressed and influenced by evil counsels and examples, than by those that are good! You will see this was the ruin of Adam (Gen 3:6). Evil example, to this day, is one of Satan's master-devices to ruin men. Though we have, by nature, more of the fox than of the lamb; yet that ill property which some observe in this creature, namely, that if one lamb skip into a water, the rest that are near will suddenly follow, may be observed also in the disposition of the children of men; to whom it is very natural to embrace an evil way, because they see others in it before them. Ill example has frequently the force of a violent stream, to carry us over plain duty, but especially if the example be given by those we bear a great affection to; our affection, in that case, blinds our judgment; and what we should abhor in others, is complied with, to humour them. Nothing is more plain, than that generally men choose rather to do what the most do, than what the best do.

Who of all Adam's sons needs be taught the art of sewing fig-leaves together, to cover their nakedness (Gen 3:7)? When we have ruined ourselves, and made ourselves naked to our shame, we naturally seek to help ourselves by ourselves: many poor contrivances are employed, as silly and insignificant as Adam's fig-leaves. What pains are men at, to cover

their sin from their own conscience, and to draw all the fair colours upon it that they can! And when once convictions are fastened upon them, so that they cannot but see themselves naked, it is as natural for them to attempt to cover it by self-deceit, as for fish to swim in water, or birds to fly in the air. Therefore the first question of the convinced is, "What shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). How shall we qualify ourselves? What shall we perform? Not considering that the new creature is God's own workmanship or deed (Eph 2:10), any more than Adam considered and thought of being clothed with the skins of sacrifices (Gen 3:21).

Do not Adam's children naturally follow his footsteps, in hiding themselves from the presence of the Lord? (Gen 3:8). We are quite as blind in this matter as he was, who thought to hide himself from the presence of God amongst the shady trees of the garden. We are very apt to promise ourselves more security in a secret sin, than in one that is openly committed. "The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me" (Job 24:15). Men will freely do that in secret, which they would be ashamed to do in the presence of a child; as if darkness could hide from the all-seeing God. Are we not naturally careless of communion with God; aye, and averse to it? Never was there any communion between God and Adam's children, where the Lord Himself had not the first word. If He were to let them alone they would never inquire after Him; "I hid me" (Isa 57:17). Did he seek after a hiding God? Very far from it: "He went on frowardly in the way of his heart."

How loth are men to confess sin, to take guilt and shame to themselves? Was it not thus in the case before us? (Gen 3:10). Adam confesses his nakedness, which could not be denied; but says not one word of his sin: the reason of it was, he would fain have hid it if he could. It is as natural for us to hide sin, as to commit it. Many sad instances thereof we have in this world, but a far clearer proof of it we shall get at the day of judgment, the day in which "God shall judge the secrets of men" (Rom 2:16). many a foul mouth will then be seen which is now "wiped, and saith, I have done no wickedness" (Prov 30:20).

Is it not natural for us to extenuate our sin, and transfer the guilt upon others? When God examined our guilty first parents, did not Adam lay the blame on the woman? And did not the woman lay the blame on the serpent? (Gen 3:12,13). Now Adam's children need not be taught this hellish policy; for before they can well speak, if they cannot get the fact denied, they will cunningly lisp out something to lessen their fault, and lay the blame upon another. Nay, so natural is this to men, that in the greatest sins, they will lay the fault upon God Himself; they will blaspheme His holy providence under the mistaken name of misfortune or ill luck, and thereby lay the blame of their sin at heaven's door. And was not this one of Adam's tricks after his fall? "And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat" (Gen 3:12). Observe the order of the speech. He makes his apology in the first place, and then comes his confession: his apology is long, but his confession very short; it is all comprehended in one word, "and I did eat." How pointed and distinct is his apology, as if he was afraid his meaning should have been mistaken! "The woman," says he, or "that woman," as if he would have pointed the Judge to His own works, of which we read (Gen 2:22). There was but one woman then in the world, so that one would think he needed not to have been so nice and exact in pointing at her: yet she is as carefully marked out in his defense, as if there had been ten thousand. "The woman whom thou gavest me." Here he speaks, as if he had been ruined with God's gift. And, to make the gift look the blacker, it is added to all this, "thou gavest to be with me," as my constant companion, to stand by me as a helper. This looks as if Adam would have fathered an ill design upon the Lord, in giving him this gift. And, after all, there is a new demonstrative here, before the sentence is complete; he says not, "The woman gave me," but "the woman, she gave me," emphatically; as if he had said, *she*, even *she*, gave me of the tree. This much for his apology. But his confession is quickly over, in one word, as he spoke it, "and I did eat." There is nothing here to point out himself and as little to show what he had eaten. How natural is this black art to Adam's posterity! He that runs may read it. So universally does Solomon's observation hold true (Prov 19:3), "The foolishness of man perverteth his way; and his heart fretteth against the LORD." Let us then call fallen Adam, father; let us not deny the relation, seeing we bear his image.

To shut up this point, sufficiently confirmed by concurring evidence from the Lord's Word, our own experience, and observation; let us be persuaded to believe the doctrine of the corruption of our nature; and look to the second Adam, the blessed Jesus, for the application of His precious blood, to remove the guilt of our sin; and for the efficacy of His Holy Spirit, to make us new creatures; knowing that "except we be born again, we cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

(Taken from the Thomas Boston's book—Human Nature in its Fourfold State.)

RAMIFICATIONS OF THE FALL

A.W. Pink

I. Blindness of Heart

The heart is the center of our moral being, out of which flow the issues of life (Prov 4:23; cf. Matt 12:35). The nature of the heart is at once indicated by its being designated a “*stony heart*” (Eze 11:19). The figure is a very apt one. As a stone is a product of the earth, so it has the property of the earth: heaviness, a tendency to fall. Thus it is with the natural mind. Men’s affections are wholly set on the world; and though God made man upright with his head erect, yet the soul is bowed down to the ground. The physical curse pronounced on the serpent is also fulfilled in his seed, for the things on which they feed turn to ashes, so that dust is their meat (Isa 65:25). Sin has so calloused man’s heart that, Godward, it is loveless and lifeless, cold and insensible. That is one reason why the moral law was written on tables of stone: to represent emblematically the stupid, unyielding hearts men had, as is clearly implied by the contrast presented in II Corinthians 3:3.

The heart of the unregenerate is also likened to “rock” (Jer 23:29), and to “adamant stone” (Zech 7:12), which is harder than flint. Those far from righteousness are called “stouthearted” (Isa 46:12); and in Isaiah 48:4 God says, “Thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass.” This hardness is often ascribed to the neck (“stiffnecked”), a figure of man’s obstinacy taken from refractory oxen which will not accept the yoke. This hardness evidences itself by a complete absence of spiritual sensibility, so that the heart is unmoved by God’s goodness, has no awe of His authority and majesty, no fear of His anger and vengeance; a presentation of the joys of heaven or the horrors of hell makes no impression on it. As the prophet of old lamented, they “put far away the evil day” (Amos 6:3), dismissing it from their thoughts as an unwelcome subject. They have no sense of guilt, no consciousness of having offended their Maker, no alarming realization of His impending wrath, but are at ease in their sins. Far from sin being a burden to them, it is their element and delight.

Hardness of heart, which was referred to in the preceding chapter, is the perverseness and obstinacy of fallen man’s nature, which makes him resolve to continue in sin no matter what be the consequences thereof. It renders him unwilling to be rebuked for his folly, and makes him refuse to be reclaimed from it, whatever methods are used in order thereunto. The Prophet Ezekiel mentioned this hardness of heart in his day, referring to those who had been forewarned by earlier judgments, and were at that very time under the most solemn rebuke of Providence. God had to say of them, “They will not hearken unto Me: for all the house of Israel are impudent and hardhearted” (Ezek 3:7). The Lord Jesus said of them, “We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented” (Matt 11:17). The most touching entreaties and winsome reasoning will not move the unregenerate to accept what is absolutely necessary for their present peace and final joy. “They are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear; which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely” (Psa 58:4,5; cf. Acts 7:57).

The hearts of the regenerate are docile and pliable, easily bent to God’s will, but the hearts of the wicked are wedded to their lusts and impervious to all appeal. There is such unyielding disposition against heavenly things that they do not respond to the most alarming threatenings and thunderings. They will neither be convinced by the most cogent arguments nor won by the most tempting inducements. They are so addicted to self-pleasing that they cannot be persuaded to take Christ’s yoke on them. Zechariah 7:11,12 states: “But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear. Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the Lord of hosts hath sent.” They are less susceptible to receive any impressions of holiness than granite is to be engraved by the tool of the artificer. They scorn control and refuse to be admonished. They are “a stubborn and rebellious generation” (Psa 78:8), being subject to neither the law nor the gospel. The doctrines of repentance, self-denial, walking with God, can find no entrance into their hearts.

II. Disordered Affections

Writers disagree as to the scope of the affections. It is a moot point both theologically and psychologically whether the desires are included in the affections. In the broadest meaning, the affections may be said to be the sensitive faculty of the soul. As the understanding discerns and judges things, so the affections allure and dispose the soul to or against the objects contemplated. By the affections the soul becomes pleased or displeased with what is known by the bodily senses or contemplated by the mind, and thus it is moved to approve or reject. As distinguished from both the understanding and the affections, the will executes the final decision of the mind or the strongest desire of the affections, carrying it into

action. Since the affections pertain to the sensitive side of the soul, we are more conscious of their stirrings than we are of the actions of our minds or wills. We shall employ the term in its widest latitude, including the desires, for what the appetites are to the body the affections are to the soul.

Goodwin likened the desire nature to the stomach. It is an empty void, fitted to receive from without, longing for a satisfying object. Its universal language is, "Who will shew us any good?" (Psa 4:6). Now God Himself is man's chief good, the only One who can afford him real, lasting and full satisfaction. At the beginning He created him in His own likeness, that as the needle touched by the lodestone ever moves northward, so the soul touched with the divine image should turn the understanding, affections and will to Himself. He also placed the soul in a material body, and in this world, fitting each for the other, providing everything necessary for and suited to each part of man's complex being. The desire nature carries the soul's impressions to the creature, originally intended as a means of enjoying God in and by them. The wonders of God's handiwork were meant to be admired, but chiefly as displaying His wisdom. Food was to be eaten and enjoyed, but in order to deepen gratitude for the goodness of the Giver and to supply strength to serve Him. But when man apostatized, his understanding, affections and will were divorced from God, and the exercise of them became directed only by self-love.

Originally the Lord sustained and directed the action of human affections toward Himself. Then He withheld that power, and left our first parents on their own footing; in consequence their desires wandered after forbidden joys. They sought their happiness not in communion with their Maker, but in fellowship with the creature. Like their children ever since, they loved and served the creature more than the Creator. The result was disastrous: they became separated from the Holy One. That was at once evidenced by their attempt to hide from Him. Had their delight been in God as their chief good, the desire for concealment could not have possessed them. As it was with Adam and Eve, so it has been with all their descendants. Many a proverb expresses that general truth. "The stream cannot rise higher than the fountain." "Men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles." "Like begets like." The parent stock of the human family must send forth scions of its own nature. The hearts and lives of all the unregenerate say to the Almighty, "Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways" (Job 21:14).

The natural center of unfallen man's soul for both its rest and delight was the One who gave him being. Therefore David said, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul" (Psa 116:7). But sin has caused men to "draw back" from Him, "departing from the living God" (Heb 10:38; 3:12). God was not only to be the delightful portion of the one whom He had made in His image, but also the ultimate end of all man's motives and actions as he aimed to glorify and please Him in all things. But man forsook "the fountain of living waters" (Jer 2:13), the infinite and perpetual spring of comfort and joy. And now the inclinations and lusts of man's nature are wholly removed from God, anything and everything being more agreeable to him than He who is the sum of all excellence. Man makes the things of time and sense his chief good, and the pleasing of himself his supreme end. That is why his affections are termed "ungodly lusts" (Jude 18)—they turn man away from God. Man has no relish for His holiness, no desire for fellowship with Him, no wish to retain Him in his thoughts.

But what has just been pointed out (the aversion of our affections from God) is only the negative phase. The positive is the conversion of the affections to other things. Thus God charged Israel, "My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" nor give them any satisfaction (Jer 2:13). All the concern of the natural man is how to live at ease; not how to honor and enjoy God. He observes "lying vanities" and forsakes his own mercy (Jonah 2:8). All his expectations are disappointments, empty vanities. Man is deceived by a vain prospect, and the outcome is vexation of spirit, because of frustration. As the love of God shed abroad in the hearts of the redeemed does not seek its own good (I Cor 13:5), so self-love does nothing but that: "They all look to their own way, every one for his gain" (Isa 56:11).

Not only are the desires of the unregenerate turned away from God to the creature, but they are greedy, excessive. Thus we read of "inordinate affections" (Col 3:5), which indicate both excess and irregularity, a spirit of gluttony and unmitigated craving for things contrary to God, a "lust after evil things" (I Cor 10:6). We see here two sins: intemperance and "pleasure in unrighteousness" (II Thess 2:12). The body is esteemed above the soul, for all the efforts of the natural man are directed to making provision to fulfill the lusts of the flesh; his immortal spirit is little thought of and still less cared for. When things go well for him, he says, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry" (Luke 12:19). His thoughts do not rise to a higher and future life. He is more concerned with the clothing and adorning of the outward man than with the cultivation of a meek and quiet spirit, which is of great value in the sight of God (I Peter 3:4). Earth is preferred before heaven, things of time before eternity. Though death and the grave may put an end to all he has here much sooner than he imagines, yet his heart is so set on his possessions that he will not be diverted from them.

Thus it is that the affections, which at the beginning were the servants of reason, now occupy the throne. That which is the glory of human nature—elevating it above the beasts of the field—is turned here and there by the rude rabble of our passions. God placed in man an instinct for happiness, so that he could find it in Himself; but now that instinct gropes in the dust and snatches at every vanity. The counsels and contrivances of the mind are engaged in the accomplishment of man's carnal desires. Not only have his affections no relish for spiritual things, but they are strongly prejudiced against them, for they run counter to the gratifying of his corrupt nature. His desires are set on more wealth, more worldly honor and power, more fleshly merriment; and because the gospel contains no promise of such things it is despised. Because it inculcates holiness, mortifying of the flesh, separation from the world, resisting the devil, the gospel is most unwelcome to him. To turn the affections away from those material and temporal things which they have made their chief good, and to turn them to unseen spiritual and eternal things, alienates the carnal mind against the gospel, for it offers nothing attractive to the natural man in place of those idols on which his heart centers. To renounce his own righteousness and be dependent on that of Another is equally distasteful to his pride.

The affections are alienated from and opposed to not only the holy requirements of the gospel, but also its mystery. That mystery is what the Scriptures term the hidden wisdom of God, which the natural man not only fails to admire and adore, but regards with contempt. He looks on all of its declarations as empty and unintelligible notions. This prejudice has prevailed among the wise and learned of this world in all ages. The wisdom of God seems foolishness to all who are puffed up by pride in their own intelligence, and what seems foolishness to them is despised and scorned. That which is related to faith rather than reason is unpalatable. Not to trust in their own understanding but in the Lord is most difficult for those of towering intellect. To set aside their own ideas, forsake their thoughts (Isa 55:7) and become as "little children," and to be told they shall never enter the kingdom of heaven unless they do all this, is most abhorrent to them. No small part of man's depravity consists in his readiness to embrace anti-God prejudices and to tenaciously adhere to them, with total lack of power to extricate himself from them.

The disordered state of the affections is seen in the fact that the actions of the natural man are regulated far more by his senses than by his reason. His conduct consists principally in responding to the clamoring of his desires rather than to the dictates of reason. The tendencies of children swiftly turn to any corrupting diversion, but are slow to respond to any improving exercise. They can scarcely be restrained from the one; they have to be compelled to do the other. That the affections are turned away from God is made clear every time His will crosses our desires. This disease appears too in the objects on which the different affections are placed. Instead of love being set on God, it is centered on the world, and dotes on idols. Instead of hatred being directed against sin, it is opposed to holiness. Instead of joy finding its delight in spiritual things, it wastes itself on things which soon pall. Instead of fear being actuated by the displeasure of the Lord, it dreads more the frowns of our fellowmen. If there is grief, it is for the thwarting of our pleasures and hopes, rather than over our waywardness. If there is pity, it is exercised on self, rather than on the sufferings of others.

The very first stirring of our lusts is itself *evil*. The passions or lusts are those natural and unrestrained motives of the creature for the advancement of its nature, inclining to those things which promote its good, and avoiding those which are harmful. They are to the soul what wings are to the bird and sails to the ship. Desire, always in pursuit of satisfaction, must be regulated by right reason. But reason has been dethroned and man's passions and inclinations are lawless; therefore their earliest stirrings after forbidden objects are essentially evil. This was, as Matthew 5 shows, denied by the rabbis, who restricted sin to open and outward transgression. But our Lord declared that unwarrantable anger against another was incipient murder, that to look on a woman with lust was a breach of the seventh commandment, that impure thoughts and wanton imaginations were nothing less than adultery. Hence Scripture speaks of "deceitful lusts" (Eph 4:22), "foolish and hurtful lusts" (I Tim 6:9), "worldly lusts" (Titus 2:12), "fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (I Pet 2:11), "ungodly lusts" (Jude 18).

The very first stirring of desire after anything evil, the slightest irregularity in the motives of the soul, is *sin*. This is clear from the universal command "Thou shalt not covet," that is, hanker after anything which God has prohibited. This irregular and evil longing is called "concupiscence" in Romans 7:8, by which the apostle meant mental as well as sensual desire. The Greek word is usually rendered "lust"; in I Thessalonians 4:5 it is found in an intensified form: "the lust of concupiscence." These lustings of the soul are its initial motions, often unsuspected by ourselves, which precede the consent of the mind, and are designated "evil concupiscence" (Col 3:5). They are the seeds from which our evil works spring, the original stirrings of our indwelling corruption. They are condemned by the law of God, for the tenth commandment forbids the first outgoings of the affections after what belongs to another. That incipient longing, *before* the approbation of the mind is obtained, is sinful, and needs to be confessed to God. Genesis 6:5 declares of fallen man that "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart" is evil, for sins even in their embryonic stage defile the soul, being contrary to that purity which the holiness of God requires.

The Council of Trent denied that the original movement of the soul tending to evil is in itself sinful, stating that it only becomes so when it is consented or yielded to. Now it is freely confessed by all sound Calvinists that the mind's entertaining of the first evil desire is a further degree of sin, and that the actual assent to the desire is yet more heinous; but they emphatically contend that the *original impulse* is also evil in the sight of God. If the original impulse is innocent per se, how could its gratification be sinful? Motives and excitements do not undergo any change in their essential nature in consequence of their being humored or encouraged. It cannot be wrong to respond to innocent impulses. The Lord Jesus teaches us to judge the tree by its fruit; if the fruit is corrupt, so too is the tree which bears it.

In Romans 7:7 the term is actually rendered sin: "I had not known *sin*, but by the law: for I had not known *lust*, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." Here, then, sin and lust are used interchangeably; any inward nonconformity to the law is sinful. Paul was made aware of that fact when the commandment was applied to him in power—as the sun shining on refuse draws forth its stench. Men may deny that the very *desire* for forbidden objects is culpable, but Scripture affirms that even imaginations are the evil buds of wickedness, for they are contrary to that rectitude of heart which the law requires. Note how that terrible list of things which Christ enumerated as issuing from the heart of fallen man is headed with "evil thoughts" (Matt 15:19). We cannot conceive of any inclination or proneness to sin in an absolutely holy being. Certainly there was none in the Lord Jesus: "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me" (John 14:30). There was nothing in Christ that was capable of responding to Satan's vile solicitations, no movement of His appetites or affections of which he could take advantage. Christ was inclined only to what is good.

"For when we were in the flesh [*i.e.*, while Christians were in their unregenerate state], the motions of sins [literally, the affections of sin, or the beginnings of our passions], which were [aggravated] by the law, did work in our members [the faculties of the soul as well as of the body] to bring forth fruit unto death" (Rom 7:5). Those "affections of sin" are the filthy streams which issue from the polluted fountain of our hearts. They are the first stirrings of our fallen nature which precede the overt acts of transgression. They are the unlawful movements of our desire prior to the studied and deliberate thoughts of the mind after sin. "But sin [indwelling corruption], taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence" or "evil lustings" (Rom 7:8). Note that word "wrought in me": there was a polluted disposition or evil propensity at work, distinct from the deeds which it produced. Indwelling sin is a powerful principle, constantly exercising a bad influence, stimulating unholy affections, stirring to avarice, enmity, malice and countless other evils.

The popular idea which now prevails is that nothing is sinful except an open and outward transgression. Such a concept falls far short of the searching and humbling teaching of Holy Writ. It affirms that the source of all temptation lies within fallen man himself. The depravity of his own heart induces him to listen to the devil or be influenced by the profligacy of others. If this were not so, no external solicitations to wrongdoing would have any force, for there would be nothing within man for them to excite, nothing to which those solicitations correspond or over which they could exert any power. An evil example would be rejected with abhorrence if we were pure within. There must be an unsatisfied lust to which temptation from without appeals. Where there is no desire for food, a well-spread table does not allure. If there is no love of acquisition, gold cannot attract the heart. In every instance the force of temptation lies in some propensity of our fallen nature.

The uniqueness of the Bible lies in its exalted spirituality, insisting that any inward bias, the least gravitation of the soul from God and His will, is sinful and culpable, whether or not it is carried into action. It reveals that the first stirring of sin itself is to draw away the soul from what it ought to be fixed upon, by an irregular craving for some foreign object which appears delightful. When our native corruptions are invited by something external which promises pleasure or profit, and the passions are attracted by it, then temptation begins, and the heart is drawn out after it. Since fallen man is influenced most by his lusts, they sway both his mind and his will. So powerful are they that they rule his whole soul: "I see another *law* in my members" (Rom 7:23). It is an imperious law, dominating the entire man. It is because their lusts are so violent that men are so mad upon sinning: "They...weary themselves to commit iniquity" (Jer 9:5).

James 1:14,15 traces the origin of all our sinning: "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished bringeth forth death." Those words show that sin encroaches on the spirit by degrees; they describe the several stages before it is consummated in the outward act. They reveal that the procreating cause of all sin lies in the lusts of every man's soul; he has within himself both the food and fuel for it. Goodwin declared: "You can never come to see how deeply and how abominably corrupt creatures you are, until God opens your eyes to see your lusts." The old man is "corrupt *according to* the deceitful lusts" (Eph 4:22). Lust is both the womb and the root of all wickedness on earth. The apostle to God's people spoke of "having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (II Peter 1:4). "The corruption": that wasting destroying blight which is on all mankind. "Which is in the world": like poison in the cup, like dry rot in wood, like an epidemic in the

air—inherent, ineradicable. It taints every part of man’s being, physical, mental and moral; it affects all his relations of life, whether in the family, society or the State.

“Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust.” When men are tempted they usually try to place the onus on God, the devil, or their fellowmen; actually the blame rests entirely on themselves. First, their affections are removed from what is good and they are incited to wrongful conduct by their corrupt inclinations, attracted to the bait which Satan or the world dangles before them. “Lust” here signifies a yearning for, or longing to obtain, something. And it is so strong that it draws the soul after a forbidden object. The Greek word for “drawn away” means forcibly impelled. The impetuous violence of the desire which covets some sensual or worldly thing demands gratification. This is nothing but a species of self-will, a hankering after what God has not granted, rising from discontent with our present condition or position. Even though that longing is a fleeting and involuntary one, perhaps against our best judgment, nevertheless it is sinful and, when allowed, produces yet deeper guilt.

“And enticed”: The drawing away is because of the irregularity and vehemence of the craving; the enticement is from the object contemplated. But that very allurements is something for which we are to blame. It is because we fail to resist, hate and reject the first rising of unlawful desire, but instead entertain and encourage it, that the bait appears so attractive. The temptation promises pleasure or profit, which shows “the deceitfulness of sin” (Heb 3:13). All this beguiles us. Then wickedness is sweet in our mouth, and we hide it under our tongue (Job 20:12). “Then when lust hath conceived”: Anticipated delight is cherished, and the mind fully consents. The sinful deed is now present in embryo, and the thoughts are busied in contriving ways and means of gratification. “It bringeth forth sin” by a decree of the will. What was previously contemplated is now actually perpetuated. Manton said: “Sin knows no mother but our own heart.” “And sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death”: We pay its wages and reap what was planted, damnation being the ultimate outcome. This is the progress of sin within us, and these are its degrees of enormity.

III. Corrupted Conscience

If there is one faculty of man’s soul which might be thought to have retained the original image of God on it, it is surely the conscience. Such a view has indeed been widely held. Not a few of the most renowned philosophers and moralists have contended that conscience is nothing less than the divine voice itself speaking in the innermost part of our being. Without minimizing the great importance and value of this internal monitor, either in its office or in its operations, it must be emphatically declared that such theorists err, that even this faculty has not escaped from the common ruin of our entire beings. This is evident from the plain teaching of God’s Word. Scripture speaks of a “weak conscience” (I Cor 8:12), of men “having their conscience seared with a hot iron” (I Tim 4:2). It says that their “conscience is defiled” (Titus 1:15), that they have “an evil conscience” (Heb 10:22). Let us examine the point more closely.

Those who affirm that there is something essentially good in the natural man insist that his conscience is an enemy to evil and a friend to holiness. They stress the fact that the conscience produces an inward conviction against wrongdoing, a conflict in the heart over sin, a reluctance to commit it. They call attention to Pharaoh’s acknowledgment of sin (Exo 10:16), and to Darius’ being “sorely displeased with himself” for his unjust act in condemning Daniel to be thrown into the lions’s den (Dan 6:14). Some have even gone so far as to affirm that the opposition to greater and grosser crimes (which is found at first in all men) differs little or not at all from that conflict between the flesh and the spirit described in Romans 7:21-23. But such a sophistry is easily refuted. In the first place, while it is true that fallen man possesses a general notion of right and wrong, and is able in some instances to distinguish between good and evil, yet while he remains unregenerate that moral instinct never causes him to truly delight in the former or to really abhor the latter. In whatever measure he may approve of good or disapprove of evil, it is from no consideration for God.

Conscience is only able to work according to the light it has; and since the natural man cannot discern spiritual things (I Cor 2:14), it is useless in respect to them. How feeble is its light! It is more like the glimmer of a candle than the rays of the sun—merely sufficient to make the darkness visible. Owing to the darkened condition of the understanding, the conscience is fearfully ignorant. When it does discover that which is adverse, it indicates it feebly and ineffectually. Instead of directing the senses, it mostly confuses. How true this is in the case of the uncivilized. Conscience gives them a sense of guilt and then puts them to practicing the most abominable and often inhuman rites. It has induced them to invent and propagate the most impious misrepresentations of Deity. As a salve to their conscience, they often make the very objects of their worship the precedents and patrons of their favorite vices. The fact is that conscience is so sadly defective that it is unable to perform its duty until God enlightens, awakens and renews it.

Its *operations* are equally faulty. Not only is conscience defective in vision but its voice is very weak. How strongly it ought to upbraid us for our shocking ingratitude to our great Benefactor! How loudly it should remonstrate against the

stupid neglect of our spiritual interests and eternal welfare. Yet it does neither the one nor the other. Though it offers some checks on outward and gross sins, it makes no resistance to the subtler secret workings of indwelling corruption. If it prompts to the performance of duty, it ignores the most important and spiritual part of that duty. It may be uneasy if we fail to spend the usual amount of time each day in private prayer, but it is little concerned about our reverence, humility, faith and fervor in prayer. Those in Malachi's day were guilty of offering God defective sacrifices, yet conscience never troubled them about it (Mal 1:7-8). Conscience may be scrupulous in carrying out the precepts of men or our personal inclinations, yet utterly neglect those things which the Lord has commanded; like the Pharisees who would not eat food while their hands remained ceremonially unwashed, yet disregarded what God had commanded (Mark 7:6-9).

Conscience is woefully *partial*, disregarding favorite sins and excusing those which most besiege us. All such attempts to excuse our faults are founded on ignorance of God, of ourselves, of our duty. Otherwise conscience would bring in the verdict of guilty. Conscience often joins with our lusts to encourage a wicked deed. Saul's conscience told him not to offer sacrifice till Samuel came, yet to please the people and prevent them from deserting him he did so. And when that servant of God reproved him, the king tried to justify his offense by saying that the Philistines were gathered together against Israel, and that he dared not attack them before calling on God: "I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering" (I Sam 13:8-12). Conscience will strain to find some consideration with which to appease itself and approve of the evil act. Even when rebuking certain sins, it will find motives and discover inducements to them. Thus, when Herod was about to commit the dastardly murder of John the Baptist, which was against his convictions, his conscience came to his aid and urged him forward by impressing on him that he must not violate the oath which he had taken before others (Mark 6:26).

Conscience often ignores great sins while condoning lesser ones, as Saul was hard upon the Israelites for a breach of the ceremonial law (I Sam 14:33) but made no scruple of killing eighty-five of the Lord's priests. Conscience will even devise arguments which favor the most outrageous acts; thus it is not only like a corrupt lawyer pleading an evil cause, but like a corrupt judge justifying the wicked. Those who clamored for the crucifixion of Christ did so under the pretext of its being orderly and necessary: "We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God" (John 19:7). Little wonder that the Lord says of men that they "call evil good, and good evil;...put darkness for light, and light for darkness" (Isa 5:20). Conscience never moves the natural man to perform duties out of gratitude and thankfulness to God. It never convicts him of the heavy guilt of Adam's offense which is lying upon his soul, nor of lack of faith in Christ. It allows sinners to sleep in peace in their awful unbelief. But theirs is not a sound and solid peace, for there is no ground for it; rather it is the false security of ignorance. Says God of them, "They consider not in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness" (Hosea 7:2).

The accusations of conscience are ineffectual, for they produce no good fruit, yielding neither meekness, humility nor genuine repentance, but rather a dread of God as a harsh Judge or hatred of Him as an inexorable enemy. Not only are its accusations ineffectual, but often they are quite erroneous. Because of the darkness upon the understanding, the moral perception of the natural man greatly errs. As Thomas Boston said of the corrupt conscience, "So it is often found like a mad and furious horse, which violently runs down himself, his rider, and all that come in his way." A fearful example of that appears in our Lord's prediction in John 16:2 which received repeated fulfillment in the Acts: "They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." In like manner Saul of Tarsus after his conversion acknowledged: "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts 26:9). The unrenewed conscience is a most unreliable guide.

Even when the conscience of the unregenerate is awakened by the immediate hand of God and is struck with deep and painful conviction of sin, far from its moving the soul to seek the mercy of God through the Mediator, it fills him with futility and dismay. As Job 6:4 declares, when the arrows of the Almighty strike a man, their poison drinks up his spirit as the terrors of God set themselves to war against him. Formerly this man may have gone to great pains to stifle the accusations of his inward judge, but now he cannot. Instead, conscience rages and roars, putting the whole man in dreadful consternation, as he is terrified by a sense of the wrath of a holy God and the fiery indignation which shall devour His adversaries. This fills him with such horror and despair that instead of turning to the Lord he tries to flee from Him. Thus it was in the case of Judas who, when he was made to realize the awful gravity of his vile deed, went out and hanged himself. That the guilt of sin within the natural man causes him to turn *from* rather than *to* Christ was demonstrated by the Pharisees in John 8:9. They, "being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one."

IV. Disabled Will

The will is not the lord but the servant of the other faculties executing the strongest conviction of the mind or the most imperious command of our lusts, for there can be but one dominating influence in the will at one and the same time. Originally the excellence of man's will consisted in following the guidance of right reason and submitting to the influence of proper authority. But in Eden man's will rejected the former and rebelled against the latter, and in consequence of the fall his will has ever since been under the control of an understanding which prefers darkness to light and of affections which crave evil rather than good. Thus the fleeting pleasures of sense and the puny interests of time excite our wishes, while the lasting delights of godliness and the riches of immortality receive little or no attention. The will of the natural man is biased by his corruption, for his inclinations gravitate in the opposite direction from his duty; therefore he is in complete bondage to sin, impelled by his lusts. The unregenerate are not merely unwilling to seek after holiness; they inveterately hate it.

Since the will turned traitor to God and entered the service of Satan, it has been completely paralyzed toward good. Said the Saviour, "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him" (John 6:44). And why is it that man cannot come to Christ by his own natural powers? Because not only has he no inclination to do so, but the Saviour repels him; His yoke is unwelcome, His sceptre repulsive. In connection with the spiritual things the condition of the will is like that of the woman in Luke 13:11 who "was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself." If such is the case, then how can man be said to act voluntarily? Because he freely chooses the evil, and that because "the soul of the wicked *desireth* evil" (Prov 21:10), always carrying out that desire except when prevented by divine restraint. Man is the slave of his corruption, like a wild colt; from earliest childhood he is averse to restraint. The will of man is uniformly rebellious against God. When Providence thwarts his desires, instead of bowing in humble resignation, he frets with disquietude and acts like a wild bull in a net. Only the Son can make him "free" (John 8:36), for there is "liberty" only where His Spirit is (II Cor 3:17).

Here, then, are the ramifications of human depravity. The fall has blinded man's mind, hardened his heart, disordered his affections, corrupted his conscience, disabled his will, so that there is "no soundness" in him (Isa 1:6), "no good thing" in him (Rom 7:18).

(Taken from A.W. Pink's book *The Doctrine of Human Depravity*, available from Chapel Library.)

A ROBBERY COMMITTED, AND RESTITUTION MADE, BOTH TO GOD AND MAN.

Ebenezer Erskine

"Then I restored that which I took not away."—Psalm 69:4

It is abundantly plain, that there are several passages in this psalm applied unto Christ in the scriptures of the New Testament; particularly that in the 9th verse of the psalm, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." We find it applied to Christ, John 2:17; and likewise that immediately following, "The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me," Romans 15:3; so likewise in the 21st verse, "They gave me also gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink," applied to Christ, Matthew 27:48, and Mark 15:23. But I need go no further to prove this, than the first word of the verse where my text lies, "They hated me without cause," Christ applies it to himself, in John 15:25. We find our Lord here, in the verse where my text lies, is complaining of his enemies; he complains of their causeless hatred in the first clause of the verse, "They hate me without a cause;" he complains of their multitude, "They are more than the hairs of mine head;" he complains of their implacable cruelty, "They that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty." Now our blessed Lord is thus treated by the world, whom he came to save. When there is such a powerful combination of hell and earth against him, one would have been ready to think, that he would have stopped, and gone no further; but he did not faint, nor was he discouraged, for all the opposition that was made against him; for you see, in the word I have read, what he was doing for lost sinners, when he was meeting with harsh entertainment from them. Then, even then, says he, I restored that which I took not away.

In which words you may notice these following particulars. 1. You have here a robbery disclaimed; a robbery was committed, but it is disclaimed by the Son of God; I took not away. There was something taken from God, and from man; by whom it is not said, but it is easy to say, that surely an enemy did it.

But then, 2. We have a restitution made of that robbery that was committed: I restored, saith Christ, I restored what I took not away. The work of man's redemption is a restitution both unto God and unto man of what was taken away by sin and by Satan. When once the work of redemption is completed, there will be a restitution of all things; for we read, Acts 3:21, of the "restitution of all things."

Again, 3. We have an account of the person restoring. Who made the restitution? It was I, saith the Lord; I restored what I took not away. I who speak in righteousness, and who am mighty to save, I the child born, and the son given to the sons of men, whose name is "Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, and the Prince of peace"; I, even I restored what I took not away.

Again, 4. You have the voluntariness and frankness of the deed. No man is obliged to make restitution of what is taken away by another, unless he does it of his own accord. Well, says Christ, though I took it not away, yet I made restitution of the robbery and stealth that was committed; I engaged to do it in the council of peace, "Lo, I come: I delight to do thy will," etc.

Again, 5. We have here the time when our glorious Immanuel made this restitution of what he took not away. It was, Then I restored what, etc., when his enemies were destroying him; when they were robbing him of his name, and robbing him of his very life, he restored what was taken away by robbery from men. You will see how low our blessed Lord descended to make this restitution, and when it was; it was, in the first verse, when the waters of God's wrath were coming into his soul, even then, says he, I restored that which I took not away. Now, from the words thus briefly opened, the doctrine that I take notice of is shortly this.

"That it was the great design of the Son of God, when he descended into a state of humiliation here, in this lower world, to make restitution both unto God and unto man, of what he never took away." For as there was a robbery committed upon God and upon man by sin and Satan; so our glorious Redeemer, makes a restitution of the stolen goods, he restores both to God what was his due, and unto man what he had lost.

Now, in the prosecution of this doctrine, if time and strength would allow, the method that I propose is,

- I. To premise two or three things for clearing of the way.
- II. To inquire into the stolen goods, what it was that was taken away both from God and man.
- III. I would make it appear that our glorious Immanuel, makes restitution of what was taken away both from God and man; he restores unto God his due, and unto man his loss.
- IV. I would shew when it was that our Lord did this; for it is said here, Then I restored.
- V. I would give the reasons why Christ made this restitution, when he was under no manner of obligation to it, but his own free will, And then,
- VI. Lastly, I would make some application of the whole.

I. The first thing proposed is, to premise two or three things for clearing of the way. For clearing of it you would consider,

1. That when God made man, he made him a rich man; he bestowed all manner of goods upon him, that were necessary to make him live comfortably here, and to make him eternally happy hereafter.

2. You would consider, that Satan, by this time, having fallen, like a star, from heaven to earth, when he lighted upon this world, upon this earth, he presently saw man standing and acting in the capacity of God's viceroy, bearing his image, and having the whole creation in subjection to him. This filled the enemy with envy, and therefore he enters into a resolution, if it were possible, to commit a robbery upon man, and to strike at God's sovereignty through man's side and accordingly,

3. Satan prevailed upon our first parents, and beguiled them into an eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which God had discharged them to eat upon the pain of death; and thereby the pact betwixt God and man (I mean the covenant of works) was broken.

4. The covenant of works being broken, and man having entered into a rebellion against God with the devil, he justly forfeited all the spiritual and temporal goods that God bestowed upon him, and likewise lost his title to a happy eternity, and became the enemy's vassal; and thus the enemy robbed him of all the goods that God bestowed upon him.

5. Lastly, The eternal Son of God having a delight in the sons of men, and beholding, them in this miserable plight, he enters upon a resolution that he will take on man's nature as a coat of mail, and that he will in man's nature be avenged upon that serpent that hath beguiled our first parents, and spoiled them of their patrimony. And accordingly, in the fullness of time, he comes, and is manifested to destroy the works of the devil, and to recover all the stolen goods; he spoiled principalities and powers, and triumphed over them in his cross, and then divides a portion with the great, and the spoil with the strong; and with a view to this, it is said in this text, Then I restored that which I took not away; And so I come to,

II. The second thing I proposed, and that was, to inquire a little into the robbery that was committed by sin and Satan, both upon God and upon man.

And, first, To begin with the robbery that was committed upon God. It was the devil's great aim by tempting man to sin against God, to rob God of his glory. God made all things for his glory, and for his pleasure they are and were created. The whole earth, before sin entered into it, was full of his glory; and whenever Adam opened his eyes, and looked abroad through the creation, he saw the glory of God sparkling, as it were, in every creature he cast his eyes upon. Well, the enemy's design was to despoil and rob God of his glory. There is a question put, Malachi 3:8, "Will a man rob God?" will a creature adventure to rob his Creator? And yet this wickedness is perpetrated. God is invaded, and his glory is in a great measure taken away, I mean his declarative glory, for it is impossible his essential glory can be invaded.

I will tell you of several things relative to the glory of God, which were attempted to be taken away, and quite obscured and sullied by the sin of man.

1. There was an attempt made to rob God of the glory of his sovereignty as the great Lord and Lawgiver of heaven and earth. Man, when he sinned against God, and broke the law in compliance with the motion of the enemy, what was the language of the deed? It was, "We ourselves are lords, and will come no more unto thee;" we will make our own will a law: "Let the Almighty depart from us: for we desire not the knowledge of his way."

2. There was an attempt to rob him of the glory of his wisdom. The wisdom of God was impeached by the sin of man as a piece of folly, namely, in giving a law to man, that was not worthy to be observed. Sirs, depend upon it, every sin you are guilty of, charges God with folly, and exalts the will and wisdom of the creature, above the will and wisdom of God expressed in this holy law. And what a capital crime is it for poor men to charge God with foolishness!

3. By sin there is an attempt to rob him of the glory of his power, in regard the sinner gives a defiance to the Almighty, and, upon the matter, says, he is not able to revenge his quarrel on us, the arm of his power is withered. That is the language of sin. And then,

4. There is a robbery upon God's holiness, which is one of the most orient and bright pearls of his crown. When the holy law is violated and transgressed, the language of that action is, God is like ourselves, he approves of our ways. Again.

5. There was an attack upon his justice, and a denying his rectoral power and equity. God says, "The soul that sinneth shall die, that he will by no means acquit the guilty." Well, but the language of sin is, "God will not require it," or he may be pleased or pacified with this or the other petty atonement.

Not to insist: there was a despising of God's goodness. God gave man a great estate; he gave him the whole earth, and would have given him the heavens also, if he had continued in his integrity; but yet all that goodness of God was trampled under foot by the sin of man.

Also, there was a denial of the faithfulness of God in the threatening that was denounced against the sin of man, "In the day that thou eatest of it, thou shalt surely die." But the language of sin is, God is not true to his word, he will not surely do it; said Satan, "Thou shalt not surely die." Thus you see there was an attempt made to rob God of the glory of all his perfections at once.

Secondly, Let us inquire a little into the goods that were stolen from man by sin and Satan. Here we may see a melancholy scene. The glory of the human nature was quite marred by sin. Man was made the top of the creation; but by sin he was brought below the very beasts that perish, so that, "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but my people know not me, saith the Lord; and they do not consider" their obligations to me.

Sin, it robbed man of his light and sight. You know what befell Samson when he was taken captive by his enemies, they put out his eyes; and so when we fell into the enemies hands, they put out our eyes, and all mankind have been born blind since that time. Again, sin hath robbed us of our very life, and laid us among the congregation of the dead. All mankind are a dead and putrefied company, “dead in trespasses and sins,” Ephesians 2:1. And then, sin hath robbed man of his liberty unto any thing that is spiritually good; and ever since we have become captives to the devil, the world, and our lusts.

Again, sin hath robbed us of our wisdom, and brought us to prefer folly to the wisdom of God. Every man by nature is playing the fool. Who but a fool would spend his money upon that which is not bread, and his labour upon that which profiteth not? Sin robbed us of our righteousness, and rendered us a company of guilty criminals before God, and brought us under the sentence of the broken law, condemned already, John 3:18. Sin robbed us of our beauty, of the beautiful image of God, consisting in holiness and conformity to the great Creator, and it hath brought the hue of hell upon all mankind, lying among the pots.

Again, sin has robbed us of our health. Man was a healthy creature both in soul and body before the entry of sin; but sin has robbed us of that, so that, “from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, there is no sound part about us.” Sin has robbed us of our peace, and set us at war with God, with ourselves, with one another, and at war with the whole creation. Sin has robbed us of our beautiful ornaments that God put upon us at our creation, and stript us naked, as it is said of Laodicea, Revelation 3:18. Sin has robbed us of our treasure, insomuch that we are become beggars, poor, and naked. In short, sin has robbed us of our God, so that we are become “without God in the world.” There is a robbery for you that cannot be paralleled! You see what was taken away from God and man, by the sin of man. I might likewise tell you that sin robbed man of that paradise of pleasure in which God set him at his creation. No sooner had man sinned through the instigation of Satan, that old serpent, but he was turned out of the garden of Eden, Genesis 3:24, and a flaming sword placed, that turned every way, to keep him from having access to the tree of life in the midst of the garden. Sin hath robbed us of heaven, and made us heirs of hell and wrath. In short, sin hath disordered and disjointed the whole creation. Whenever man sinned, there came such a load upon the earth, through the curse of God, that ever since the whole creation hath been crying in pain, seeking deliverance from that dead weight that hath been lying upon it. So that, I say, by the sin of man there is a robbery committed, there are goods stolen from God and man, and the good creatures of God.

III. The third thing proposed was, to make it appear that our glorious Immanuel makes a restitution of what was taken away both from God and from man. He restores unto God his due, and restores unto man his loss.

And, 1. He makes restitution of glory to God, and that in the highest measure and degree, as was intimated by the angels, at the nativity of our Lord, Luke 2:14. The first note of the song of the angels is, “Glory to God in the highest,” etc. It is just as if they had said, Glory hath been taken away from God, by the sin of the first Adam and his posterity; but now there is a higher revenue of glory to be brought in to the crown of heaven, than the whole creation in innocency could afford. Accordingly, our blessed Lord declares, when his work was finished, after he had gone through his course of humiliation, he comes to his Father, John 17:4, and he says, Now Father, “I have glorified thee on the earth.” Observe the phraseology, for there is something remarkable in it, “I have glorified thee on the earth:” the earth was the theater of rebellion where God was affronted, his law violated, and his sovereignty contemned; but, he says, “I have glorified thee on the earth,” where thou wast dishonoured. I ought to go through all the perfections of God, that were injured by the sin of man, and tell how Christ restores glory to every one of them.

He restores glory to the divine sovereignty, bowing his royal neck to take on the yoke of the law which we had broken. He was made of a woman, and made under the law, that he might magnify it, and so maintain the honour of the great Lawgiver. He restores glory likewise to the divine wisdom; for Christ himself, in his person and mediation, is just “the wisdom of God in a mystery,” even his “hidden wisdom, the manifold wisdom of God.” O Sirs! never were the treasures of divine wisdom and knowledge so much expended as in the person and mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And then, he restores glory likewise to the divine power; for Christ is “the power of God.” And when he went forth to the great work of man's redemption, he went forth armed with infinite power to manage it; therefore he is called “the arm of God, and the man of God's right-hand, whom he hath made strong for the purposes of his glory.” How gloriously was the power of God displayed, when he came from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength; spoiling principalities and powers, who had spoiled God in his glory, and man of all that was valuable unto him!

He restores glory to the holiness of God. This attribute, was injured by the sin of man, but its glory is restored by Christ; and there is such a brightness of divine holiness shines in the person and mediation of Christ, that when the Angels look

upon him, Isaiah 6, they are dazzled, they are overwhelmed, not being able to behold it, they cover themselves, and cry, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory."

And then, he restores glory to the divine justice; for in the work of man's redemption, justice gets a complete, and full satisfaction, till it cry, It is enough. And the justice of God manifested in the execution of the penalty of the law upon the Surety, is laid as the very foundation of the throne of grace, that we are called to come to for grace and mercy to help in the time of need, Psalm 89:14, "Justice and judgment are the habitation, or establishment, of thy throne," viz.—justice satisfied, and judgment executed upon the glorious Surety.

Again, he restores glory to the divine goodness. God was good to man, but man trampled it under foot: But Christ makes a higher display of the divine goodness than ever was seen by men or angels; for in his person, and mediation, and sufferings, the goodness of God breaks out like an ocean, in amazing streams of love, grace, and mercy. The love of God, O how does it shine in the giving his only begotten Son into the world! "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and gave his own Son to be a propitiation for our sins." And then for grace, grace is made to "reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." And for mercy, it is "built up for ever." Thus I say, there is a restitution of glory to the divine goodness.

And likewise there is a restitution of glory to the divine faithfulness. The faithfulness of God engaged in the penalty, was trode upon by man and the devil; but the faithfulness of God is maintained in the execution of that penalty threatened against man in the person of our glorious Immanuel: and not only so, but the faithfulness of God comes to be established in the new covenant "in the very heavens:" for all the promises come to be "yea and amen in Christ, to the glory of God." Thus you see, that Christ restores what he took not away from his Father; he restores "glory to God in the highest," which he never took away.

2. Let us see next what restitution he makes to man; for man was robbed of all that was valuable to him, either for time or eternity.

First, The human nature was debased by sin, and sunk below the beasts that perish. Well, but the Son of God comes and takes the human nature into a personal union with himself, and thereby exalts the human nature above the angelical nature: Hebrews 2:16, "Verily he took not on him the nature of angels: but he took on him the seed of Abraham." And, chapter 1:5, "Unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?" And see what follows, "When he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him." Thus the glory of the human nature is restored and advanced to a far brighter pinnacle of glory and honour, than when it stood in the first Adam before his fall, adorned with all its embroideries, in a state of innocency. O Sirs, look up and see your nature exalted, taken out of the dunghill, and set on the throne of God. The throne of God is called "the throne of the Lamb," because our nature is there in a personal union with the great God.

But this is not all: he not only restores the glory of the human nature; but, to all who believe in him, he restores to advantage all the losses we sustain, either by the sin of the First Adam, or our own personal transgression; as will appear by running over the particular losses mentioned upon the former head.

First, then, Did sin rob us of our sight and light, and leave us in darkness? Well, Christ makes a restitution of that; for he comes forth as the bright and morning star, to give light to the darkened world, which may make us all sing and say with Zacharias, Luke 1:78, "Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us." Psalm 118:27-29 "God is the Lord, which hath showed us light; bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar. Thou are my God, and I will praise thee; thou art my God, I will exalt thee. O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever."

Again, Hath sin robbed us of life, and left us among the congregation of the dead? Christ makes restitution of that; for he is "the resurrection and the life:" and having recovered life by his own death, John 14:19, He keeps it in his hand and heart, and binds up our life with his "Because I live, ye shall live also. Our life is hid with Christ in God."

Again, Did sin rob us of our liberty? Christ makes restitution of that; he buys our liberty at the hand of justice, and then takes the executioner and binds him, and spoils him of his power over the poor captive; and having purchased liberty, he goes forth and "proclaims liberty to the captives, and the opening the prison-doors to them that are bound."

Again, Did Satan and sin spoil us of our wisdom, insomuch that ever since we are infatuated, and like fools, spend our money for that which is not bread, and our labour for that which cannot profit us? Well, Christ restores wisdom unto fools and babes; he is "made of God unto us wisdom" and when we are determined to come to him, he makes us wiser than our teachers; wise to know the mysteries of the kingdom that are hid from the wise and prudent of the world, and revealed unto babes: "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven," etc.

And then again, Did sin spoil and rob us of our original righteousness? Christ makes restitution of that; for he himself is “the Lord our righteousness, and he was made sin for us, he who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

Did sin spoil us of the beautiful image of God? Christ makes restitution of that; for that very moment that a poor sinner looks unto him with the eye of faith, he gets the print of the second Adam drawn again upon his soul, and it is by beholding his glory that we are changed into the same image.

Did Satan and sin rob us of, and take away our health? Well, Christ, comes to make restitution of that: for he is the Physician of value, and there is no disease so obstinate as is able to stand the virtue and healing power of this Physician; so that, if we perish with our diseases, we need not do it with that word in our mouth, “Is there no balm in Gilead, and no physician there?”

Did Satan spoil us of our peace? Well, Christ makes restitution of that: for “he is our peace.” Peace on earth was one of the articles of the angels praise, “Peace on earth, and good will towards men.” Sin robbed us of our peace with God. Christ restores that; for “God is in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.” Did sin rob us of our peace of conscience? Christ restores that; “Peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you,” etc.

Did sin kindle a fire of war and of strife betwixt man and man? Well, when Christ comes with the sceptre of his power, he makes them beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; he makes the wolf dwell with the lamb, and the leopard lie down with the kid.

Did sin rob us of our ornaments? Christ restores these, he makes the King's daughter all glorious within; he brings us a far better garment, even the garment of salvation, and a robe of righteousness to adorn us.

Did sin take away our riches and treasures? Christ opens up a far better treasure, even unsearchable riches; and he tells us, that “riches are with him, yea, durable riches and righteousness.”

Did sin rob us of our God, and leave us without God in the World? Christ makes restitution of that; for what is Christ? He is Immanuel. And what is that? He is God with us. That may make our hearts rejoice indeed; our God is come back to us, and is saying, “I am the Lord thy God; I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” It is God in Christ that speaks in such a dialect to poor sinners. Thus you see, that Christ restores to man, what he took not away from him. I might enlarge much on this subject.

Sin robbed us of our title and charter to eternal life; whenever the covenant of works was broken, our charter was done. But Christ restores a better charter. Even the covenant of grace; he himself is “given for a covenant to the people.” and is the Alpha and Omega of the covenant; all the promises and blessings of it are “in him yea and amen.” The covenant of works was a frail covenant, a slippery security; but the covenant of grace, and the charter granted unto us in Christ, it is a lasting charter: Isaiah 54:10. “The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee.”

In short, Christ restores beauty and order again to the whole creation. Whenever man sinned, there fell such a dead weight upon the creation, that the whole creation was like to crumble to its original chaos; but the thing that prevented it was, the Son of God bought this earth as a theater, on which his love to sinners might be displayed; therefore he will uphold the theater till the scene be acted; and when it is acted, he will commit it to the flames; there is a word to that purpose, Isaiah 49:8, “I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages.” The theater of this earth was giving way under the weight of the wrath of God; but Christ being given as a covenant of the people, he upholds the earth and all things by the word of his power, as it is, Hebrews 1:3.

Thus much for the third thing, which was, to let you see how Christ makes restitution of these good things which he never took away from God or from man.

IV. The fourth thing proposed was, to inquire into the time when Christ did all this: when did he restore that which he took not away?

I shall not stay upon this; I pointed at it in the explication. I told you that it was in a state of humiliation that he made this restitution. I cannot stand to tell you of the several steps of his humiliation whereby he restored what he took not away. We have a summary description thereof, in that question of the Catechism, “Wherein did Christ's humiliation consist?” The answer is, “In his being born, and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of

this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross; in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time." By these steps of his humiliation, he brought about the blessed project of redemption. Then was it that he restored what he took not away: Galatians 4:4,5, "In the fullness of time, God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." But I do not stay upon this; I hasten forward.

V. The fifth thing proposed was, to inquire a little into the reasons of the doctrine. Why was it that our Lord restored what he took not away? Why did he restore these goods that sin and Satan took away both from God and from man? In answer to this, I only suggest these few particulars.

1. Christ made this restitution, because it was his Father's pleasure that he should do it: he did always these things that pleased his Father: "No man taketh my life from me [saith he], but I lay it down of myself. This commandment have I received of my Father."

2. He restored what he took not away, because it contributes very much to enhance his mediatorial glory. Genesis 14, there you read of what Abraham did, he armed his men and went in quest of the five kings that had plundered Sodom; he pursues them, takes them captives, and recovers the spoil, and restores what not he, but the enemy, had taken away: and this was much for Abraham's honour. So it is to the immortal honour of our glorious Immanuel, that he pursued, and spoiled principalities and powers, who had robbed God and man; and then restores unto both what they, not he, had taken away. Upon this account, "God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name." etc.

3. Christ restored what he took not away, out of regard that he had to the holy law of God. The holy law was violated, and the sovereignty of God in it was trod down: but Christ had a mind to maintain the dignity of the law, it being an emanation of the holiness of God, therefore he will restore a perfect obedience to the law, and bring in an everlasting righteousness that answers it to the full, that so a foundation may be thereby laid for our legal investiture in the privileges of children we had lost by sin.

4. Because his delights were with the sons of men. Sirs, Christ had a bride. And when he saw her in the devil's clutches, he arms himself with divine power, and rescues the bride: "He loved me, and gave himself for me." And then, Christ restores what he took not away, that so the glory of grace might be exalted in the salvation of lost sinners; and that none glory in themselves, but that they that glory may glory in the Lord. It is not we, but he only, that makes the restitution, and grace reigns to us through that restitution that he made.

5. And lastly, Christ restores what he took not away, that he might "still the enemy and the avenger," as the expression is, Psalm 8:2; "the enemy and the avenger," that is the devil. Sirs, when the devil robbed man, he thought the day was his own, and triumphed as if the world and the glory thereof were his own, and men led as captive prisoners. But Christ stills the enemy, he stills his boasting; for he spoils the spoilers, takes the prey from the mighty, and delivers the captives from the terrible.

VI. The sixth thing proposed was the Application.

1. Is it so, as you have been hearing, that Christ restores what he took not away? Then, hence see, what a generous Kinsman we have of him; he never took away any thing from us, and yet he restores all to the spoiling of his own soul, and pouring of it out unto death. O! how hath the kindness of God to men appeared! What reason have we to adore the achievements of our renowned Redeemer, who went forth conquering and to conquer!

2. This doctrine serves to let us see into the meaning of that word, Romans 8:3, "He condemned sin." Why, or how did he it? Why, sin is a robber, it committed a robbery on God and man; and is it not just that a robber should be condemned to die? Well, Christ condemns sin, and yet he saves the sinner: the sinner deserved to be condemned; but he manages the matter so dexterously that he kills sin, and preserves the sinner.

3. Hence see what a criminal correspondence it is that the generality of the children of men have with sin. It is dangerous to haunt and harbour robbers; and yet will you keep a robber in your bosom. Sin is a robber; and every time you sin, it is committing robbery upon God and your own souls; therefore do not harbour it. "Stand in awe, and sin not."

4. If sin be such a robber of God and man, then see how reasonable the command is, to crucify sin, and to mortify the deeds of the body, "Mortify the deeds of the body, crucify the flesh, with its affections and lust." Why crucify them? Why kill and destroy them? They are robbers. Therefore let us wage war against all manner of sin, whether within us or without

us; let us “resist even unto blood, striving against sin,” because sin is a robber and deprives us of all the good you are hearing of.

5. From this doctrine see what way Christ takes in order to carry on his mediatory work of making peace betwixt God and man. There was a robbery committed upon God and man; and unless there was a restitution to both parties, there could be no peace. Well, Christ restores what he took not away; he restores glory to God, happiness to man; and so he carries on his mediatory work; for when both parties have restitution, then there is peace. Christ makes an end of sin, for he is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.” And why takes he it away? It is, that so peace may be restored betwixt God and man, restitution being made to both.

6. From the doctrine we may likewise see, that the believer in Christ is the wisest man in the world, however the world may look upon him as a fool. Why? because he comes to Christ, and gets restitution of all the losses he suffered either by the sin of the first Adam or his own. No wonder he is a thriving man, because he gets his losses made up in Christ; for he comes, and out of his fullness receives grace for grace, and gets wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, from the Lord Jesus.

7. See the folly and madness of the sin of unbelief. The generality of the hearers of the gospel will not come to Christ to get restitution of what they lost by Adam and their own sin; John 5:40, “Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.” O what folly is this! If you had lost any of your worldly goods at the last rebellion, how readily would you seek restitution if it were to be had? And yet such fools are the most part of sinners under the gospel, that though Christ counsels, calls, and beseeches them to come and get restitution of their God, of their life, and all losses, yet they will not hear, Psalm 81:11, “My people would not hearken to my voice,” etc.

8. See the folly of the legalist, that goes about to make restitution to God, and to himself, of what was taken away by sin. The legalist, like the proud Pharisee, comes to God with his filthy rags, and thinks to please God with this and that obedience. But, O Sirs! consider that “by the works of the law no flesh living can be justified;” you will never repair your own losses, nor the dishonour you have done to God, but only by coming to Christ, who is “the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”

I should next improve the doctrine by an use of Trial. Try whether you have ever come by faith to a second Adam, and found in him a reparation of your losses by the sin and apostasy of the first Adam. They who find Christ himself, they have found all, for “Christ is all, and in all. All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; for ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s.” They who find him, they find the goodly pearl, a treasure of unsearchable riches; and therefore cannot but reckon all their losses made up to wonderful advantage. And if so, whatever appeared gain to you formerly, will be esteemed loss for Christ; yea, doubtless, you will count all but dung and loss for Christ, that you may know him, win him, and be found in him. You will be dead to the law, and the works of it, being married to a better husband, whose name, is “The Lord our righteousness;” for “in him shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.”

Again, if you have found reparation in Christ, you will wage a continual war with sin and Satan; you will resist the devil, resist even unto blood, striving against sin. These robbers, they never come but to spoil you of some good, whatever disguise they may appear in. And if you have received any love-tokens from the Lord on this occasion, you may lay your account with an attack; the pirates pursue and attack the ship with the richest cargo. Lastly, whenever the enemy has prevented and stripped you of your comforts, you will fly to Christ for restitution, saying, with David, “Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation,” for he it is who restores what he took not away.

I close with a word of Exhortation.

Sirs, I have a proclamation to issue forth in the name of the Lord Immanuel. Be it known unto men, by these presents, That whereas two great robbers have entered into the world, namely, sin and Satan, and have stolen away all the valuable goods which once pertained to Adam and his family, whereby they are all reduced to the utmost poverty and misery; it has pleased God the Father, from the love he bears to mankind-sinners, to send his only begotten Son into the world, to repair all their losses, and to restore what he took not away. Accordingly, the eternal Son of God hath come into the world, and having armed himself with the human nature and divine power, he hath gone forth and pursued the robbers, and taken Satan captive, and bruised his head, and destroyed that destroyer of mankind; he hath finished transgression, and made an end of sin, and hath brought in a robe of righteousness, and hath recovered all the goods that the robbers had taken away, all the goods and gear men lost; hath recovered them with wonderful advantage; and the goods are all in his hand, and he hath sent out us, who are his ambassadors, to cause all mankind to see what losses they have sustained; and whoever have

lost any thing, their God and their souls, heaven and happiness, he is willing to restore it to mankind, and that without any security; for he will do it without money and without price.

Come, and get your own again; for Christ hath received gifts for men, for the sons of men. O come, come, come, Sirs, and get from the glorious Restorer what you have lost, what you stand in need of, through time and eternity! O come and get your life, your God, and your souls again for a prey!

Since the rebellion commenced, many a man has lost very much; some have lost their land, some their houses, some their legs, and some their arms, and many their lives. And now, if the Duke of Cumberland, the King's son, should issue forth a proclamation, to every man to come and get his losses repaired, in his father's name, I believe you would not be shy to put in your name, and tell that you have lost this and that. Well, the Son of the King of Heaven, the great Jehovah, he hath all his Father's treasures in his hand, and he hath sent us to tell you to come and get your losses repaired. O Sirs, what are men's temporal losses in comparison with their soul losses! "What is a man profited, though he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Well, come and get your souls for a prey from the Son of God.

I might make use of many motives to persuade you. Pray you, consider only the goods you lost are in Christ's hand, and that they are in his hand that they may be restored again to you. He invites you to come, "Incline your ear, and come unto me." etc. He not only invites you, but counsels you, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire," that is, I counsel you to get your losses restored. He not only counsels you, but commands you, "This is his commandment, that ye believe in his Son," etc. He not only commands, but he promises; he gives all manner of security that your losses shall be made up, if you come to him for a reparation, Psalm 72:4, "He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy." Come then, poor and needy sinner. He is grieved to the heart when sinners will not come and get their losses repaired; he was grieved when Jerusalem would not be gathered as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings. I will tell you, many a man have got their losses repaired; and innumerable company have got restitution from him, Revelation 7:9, "I beheld, and lo, a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." Now, when others have come and got reparation, will not ye come and get reparation too?

O Sirs, consider what you are doing. Mind, there is no hope of reparation after death; but if you come for reparation, you must come now to the King's Son; therefore, "Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation."

Upon this last day of the feast, I cry to all mankind, if my voice could reach them, to come and get their losses repaired by the Son of God, who restores that which he took not away. Do not say, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and stand in need of nothing;" for I can assure you, that he who is infinitely wise, and knows you better than you do yourselves, declares, that you are "poor, miserable, wretched, blind, and naked," through the robbery that sin hath committed.

You say, I cannot get time to come, because of worldly business. But let me tell you, that your worldly business is but mere trifles in comparison with this; therefore make all other business but by-business in comparison with this one thing needful. Another says, I will get time enough afterwards. I will tell you, delays are dangerous; what know you, man, what a day may bring forth? Death may come, and then you are gone for ever through eternity. Another says, I am afraid the time is gone already, and that he will not make a reparation of my losses. No, Sirs, I will tell you, that while there is life there is hope, and the Son of God is at the back of your heart, crying, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: If any man [out of hell] hear my voice, and open to me, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

But O, you say, I fear my losses are irreparable. I will tell you, poor sinner, as broken a ship has come to land, as we use to say; as great sinners as you have got a reparation of their losses, and a full pardon to the boot. What think you of Manasseh, and Mary Magdalene, and Paul? The same hand that repaired their losses is ready to repair yours; "his hand is not shortened, that it cannot save," etc.

Another says, What if I be not among the number of the elect? I answer, You have nothing a-do with election; for "secret things belong unto the Lord, but that which is revealed unto us and our children." Election does not belong directly and immediately to the business of believing, but only things revealed: and if revealed things belong unto us, then put in your claim: for "the promise is to you and your seed."

You say, I am impotent, and cannot come. I answer, That was one of the losses Christ came to restore; "he gives strength to the weak, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength." You say, My will is an iron sinew, it will not answer. Answer. He that restores that which he took not away, offers to restore your good hearts and your will, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." Ezekiel 36:26, "I will take away the heart of stone, and give the heart of flesh."

Another says, I would fain come to get my losses repaired, but I think when I come to him he will frown me away. Do not think so; for he says, "Whosoever will come to me I will in no wise cast out." When he frowns upon you, and calls you a dog, be as the Syrophenician woman, do not give over, and you shall prevail. "Truth, Lord, I am a dog, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from the master's table;" the Lord repaired her losses, and granted her all the desires of her heart.

I should conclude with a word to believers, who have got their losses repaired by the glorious Immanuel. I only say two or three things to you by way of advice. (1) O sing praises to the blessed Restorer, "O my soul, bless the Lord, who hath redeemed thy life from destruction, and crowned thee with loving kindness and tender mercies," Psalm 103:1-4. (2) Whenever you meet with new losses, come back to the blessed Restorer. Satan will be about with you, he goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, and to take away any good you have got on this solemn occasion; but when the enemy has robbed you, I say, come back to Christ by faith, and you will find restitution again. Again, my advice to you is, O love the Lord with your heart, strength, and mind; let him have the strength and flower of your affection, lay nothing in the balance with him; and, as an evidence of your love, keep his commandments, walk worthy of the Lord, to all well pleasing; contend for the faith once delivered to the saints; study, with the church, to cause his name to be remembered to all generations, that the people may praise him for ever and ever, who restored what he took not away.

(This sermon available in a small booklet.)

