

## INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS CHAPTER 3

The story of this chapter is perhaps as sad a story (all things considered) as any we have in all the Bible. In the foregoing chapters we have had the pleasant view of the holiness and happiness of our first parents, the grace and favour of God, and the peace and beauty of the whole creation, all good, very good; but here the scene is altered. We have here an account of the sin and misery of our first parents, the wrath and curse of God against them, the peace of the creation disturbed, and its beauty stained and sullied, all bad, very bad.

"How has the gold become dim, and the most fine gold changed!"

O that our hearts were deeply affected with this record! For we are all nearly concerned in it; let it not be to us as a tale that is told. The general contents of this chapter we have #Ro 5:12,

"By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

More particularly, we have here,

I. The innocent tempted, #Ge 3:1-5.

II. The tempted transgressing, #Ge 3:6-8.

III. The transgressors arraigned, #Ge 3:9-10.

IV. Upon their arraignment, convicted, #Ge 3:11-13.

V. Upon their conviction, sentenced, #Ge 3:14-19.

VI. After sentence, reprieved, #Ge 3:20-21.

VII. Notwithstanding their reprieve, execution in part done, #Ge 3:22-24.

And were it not for the gracious intimations here given of redemption by the promised seed, they, and all their degenerate guilty race, would have been left to endless despair.

Ver. 1.

We have here an account of the temptation with which Satan assaulted our first parents, to draw them into sin, and which proved fatal to them. Here observe,

I. The tempter, and that was the devil, in the shape and likeness of a serpent.

1. It is certain it was the devil that beguiled Eve. The devil and Satan is the old serpent (#Re 12:9), a malignant spirit, by creation an angel of light and an immediate attendant upon God's throne, but by sin become an apostate from his first state and a rebel against God's crown and dignity. Multitudes of the angels fell; but this that attacked our first parents was surely the prince of the devils, the ring-leader in the rebellion: no sooner was he a sinner than he was a Satan, no sooner a traitor than a tempter, as one enraged against God and his glory and envious of man and his happiness. He knew he could not destroy man but by debauching him. Balaam could

not curse Israel, but he could tempt Israel, #Re 2:14. The game therefore which Satan had to play was to draw our first parents to sin, and so to separate between them and their God. Thus the devil was, from the beginning, a murderer, and the great mischief-maker. The whole race of mankind had here, as it were, but one neck, and at that Satan struck. The adversary and enemy is that wicked one.

2. It was the devil in the likeness of a serpent. Whether it was only the visible shape and appearance of a serpent (as some think those were of which we read, #Ex 7:12), or whether it was a real living serpent, actuated and possessed by the devil, is not certain: by God's permission it might be either. The devil chose to act his part in a serpent,

(1.) Because it is a specious creature, has a spotted dappled skin, and then went erect. Perhaps it was a flying serpent, which seemed to come from on high as a messenger from the upper world, one of the seraphim; for the fiery serpents were flying, #Isa 14:29. Many a dangerous temptation comes to us in gay fine colours that are but skin deep, and seems to come from above; for Satan can seem an angel of light. And,

(2.) Because it is a subtle creature; this is here taken notice of. Many instances are given of the subtlety of the serpent, both to do mischief and to secure himself in it when it is done. We are directed to be wise as serpents. But this serpent, as actuated by the devil, was no doubt more subtle than any other; for the devil, though he has lost the sanctity, retains the sagacity of an angel, and is wise to do evil. He knew of more advantage by making use of the serpent than we are aware of. Observe, There is not any thing by which the devil serves himself and his own interest more than by unsanctified subtlety. What Eve thought of this serpent speaking to her we are not likely to tell, when I believe she herself did not know what to think of it. At first, perhaps, she supposed it might be a good angel, and yet, afterwards, she might suspect something amiss. It is remarkable that the Gentile idolaters did many of them worship the devil in the shape and form of a serpent, thereby avowing their adherence to that apostate spirit, and wearing his colours.

II. The person tempted was the woman, now alone, and at a distance from her husband, but near the forbidden tree. It was the devil's subtlety,

1. To assault the weaker vessel with his temptations. Though perfect in her kind, yet we may suppose her inferior to Adam in knowledge, and strength, and presence of mind. Some think Eve received the command, not immediately from God, but at second hand by her husband, and therefore might the more easily be persuaded to discredit it.

2. It was his policy to enter into discourse with her when she was alone. Had she kept close to the side out of which she was lately taken, she would not have been so much exposed. There are many temptations, to which solitude gives great advantage; but the communion of saints contributes much to their strength and safety.

3. He took advantage by finding her near the forbidden tree, and probably gazing upon the fruit of it, only to satisfy her curiosity. Those that would not eat the forbidden fruit must not come near the forbidden tree. *Avoid it, pass not by it, #Pr 4:15.*

4. Satan tempted Eve, that by her he might tempt Adam; so he tempted Job by his wife, and Christ by Peter. It is his policy to send temptations by unsuspected hands, and theirs that have most interest in us and influence upon us.

III. The temptation itself, and the artificial management of it. We are often, in scripture,

told of our danger by the temptations of Satan, his *devices* (#2Co 2:11), his *depths* (#Re 2:24), his *wiles*, #Eph 6:11. The greatest instances we have of them are in his tempting of the two Adams, here, and Matthew 4. In this he prevailed, but in that he was baffled. What he spoke to them, of whom he had no hold by any corruption in them, he speaks in us by our own deceitful hearts and their carnal reasonings; this makes his assaults on us less discernible, but not less dangerous. That which the devil aimed at was to persuade Eve to cut forbidden fruit; and, to do this, he took the same method that he does still. He questioned whether it was a sin or no, #Ge 3:1. He denied that there was any danger in it, #Ge 3:4. He suggested much advantage by it, #Ge 3:5. And these are his common topics.

1. He questioned whether it was a sin or no to eat of this tree, and whether really the fruit of it was forbidden. Observe,

(1.) *He said to the woman, Yea, hath God said, You shall not eat?* The first word intimated something said before, introducing this, and with which it is connected, perhaps some discourse Eve had with herself, which Satan took hold of, and grafted this question upon. In the chain of thoughts one thing strangely brings in another, and perhaps something bad at last. Observe here, [1.] He does not discover his design at first, but puts a question which seemed innocent:

"I hear a piece of news, pray is it true? has God forbidden you to eat of this tree?"

Thus he would begin a discourse, and draw her into a parley. Those that would be safe have need to be suspicious, and shy of talking with the tempter.

[2.] He quotes the command fallaciously, as if it were a prohibition, not only of that tree, but of all. God had said, *Of every tree you may eat, except one*. He, by aggravating the exception, endeavours to invalidate the concession: *Hath God said, You shall not eat of every tree?* The divine law cannot be reproached unless it be first misrepresented.

[3.] He seems to speak it tauntingly, upbraiding the woman with her shyness of meddling with that tree; as if he had said,

"You are so nice and cautious, and so very precise, because God has said, You shall not eat."

The devil, as he is a liar, so he is a scoffer, from the beginning: and the scoffers of the last days are his children.

[4.] That which he aimed at in the first onset was to take off her sense of the obligation of the command.

"Surely you are mistaken, it cannot be that God should tie you out from this tree; he would not do so unreasonable a thing."

See here, That it is the subtlety of Satan to blemish the reputation of the divine law as uncertain or unreasonable, and so to draw people to sin; and that it is therefore our wisdom to keep up a firm belief of, and a high respect for, the command of God. Has God said,

"You shall not lie, nor take his name in vain, nor be drunk," &c.?

"Yes, I am sure he has, and it is well said, and by his grace I will abide by it, whatever the tempter suggests to the contrary."

(2.) In answer to this question the woman gives him a plain and full account of the law they were under, #Ge 3:2,3. Here observe,

[1.] It was her weakness to enter into discourse with the serpent. She might have perceived by his question that he had no good design, and should therefore have started back with a *Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence to me*. But her curiosity, and perhaps her surprise, to hear a serpent speak, led her into further talk with him. Note, It is a dangerous thing to treat with a temptation, which ought at first to be rejected with disdain and abhorrence. The garrison that sounds a parley is not far from being surrendered. Those that would be kept from harm must keep out of harm's way. See #Pr 14:7; 19:27.

[2.] It was her wisdom to take notice of the liberty God had granted them, in answer to his sly insinuation, as if God has put them into paradise only to tantalize them with the sight of fair but forbidden fruits.

"Yea," says she, "we may eat of the fruit of the trees, thanks to our Maker, we have plenty and variety enough allowed us."

Note, To prevent our being uneasy at the restraints of religion, it is good often to take a view of the liberties and comforts of it.

[3.] It was an instance of her resolution that she adhered to the command, and faithfully repeated it, as of unquestionable certainty:

"God hath said, I am confident he hath said it, You shall not eat of the fruit of this tree;"

and that which she adds, *Neither shall you touch it*, seems to have been with a good intention, not (as some think) tacitly to reflect upon the command as too strict (*Touch not, taste not and handle not*), but to make a fence about it:

"We must not eat, therefore we will not touch. It is forbidden in the highest degree, and the authority of the prohibition is sacred to us."

[4.] She seems a little to waver about the threatening, and is not so particular and faithful in the repetition of that as of the precept. God has said, *In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*; all she makes of that is, *Lest you die*. Note, Wavering faith and wavering resolutions give great advantage to the tempter.

2. He denies that there was any danger in it, insisting that, though it might be the transgressing of a precept, yet it would not be the incurring of a penalty: *You shall not surely die*, #Ge 3:4.

"You shall not dying die,"

so the word is, in direct contradiction to what God had said. Either,

(1.)

"It is not certain that you shall die," so some.

"It is not so sure as you are made to believe it is."

Thus Satan endeavours to shake that which he cannot overthrow, and invalidates the force of divine threatenings by questioning the certainty of them; and, when once it is supposed possible that there may be falsehood or fallacy in any word of God, a door is then opened to downright infidelity. Satan teaches men first to doubt and then to deny; he makes them sceptics first, and so by degrees makes them atheists. Or,

(2.)

"It is certain you shall not die,"

so others. He avers his contradiction with the same phrase of assurance that God had used in ratifying the threatening. He began to call the precept in question (#Ge 3:1), but, finding that the woman adhered to that, he quitted that battery, and made his second onset upon the threatening, where he perceived her to waver; for he is quick to spy all advantages, and to attack the wall where it is weakest: *You shall not surely die*. This was a lie, a downright lie; for,

[1.] It was contrary to the word of God, which we are sure is true. See #1Jo 2:21,27. It was such a lie as gave the lie to God himself.

[2.] It was contrary to his own knowledge. When he told them there was no danger in disobedience and rebellion he said that which he knew, by woeful experience, to be false. He had broken the law of his creation, and had found, to his cost, that he could not prosper in it; and yet he tells our first parents they shall not die. He concealed his own misery, that he might draw them into the like: thus he still deceives sinners into their own ruin. He tells them that, though they sin, they shall not die; and gains credit rather than God, who tells them, *The wages of sin is death*. Note, Hope of impunity is a great support to all iniquity, and impenitency in it. *I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my heart*, #De 29:19.

3. He promises them advantage by it, #Ge 3:5. Here he follows his blow, and it was a blow at the root, a fatal blow to the tree we are branches of. He not only would undertake that they should be no losers by it, thus binding himself to save them from harm; but (if they would be such fools as to venture upon the security of one that had himself become a bankrupt) he undertakes they shall be gainers by it, unspeakable gainers. He could not have persuaded them to run the hazard of ruining themselves if he had not suggested to them a great probability of bettering themselves.

(1.) He insinuates to them the great improvements they would make by eating of this fruit. And he suits the temptation to the pure state they were now in, proposing to them, not any carnal pleasures or gratifications, but intellectual delights and satisfactions. These were the baits with which he covered his hook.

[1.]

"*Your eyes shall be opened; you shall have much more of the power and pleasure of contemplation than now you have; you shall fetch a larger compass in your intellectual views, and see further into things than now you do.*"

He speaks as if now they were but dim-sighted, and short-sighted, in comparison of what they would be then.

[2.]

"You shall be as gods, as Elohim, mighty gods; not only omniscient, but omnipotent too;" or,

"You shall be as God himself, equal to him, rivals with him; you shall be sovereigns and no longer subjects, self-sufficient and no longer dependent."

A most absurd suggestion! As if it were possible for creatures of yesterday to be like their Creator that was from eternity.

[3.]

"You shall know *good and evil*, that is, every thing that is desirable to be known."

To support this part of the temptation, he abuses the name given to this tree: it was intended to teach the practical knowledge of good and evil, that is, of duty and disobedience; and it would prove the experimental knowledge of good and evil, that is, of happiness and misery. In these senses, the name of the tree was a warning to them not to eat of it; but he perverts the sense of it, and wrests it to their destruction, as if this tree would give them a speculative notional knowledge of the natures, kinds, and originals, of good and evil. And,

[4.] All this presently:

"*In the day you eat thereof* you will find a sudden and immediate change for the better."

Now in all these insinuations he aims to beget in them, *First*, Discontent with their present state, as if it were not so good as it might be, and should be. Note, No condition will of itself bring contentment, unless the mind be brought to it. Adam was not easy, no, not in paradise, nor the angels in their first state, #Jude 6. *Secondly*, Ambition of preferment, as if they were fit to be gods. Satan had ruined himself by desiring to be like the Most High (#Isa 14:14), and therefore seeks to infect our first parents with the same desire, that he might ruin them too.

(2.) He insinuates to them that God had no good design upon them, in forbidding them this fruit:

"*For God doth know* how much it will advance you; and therefore, in envy and ill-will to you, he hath forbidden it:"

as if he durst not let them eat of that tree because then they would know their own strength, and would not continue in an inferior state, but be able to cope with him; or as if he grudged them the honour and happiness to which their eating of that tree would prefer them. Now,

[1.] This was a great affront to God, and the highest indignity that could be done him, a reproach to his power, as if he feared his creatures, and much more a reproach to his goodness, as if he hated the work of his own hands and would not have those whom he has made to be made happy. Shall the best of men think it strange to be misrepresented and evil spoken of, when God himself is so? Satan, as he is the accuser of the brethren before God, so he accuses God before the brethren; thus he sows discord, and is the father of those that do so.

[2.] It was a most dangerous snare to our first parents, as it tended to alienate their

affections from God, and so to withdraw them from their allegiance to him. Thus still the devil draws people into his interest by suggesting to them hard thoughts of God, and false hopes of benefit and advantage by sin. Let us therefore, in opposition to him, always think well of God as the best good, and think ill of sin as the worst of evils: thus let us resist the devil, and he will flee from us.

Ver. 6.

Here we see what Eve's parley with the tempter ended in. Satan, at length, gains his point, and the strong-hold is taken by his wiles. God tried the obedience of our first parents by forbidding them the tree of knowledge, and Satan does, as it were, join issue with God, and in that very thing undertakes to seduce them into a transgression; and here we find how he prevailed, God permitting it for wise and holy ends.

I. We have here the inducements that moved them to transgress. The woman, being deceived by the tempter's artful management, was ringleader in the transgression, #1Ti 2:14. She was first in the fault; and it was the result of her consideration, or rather her inconsideration.

1. She saw no harm in this tree, more than in any of the rest. It was said of all the rest of the fruit trees with which the garden of Eden was planted that they were *pleasant to the sight, and good for food*, #Ge 2:9. Now, in her eye, this was like all the rest. It seemed as good for food as any of them, and she saw nothing in the colour of its fruit that threatened death or danger; it was as pleasant to the sight as any of them, and therefore,

"What hurt could it do them? Why should this be forbidden them rather than any of the rest?"

Note, When there is thought to be no more harm in forbidden fruit than in other fruit sin lies at the door, and Satan soon carries the day. Nay, perhaps it seemed to her to be better for food, more grateful to the taste, and more nourishing to the body, than any of the rest, and to her eye it was more pleasant than any. We are often betrayed into snares by an inordinate desire to have our senses gratified. Or, if it had nothing in it more inviting than the rest, yet it was the more coveted because it was prohibited. Whether it was so in her or not, we find that in us (that is, in our flesh, in our corrupt nature) there dwells a strange spirit of contradiction. *Nitimur in vetitum--We desire what is prohibited.*

2. She imagined more virtue in this tree than in any of the rest, that it was a tree not only not to be dreaded, but *to be desired to make one wise*, and therein excelling all the rest of the trees. This she saw, that is, she perceived and understood it by what the devil had said to her; and some think that she saw the serpent eat of that tree, and that he told her he thereby had gained the faculties of speech and reason, whence she inferred its power to make one wise, and was persuaded to think,

"If it made a brute creature rational, why might it not make a rational creature divine?"

See here how the desire of unnecessary knowledge, under the mistaken notion of wisdom, proves hurtful and destructive to many. Our first parents, who knew so much, did not know this--that they knew enough. Christ is a tree to be desired to make one wise, #Col 2:3; 1Co 1:30. Let us, by faith, feed upon him, that we may be wise to salvation. In the heavenly paradise, the tree of knowledge will not be a forbidden tree; for there we shall know as we are known. Let us therefore long to be there, and, in the mean time, not

exercise ourselves in things too high or too deep for us, nor covet to be wise above what is written.

II. The steps of the transgression, not steps upward, but downward towards the pit--steps that take hold on hell.

1. She saw. She should have turned away her eyes from beholding vanity; but she enters into temptation, by looking with pleasure on the forbidden fruit. Observe, A great deal of sin comes in at the eyes. At these windows Satan throws in those fiery darts which pierce and poison the heart. The eye affects the heart with guilt as well as grief. Let us therefore, with holy Job, make a covenant with our eyes, not to look on that which we are in danger of lusting after, #Pr 23:31; Mt 5:28. Let the fear of God be always to us for a covering of the eyes, #Ge 20:16.

2. She took. It was her own act and deed. The devil did not take it, and put it into her mouth, whether she would or no; but she herself took it. Satan may tempt, but he cannot force; may persuade us to cast ourselves down, but he cannot cast us down, #Mt 4:6. Eve's taking was stealing, like Achan's taking the accursed thing, taking that to which she had no right. Surely she took it with a trembling hand.

3. She did eat. Perhaps she did not intend, when she looked, to take, nor, when she took, to eat; but this was the result. Note, The way of sin is down-hill; a man cannot stop himself when he will. The beginning of it is as the breaking forth of water, to which it is hard to say,

"Hitherto thou shalt come and no further."

Therefore it is our wisdom to suppress the first emotions of sin, and to leave it off before it be meddled with. *Obsta principiis--Nip mischief in the bud.*

4. She gave also to her husband with her. It is probable that he was not with her when she was tempted (surely, if he had, he would have interposed to prevent the sin), but came to her when she had eaten, and was prevailed upon by her to eat likewise; for it is easier to learn that which is bad than to teach that which is good. She gave it to him, persuading him with the same arguments that the serpent had used with her, adding this to all the rest, that she herself had eaten of it, and found it so far from being deadly that it was extremely pleasant and grateful. *Stolen waters are sweet.* She gave it to him, under colour of kindness--she would not eat these delicious morsels alone; but really it was the greatest unkindness she could do him. Or perhaps she gave it to him that, if it should prove hurtful, he might share with her in the misery, which indeed looks strangely unkind, and yet may, without difficulty, be supposed to enter into the heart of one that had eaten forbidden fruit. Note, Those that have themselves done ill are commonly willing to draw in others to do the same. As was the devil, so was Eve, no sooner a sinner than a tempter.

5. He did eat, overcome by his wife's importunity. It is needless to ask,

"What would have been the consequence if Eve only had transgressed?"

The wisdom of God, we are sure, would have decided the difficulty, according to equity; but, alas! the case was not so; Adam also did eat.

"And what great harm if he did?"

say the corrupt and carnal reasonings of a vain mind. What harm! Why, this act involved disbelief of God's word, together with confidence in the devil's, discontent with his present state, pride in his own merits, and ambition of the honour which comes not from God, envy at God's perfections, and indulgence of the appetites of the body. In neglecting the tree of life of which he was allowed to eat, and eating of the tree of knowledge which was forbidden, he plainly showed a contempt of the favours God had bestowed on him, and a preference given to those God did not see fit for him. He would be both his own carver and his own master, would have what he pleased and do what he pleased: his sin was, in one word, *disobedience* (#Ro 5:19), disobedience to a plain, easy, and express command, which probably he knew to be a command of trial. He sinned against great knowledge, against many mercies, against light and love, the clearest light and the dearest love that ever sinner sinned against. He had no corrupt nature within him to betray him; but had a freedom of will, not enslaved, and was in his full strength, not weakened or impaired. He turned aside quickly. Some think he fell the very day on which he was made; but I see not how to reconcile this with God's pronouncing all *very good* in the close of the day. Others suppose he fell on the sabbath day: the better day the worse deed. However, it is certain that he kept his integrity but a very little while: being in honour, he continued not. But the greatest aggravation of his sin was that he involved all his posterity in sin and ruin by it. God having told him that his race should replenish the earth, surely he could not but know that he stood as a public person, and that his disobedience would be fatal to all his seed; and, if so, it was certainly both the greatest treachery and the greatest cruelty that ever was. The human nature being lodged entirely in our first parents, henceforward it could not but be transmitted from them under an attainder of guilt, a stain of dishonour, and an hereditary disease of sin and corruption. And can we say, then, that Adam's sin had but little harm in it?

III. The ultimate consequences of the transgression. Shame and fear seized the criminals, *ipso facto--in the fact itself*; these came into the world along with sin, and still attend it.

1. Shame seized them unseen, #Ge 3:7, where observe,

(1.) The strong convictions they fell under, in their own bosoms: *The eyes of them both were opened*. It is not meant of the eyes of the body; these were open before, as appears by this, that the sin came in at them. Jonathan's eyes were enlightened by eating forbidden fruit (#1Sa 14:27), that is, he was refreshed and revived by it; but theirs were not so. Nor is it meant of any advances made hereby in true knowledge; but the eyes of their consciences were opened, their hearts smote them for what they had done. Now, when it was too late, they saw the folly of eating forbidden fruit. They saw the happiness they had fallen from, and the misery they had fallen into. They saw a loving God provoked, his grace and favour forfeited, his likeness and image lost, dominion over the creatures gone. They saw their natures corrupted and depraved, and felt a disorder in their own spirits of which they had never before been conscious. They saw a law in their members warring against the law of their minds, and captivating them both to sin and wrath. They saw, as Balaam, when *his eyes were opened* (#Nu 22:31), the angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand; and perhaps they saw the serpent that had abused them insulting over them. The text tells us that they saw *that they were naked*, that is,

[1.] That they were stripped, deprived of all the honours and joys of their paradise-state, and exposed to all the miseries that might justly be expected from an angry God. They were disarmed; their defence had departed from them.

[2.] That they were shamed, for ever shamed, before God and angels. They saw themselves disrobed of all their ornaments and ensigns of honour, degraded from their dignity and disgraced in the highest degree, laid open to the contempt and reproach of

heaven, and earth, and their own consciences. Now see here, *First*, What a dishonour and disquietment sin is; it makes mischief wherever it is admitted, sets men against themselves disturbs their peace, and destroys all their comforts. Sooner or later, it will have shame, either the shame of true repentance, which ends in glory, or that shame and everlasting contempt to which the wicked shall rise at the great day. Sin is a reproach to any people. *Secondly*, What deceiver Satan is. He told our first parents, when he tempted them, that their eyes should be opened; and so they were, but not as they understood it; they were opened to their shame and grief, not to their honour nor advantage. Therefore, when he speaks fair, believe him not. The most malicious mischievous liars often excuse themselves with this, that they only equivocate; but God will not so excuse them.

(2.) The sorry shift they made to palliate these convictions, and to arm themselves against them: *They sewed, or platted, fig-leaves together*; and to cover, at least, part of their shame from one another, they *made themselves aprons*. See here what is commonly the folly of those that have sinned.

[1.] That they are more solicitous to save their credit before men than to obtain their pardon from God; they are backward to confess their sin, and very desirous to conceal it, as much as may be. *I have sinned, yet honour me*.

[2.] That the excuses men make, to cover and extenuate their sins, are vain and frivolous. Like the aprons of fig-leaves, they make the matter never the better, but the worse; the shame, thus hidden, becomes the more shameful. Yet thus we are all apt to *cover our transgressions as Adam, #Job 31:33*.

2. Fear seized them immediately upon their eating the forbidden fruit, *#Ge 3:8*. Observe here,

(1.) What was the cause and occasion of their fear: *They heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day*. It was the approach of the Judge that put them into a fright; and yet he came in such a manner as made it formidable only to guilty consciences. It is supposed that he came in a human shape, and that he who judged the world now was the same that shall judge the world at the last day, even *that man whom God has ordained*. He appeared to them now (it should seem) in no other similitude than that in which they had seen him when he put them into paradise; for he came to convince and humble them, not to amaze and terrify them. He came into the garden, not descending immediately from heaven in their view, as afterwards on mount Sinai (making either thick darkness his pavilion or the flaming fire his chariot), but he came into the garden, as one that was still willing to be familiar with them. He came walking, not running, not riding upon the wings of the wind, but walking deliberately, as one slow to anger, teaching us, when we are ever so much provoked, not to be hot nor hasty, but to speak and act considerately and not rashly. He came in the cool of the day, not in the night, when all fears are doubly fearful, nor in the heat of day, for he came not in the heat of his anger. *Fury is not in him, #Isa 27:4*. Nor did he come suddenly upon them; but they heard his voice at some distance, giving them notice of his coming, and probably it was a still small voice, like that in which he came to enquire after Elijah. Some think they heard him discoursing with himself concerning the sin of Adam, and the judgment now to be passed upon him, perhaps as he did concerning Israel, *#Ho 11:8,9*. *How shall I give thee up? Or, rather, they heard him calling for them, and coming towards them*.

(2.) What was the effect and evidence of their fear: *They hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God*--a sad change! Before they had sinned, if they had heard the voice of the Lord God coming towards them, they would have run to meet him, and with a humble joy welcomed his gracious visits. But, now that it was otherwise, God had become

a terror to them, and then no marvel that they had become a terror to themselves, and were full of confusion. Their own consciences accused them, and set their sin before them in its proper colours. Their fig-leaves failed them, and would do them no service. God had come forth against them as an enemy, and the whole creation was at war with them; and as yet they knew not of any mediator between them and an angry God, so that nothing remained but a certain fearful looking for of judgment. In this fright they hid themselves among the bushes; having offended, they fled for the same. Knowing themselves guilty, they durst not stand a trial, but absconded, and fled from justice. See here,

[1.] The falsehood of the tempter, and the frauds and fallacies of his temptations. He promised them they should be safe, but now they cannot so much as think themselves so; he said they should not die, and yet now they are forced to fly or their lives; he promised them they should be advanced, but they see themselves abased--never did they seem so little as now; he promised them they should be knowing, but they see themselves at a loss, and know not so much as where to hide themselves; he promised them they should be as gods, great, and bold, and daring, but they are as criminals discovered, trembling, pale, and anxious to escape: they would not be subjects, and so they are prisoners.

[2.] The folly of sinners, to think it either possible or desirable to hide themselves from God: can they conceal themselves from the Father of lights? #Ps 139:7, &c.; #Jer 23:24. Will they withdraw themselves from the fountain of life, who alone can give help and happiness? #Jon 2:8.

[3.] The fear that attends sin. All that amazing fear of God's appearances, the accusations of conscience, the approaches of trouble, the assaults of inferior creatures, and the arrests of death, which is common among men, is the effect of sin. Adam and Eve, who were partners in the sin, were sharers in the shame and fear that attended it; and though hand joined in hand (hands so lately joined in marriage), yet could they not animate nor fortify one another: miserable comforters they had become to each other!

Ver. 9.

We have here the arraignment of these deserters before the righteous Judge of heaven and earth, who, though he is not tied to observe formalities, yet proceeds against them with all possible fairness, that he may be justified when he speaks. Observe here,

I. The startling question with which God pursued Adam and arrested him: *Where art thou?* Not as if God did not know where he was; but thus he would enter the process against him.

"Come, where is this foolish man?"

Some make it a bemoaning question:

"Poor Adam, what has become of thee?"

"Alas for thee!"

(so some read it)

"How art thou fallen, Lucifer, son of the morning! Thou that wast my friend and favourite, whom I had done so much for, and would have done so much more for; hast thou now forsaken me, and ruined thyself? Has it come to this?"

It is rather an upbraiding question, in order to his conviction and humiliation: *Where art thou? Not, In what place? but, In what condition?*

"Is this all thou hast gotten by eating forbidden fruit? Thou that wouldest vie with me, dost thou now fly from me?"

Note,

1. Those who by sin have gone astray from God should seriously consider where they are; they are afar off from all good, in the midst of their enemies, in bondage to Satan, and in the high road to utter ruin. This enquiry after Adam may be looked upon as a gracious pursuit, in kindness to him, and in order to his recovery. If God had not called to him, to reclaim him, his condition would have been as desperate as that of fallen angels; this lost sheep would have wandered endlessly, if the good Shepherd had not sought after him, to bring him back, and, in order to that, reminded him where he was, where he should not be, and where he could not be either happy or easy.

Note,

2. If sinners will but consider where they are, they will not rest till they return to God.

II. The trembling answer which Adam gave to this question: *I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, #Ge 3:10.* He does not own his guilt, and yet in effect confesses it by owning his shame and fear; but it is the common fault and folly of those that have done an ill thing, when they are questioned about it, to acknowledge no more than what is so manifest that they cannot deny it. Adam was afraid, because he was naked; not only unarmed, and therefore afraid to contend with God, but unclothed, and therefore afraid so much as to appear before him. We have reason to be afraid of approaching to God if we be not clothed and fenced with the righteousness of Christ, for nothing but this will be armour of proof and cover the shame of our nakedness. Let us therefore *put on the Lord Jesus Christ*, and then draw near with humble boldness.

Ver. 11.

We have here the offenders found guilty by their own confession, and yet endeavouring to excuse and extenuate their fault. They could not confess and justify what they had done, but they confess and palliate it. Observe,

I. How their confession was extorted from them. God put it to the man: *Who told thee that thou wast naked? #Ge 3:11.*

"How camest thou to be sensible of thy nakedness as thy shame?"

*Hast thou eaten of the forbidden tree?* Note, Though God knows all our sins, yet he will know them from us, and requires from us an ingenuous confession of them; not that he may be informed, but that we may be humbled. In this examination, God reminds him of the command he had given him:

"I commanded thee not to eat of it, I thy Maker, I thy Master, I thy benefactor; I commanded thee to the contrary."

Sin appears most plain and most sinful in the glass of the commandment, therefore God here sets it before Adam; and in it we should see our faces. The question put to the woman was, *What is this that thou hast done? #Ge 3:13.*

"Wilt thou also own thy fault, and make confession of it? And wilt thou see what an evil thing it was?"

Note, It concerns those who have eaten forbidden fruit themselves, and especially those who have enticed others to eat it likewise, seriously to consider what they have done. In eating forbidden fruit, we have offended a great and gracious God, broken a just and righteous law, violated a sacred and most solemn covenant, and wronged our own precious souls by forfeiting God's favour and exposing ourselves to his wrath and curse: in enticing others to eat of it, we do the devil's work, make ourselves guilty of other men's sins, and accessory to their ruin. *What is this that we have done?*

II. How their crime was extenuated by them in their confession. It was to no purpose to plead *not guilty*. The show of their countenances testified against them; therefore they become their own accusers:

"*I did eat,*" says the man, "And so did I,"

says the woman; for when God judges he will overcome. But these do not look like penitent confessions; for instead of aggravating the sin, and taking shame to themselves, they excuse the sin, and lay the shame and blame on others.

#### 1. Adam lays all the blame upon his wife.

"She gave me of the tree, and pressed me to eat of it, which I did, only to oblige her"

--a frivolous excuse. He ought to have taught her, not to have been taught by her; and it was no hard matter to determine which of the two he must be ruled by, his God or his wife. Learn, hence, never to be brought to sin by that which will not bring us off in the judgment; let not that bear us up in the commission which will not bear us out in the trial; let us therefore never be overcome by importunity to act against our consciences, nor ever displease God, to please the best friend we have in the world. But this is not the worst of it. He not only lays the blame upon his wife, but expresses it so as tacitly to reflect on God himself:

"It is the woman whom thou gavest me, and gavest to be with me as my companion, my guide, and my acquaintance; she gave me of the tree, else I had not eaten of it."

Thus he insinuates that God was accessory to his sin: he gave him the woman, and she gave him the fruit; so that he seemed to have it at but one remove from God's own hand. Note, There is a strange proneness in those that are tempted to say that they are tempted of God, as if our abusing God's gifts would excuse our violation of God's laws. God gives us riches, honours, and relations, that we may serve him cheerfully in the enjoyment of them; but, if we take occasion from them to sin against him, instead of blaming Providence for putting us into such a condition, we must blame ourselves for perverting the gracious designs of Providence therein.

#### 2. Eve lays all the blame upon the serpent: *The serpent beguiled me*. Sin is a brat that nobody is willing to own, a sign that it is a scandalous thing. Those that are willing enough to take the pleasure and profit of sin are backward enough to take the blame and shame of it.

"The serpent, that subtle creature of thy making, which thou didst permit to come into paradise to us, he beguiled me,"

or made me to err; for our sins are our errors. Learn hence,

(1.) That Satan's temptations are all beguilings, his arguments are all fallacies, his allurements are all cheats; when he speaks fair, believe him not. Sin deceives us, and, by deceiving, cheats us. It is by the *deceitfulness of sin* that the heart is hardened. See #Ro 7:11; Heb 3:13.

(2.) That though Satan's subtlety drew us into sin, yet it will not justify us in sin: though he is the tempter, we are the sinners; and indeed it is our own lust that draws us aside and entices us, #Jas 1:14. Let it not therefore lessen our sorrow and humiliation for sin that we are beguiled into it; but rather let it increase our self-indignation that we should suffer ourselves to be beguiled by a known cheat and a sworn enemy. Well, this is all the prisoners at the bar have to say why sentence should not be passed and execution awarded, according to law; and this *all* is next to nothing, in some respects worse than nothing.

Ver. 14.

The prisoners being found guilty by their own confession, besides the personal and infallible knowledge of the Judge, and nothing material being offered in arrest of judgment, God immediately proceeds to pass sentence; and, in these verses, he begins (where the sin began) with the serpent. God did not examine the serpent, nor ask him what he had done nor why he did it; but immediately sentenced him,

1. Because he was already convicted of rebellion against God, and his malice and wickedness were notorious, not found by secret search, but openly avowed and declared as Sodom's.
2. Because he was to be for ever excluded from all hope of pardon; and why should any thing be said to convince and humble him who was to find no place for repentance? His wound was not searched, because it was not to be cured. Some think the condition of the fallen angels was not declared desperate and helpless, until now that they had seduced man into the rebellion.

I. The sentence passed upon the tempter may be considered as lighting upon the serpent, the brute creature which Satan made use of which was, as the rest, made for the service of man, but was now abused to his hurt. Therefore, to testify a displeasure against sin, and a jealousy for the injured honour of Adam and Eve, God fastens a curse and reproach upon the serpent, and makes it to groan, being burdened. See #Ro 8:20. The devil's instruments must share in the devil's punishments. Thus the bodies of the wicked, though only instruments of unrighteousness, shall partake of everlasting torments with the soul, the principal agent. Even the ox that killed a man must be stoned, #Ex 21:28,29. See here how God hates sin, and especially how much displeased he is with those who entice others into sin. It is a perpetual brand upon Jeroboam's name *that he made Israel to sin*. Now,

1. The serpent is here laid under the curse of God: *Thou art cursed above all cattle*. Even the creeping things, when God made them, were blessed of him (#Ge 1:22), but sin turned the blessing into a curse. *The serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field* (#Ge 3:1), and here, *cursed above every beast of the field*. Unsanctified subtlety often proves a great curse to a man; and the more crafty men are to do evil the more mischief they do, and, consequently, they shall receive the greater damnation. Subtle tempters are the most accursed creatures under the sun.

2. He is here laid under man's reproach and enmity.

(1.) He is to be for ever looked upon as a vile and despicable creature, and a proper object of scorn and contempt:

*"Upon thy belly thou shalt go, no longer upon feet, or half erect, but thou shalt crawl along, thy belly cleaving to the earth,"*

an expression of a very abject miserable condition, #Ps 44:25;

*"and thou shalt not avoid eating dust with thy meat."*

His crime was that he tempted Eve to eat that which she should not; his punishment was that he was necessitated to eat that which he would not: *Dust thou shalt eat*. This denotes not only a base and despicable condition, but a mean and pitiful spirit; it is said of those whose courage has departed from them that they *lick the dust like a serpent*, #Mic 7:17. How sad it is that the serpent's curse should be the covetous worldling's choice, whose character it is that he *pants after the dust of the earth!* #Am 2:7. These choose their own delusions, and so shall their doom be.

(2.) He is to be for ever looked upon as a venomous noxious creature, and a proper object of hatred and detestation: *I will put enmity between thee and the woman*. The inferior creatures being made for man, it was a curse upon any of them to be turned against man and man against them; and this is part of the serpent's curse. The serpent is hurtful to man, and often bruises his heel, because it can reach no higher; nay, notice is taken of his biting the horses' heels, #Ge 49:17. But man is victorious over the serpent, and bruises his head, that is, gives him a mortal wound, aiming to destroy the whole generation of vipers. It is the effect of this curse upon the serpent that, though that creature is subtle and very dangerous, yet it prevails not (as it would if God gave it commission) to the destruction of mankind. This sentence pronounced upon the serpent is much fortified by that promise of God to his people, *Thou shalt tread upon the lion and the adder* (#Ps 91:13), and that of Christ to his disciples, *They shall take up serpents* (#Mr 16:18), witness Paul, who was unhurt by the viper that fastened upon his hand. Observe here, The serpent and the woman had just now been very familiar and friendly in discourse about the forbidden fruit, and a wonderful agreement there was between them; but here they are irreconcilably set at variance. Note, Sinful friendships justly end in mortal feuds: those that unite in wickedness will not unite long.

II. This sentence may be considered as levelled at the devil, who only made use of the serpent as his vehicle in this appearance, but was himself the principal agent. He that spoke through the serpent's mouth is here struck at through the serpent's side, and is principally intended in the sentence, which, like the pillar of cloud and fire, has a dark side towards the devil and a bright side towards our first parents and their seed. Great things are contained in these words.

1. A perpetual reproach is here fastened upon that great enemy both to God and man. Under the cover of the serpent, he is here sentenced to be,

(1.) Degraded and accursed of God. It is supposed that the sin which turned angels into devils was pride, which is here justly punished by a great variety of mortifications couched under the mean circumstances of a serpent crawling on his belly and licking the dust. *How art thou fallen, O Lucifer!* He that would be above God, and would head a rebellion against him, is justly exposed here to contempt and lies to be trodden on; a man's pride will bring him low, and God will humble those that will not humble themselves.

(2.) Detested and abhorred of all mankind. Even those that are really seduced into his interest yet profess a hatred and abhorrence of him; and all that are born of God make it their constant care to keep themselves, that this wicked one touch them not, #1Jo 5:18. He is here condemned to a state of war and irreconcilable enmity.

(3.) Destroyed and ruined at last by *the great Redeemer*, signified by the breaking of his head. His subtle politics shall all be baffled, his usurped power shall be entirely crushed, and he shall be for ever a captive to the injured honour of divine sovereignty. By being told of this now he was tormented before the time.

2. A perpetual quarrel is here commenced between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the devil among men; war is proclaimed between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. That war in heaven between Michael and the dragon began now, #Re 12:7. It is the fruit of this enmity,

(1.) That there is a continual conflict between grace and corruption in the hearts of God's people. Satan, by their corruptions, assaults them, buffets them, sifts them, and seeks to devour them; they, by the exercise of their graces, resist him, wrestle with him, quench his fiery darts, force him to flee from them. Heaven and hell can never be reconciled, nor light and darkness; no more can Satan and a sanctified soul, for these are contrary the one to the other.

(2.) That there is likewise a continual struggle between the wicked and the godly in this world. Those that love God account those their enemies that hate him, #Ps 139:21,22. And all the rage and malice of persecutors against the people of God are the fruit of this enmity, which will continue while there is a godly man on this side heaven, and a wicked man on this side hell. *Marvel not therefore if the world hate you*, #1Jo 3:13.

3. A gracious promise is here made of Christ, as the deliverer of fallen man from the power of Satan. Though what was said was addressed to the serpent, yet it was said in the hearing of our first parents, who, doubtless, took the hints of grace here given them, and saw a door of hope opened to them, else the following sentence upon themselves would have overwhelmed them. Here was the dawning of the gospel day. No sooner was the wound given than the remedy was provided and revealed. Here, *in the head of the book*, as the word is (#Heb 10:7), in the beginning of the Bible, it is written of Christ, that he should *do the will of God*. By faith in this promise, we have reason to think, our first parents, and the patriarchs before the flood, were justified and saved and to this promise, and the benefit of it, instantly serving God day and night, they hoped to come. Notice is here given them of three things concerning Christ:--

(1.) His incarnation, that he should be *the seed of the woman*, the seed of *that* woman; therefore his genealogy (Luke 3) goes so high as to show him to be the son of Adam, but God does the woman the honour to call him rather her seed, because she it was whom the devil had beguiled, and on whom Adam had laid the blame; herein God magnifies his grace, in that, though the woman was first in the transgression, yet she shall be saved by childbearing (as some read it), that is, by the promised seed who shall descend from her, #1Ti 2:15. He was likewise to be the seed of a woman only, of a virgin, that he might not be tainted with the corruption of our nature; he was sent forth, *made of a woman* (#Ga 4:4), that this promise might be fulfilled. It is a great encouragement to sinners that their Saviour *is the seed of the woman, bone of our bone*, #Heb 2:11,14. Man is therefore sinful and unclean, because he is *born of a woman* (#Job 25:4), and therefore *his days are full of trouble*, #Job 14:1. But the seed of the woman was made sin and a curse for us, so saving

us from both.

(2.) His sufferings and death, pointed at in Satan's *bruising his heel*, that is, his human nature. Satan tempted Christ in the wilderness, to draw him into sin; and some think it was Satan that terrified Christ in his agony, to drive him to despair. It was the devil that put it into the heart of Judas to betray Christ, of Peter to deny him, of the chief priests to prosecute him, of the false witnesses to accuse him, and of Pilate to condemn him, aiming in all this, by destroying the Saviour, to ruin the salvation; but, on the contrary, it was by death that Christ *destroyed him that had the power of death*, #Heb 2:14. Christ's heel was bruised when his feet were pierced and nailed to the cross, and Christ's sufferings are continued in the sufferings of the saints for his name. The devil tempts them, casts them into prison, persecutes and slays them, and so bruises the heel of Christ, who is afflicted in their afflictions. But, while the heel is bruised on earth, it is well that the head is safe in heaven.

(3.) His victory over Satan thereby. Satan had now trampled upon the woman, and insulted over her; but the seed of the woman should be raised up in the fulness of time to avenge her quarrel, and to trample upon him, to spoil him, to lead him captive, and to *triumph over him*, #Col 2:15. *He shall bruise his head*, that is, he shall destroy all his politics and all his powers, and give a total overthrow to his kingdom and interest. Christ baffled Satan's temptations, rescued souls out of his hands, cast him out of the bodies of people, dispossessed the strong man armed, and divided his spoil: by his death, he gave a fatal and incurable blow to the devil's kingdom, a wound to the head of this beast, that can never be healed. As his gospel gets ground, *Satan falls* (#Lu 10:18) and is *bound*, #Re 20:2. By his grace, he treads Satan under his people's feet (#Ro 16:20) and will shortly cast him into the lake of fire, #Re 20:10. And the devil's perpetual overthrow will be the complete and everlasting joy and glory of the chosen remnant.

Ver. 16.

We have here the sentence passed upon the woman for her sin. Two things she is condemned to: a state of sorrow, and a state of subjection, proper punishments of a sin in which she had gratified her pleasure and her pride.

I. She is here put into a state of sorrow, one particular of which only is specified, that in bringing forth children; but it includes all those impressions of grief and fear which the mind of that tender sex is most apt to receive, and all the common calamities which they are liable to. Note, Sin brought sorrow into the world; it was this that made the world a vale of tears, brought showers of trouble upon our heads, and opened springs of sorrows in our hearts, and so deluged the world: had we known no guilt, we should have known no grief. The pains of childbearing, which are great to a proverb, a scripture proverb, are the effect of sin; every pang and every groan of the travailing woman speak aloud the fatal consequences of sin: this comes of eating forbidden fruit. Observe,

1. The sorrows are here said to be multiplied, *greatly multiplied*. All the sorrows of this present time are so; many are the calamities which human life is liable to, of various kinds, and often repeated, the clouds returning after the rain, and no marvel that our sorrows are multiplied when our sins are: both are innumerable evils. The sorrows of child-bearing are multiplied; for they include, not only the travailing throes, but the indispositions before (it is sorrow from the conception), and the nursing toils and vexations after; and after all, if the children prove wicked and foolish, they are, more than ever, the heaviness of her that bore them. Thus are the sorrows multiplied; as one grief is over, another succeeds in this world.

2. It is God that multiplies our sorrows: *I will do it*. God, as a righteous Judge, does it, which ought to silence us under all our sorrows; as many as they are, we have deserved them all, and more: nay, God, as a tender Father, does it for our necessary correction, that we may be humbled for sin, and weaned from the world by all our sorrows; and the good we get by them, with the comfort we have under them, will abundantly balance our sorrows, how greatly soever they are multiplied.

II. She is here put into a state of subjection. The whole sex, which by creation was equal with man, is, for sin, made inferior, and forbidden to *usurp authority*, #1Ti 2:11,12. The wife particularly is hereby put under the dominion of her husband, and is not *sui juris--at her own disposal*, of which see an instance in that law, #Nu 30:6-8, where the husband is empowered, if he please, to disannul the vows made by the wife. This sentence amounts only to that command, *Wives, be in subjection to your own husbands*; but the entrance of sin has made that duty a punishment, which otherwise it would not have been. If man had not sinned, he would always have ruled with wisdom and love; and, if the woman had not sinned, she would always have obeyed with humility and meekness; and then the dominion would have been no grievance: but our own sin and folly make our yoke heavy. If Eve had not eaten forbidden fruit herself, and tempted her husband to eat it, she would never have complained of her subjection; therefore it ought never to be complained of, though harsh; but sin must be complained of, that made it so. Those wives who not only despise and disobey their husbands, but domineer over them, do not consider that they not only violate a divine law, but thwart a divine sentence.

III. Observe here how mercy is mixed with wrath in this sentence. The woman shall have sorrow, but it shall be in bringing forth children, and the sorrow shall be *forgotten for joy that a child is born*, #Joh 16:21. She shall be subject, but it shall be to her own husband that loves her, not to a stranger, or an enemy: the sentence was not a curse, to bring her to ruin, but a chastisement, to bring her to repentance. It was well that enmity was not put between the man and the woman, as there was between the serpent and the woman.

Ver. 17.

We have here the sentence passed upon Adam, which is prefaced with a recital of his crime: *Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife*, #Ge 3:17. He excused the fault, by laying it on his wife: *She gave it me*. But God does not admit the excuse. She could but tempt him, she could not force him; though it was her fault to persuade him to eat, it was his fault to hearken to her. Thus men's frivolous pleas will, in the day of God's judgment, not only be overruled, but turned against them, and made the grounds of their sentence. *Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee*. Observe,

I. God put marks of his displeasure on Adam in three instances:--

1. His habitation is, by this sentence, cursed: *Cursed is the ground for thy sake*; and the effect of that curse is, *Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee*. It is here intimated that his habitation should be changed; he should no longer dwell in a distinguished, blessed, paradise, but should be removed to common ground, and that cursed. The ground, or earth, is here put for the whole visible creation, which, by the sin of man, is made subject to vanity, the several parts of it being not so serviceable to man's comfort and happiness as they were designed to be when they were made, and would have been if he had not sinned. God gave the earth to the children of men, designing it to be a comfortable dwelling to them. But sin has altered the property of it. It is now cursed for man's sin; that is, it is a dishonourable habitation, it bespeaks man mean, that his foundation is in the dust; it is a dry and barren habitation, its spontaneous productions are now weeds and briers, something nauseous or

noxious; what good fruits it produces must be extorted from it by the ingenuity and industry of man. Fruitfulness was its blessing, for man's service (#Ge 1:11,29), and now barrenness was its curse, for man's punishment. It is not what it was in the day it was created. Sin turned a fruitful land into barrenness; and man, having become as the wild ass's colt, has the wild ass's lot, *the wilderness for his habitation, and the barren land his dwelling*, #Job 39:6; Ps 68:6. Had not this curse been in part removed, for aught I know, the earth would have been for ever barren, and never produced any thing but thorns and thistles. The ground is *cursed*, that is, doomed to destruction at the end of time, when the earth, and *all the works that are therein, shall be burnt up* for the sin of man, the measure of whose iniquity will then be full, #2Pe 3:7,10. But observe a mixture of mercy in this sentence.

(1.) Adam himself is not cursed, as the serpent was (#Ge 3:14), but only the ground for his sake. God had blessings in him, even the holy seed: *Destroy it not, for that blessing is in it*, #Isa 65:8. And he had blessings in store for him; therefore he is not directly and immediately cursed, but, as it were, at second hand.

(2.) He is yet above ground. The earth does not open and swallow him up; only it is not what it was: as he continues alive, notwithstanding his degeneracy from his primitive purity and rectitude, so the earth continues to be his habitation, notwithstanding its degeneracy from its primitive beauty and fruitfulness.

(3.) This curse upon the earth, which cut off all expectations of a happiness in things below, might direct and quicken him to look for bliss and satisfaction only in things above.

## 2. His employments and enjoyments are all embittered to him.

(1.) His business shall henceforth become a toil to him, and he shall go on with it *in the sweat of his face*, #Ge 3:19. His business, before he sinned, was a constant pleasure to him, the garden was then dressed without any uneasy labour, and kept without any uneasy care; but now his labour shall be a weariness and shall waste his body; his care shall be a torment and shall afflict his mind. The curse upon the ground which made it barren, and produced thorns and thistles, made his employment about it much more difficult and toilsome. If Adam had not sinned, he had not sweated. Observe here,

[1.] That labour is our duty, which we must faithfully perform; we are bound to work, not as creatures only, but as criminals; it is part of our sentence, which idleness daringly defies.

[2.] That uneasiness and weariness with labour are our just punishment, which we must patiently submit to, and not complain of, since they are less than our iniquity deserves. Let not us, by inordinate care and labour, make our punishment heavier than God has made it; but rather study to lighten our burden, and wipe off our sweat, by eyeing Providence in all and expecting rest shortly.

(2.) His food shall henceforth become (in comparison with what it had been) unpleasant to him.

[1.] The matter of his food is changed; he must now eat the herb of the field, and must no longer be feasted with the delicacies of the garden of Eden. Having by sin made himself like the beasts that perish, he is justly turned to be a fellow-commoner with them, and to *eat grass as oxen, till he know that the heavens do rule*.

[2.] There is a change in the manner of his eating it: *In sorrow (#Ge 3:17) and in the sweat of his face (#Ge 3:19)* he must eat of it. Adam could not but eat in sorrow all the days of his life, remembering the forbidden fruit he had eaten, and the guilt and shame he had contracted by it. Observe, *First*, That human life is exposed to many miseries and calamities, which very much embitter the poor remains of its pleasures and delights. Some never eat with pleasure (#Job 21:25), through sickness or melancholy; all, even the best, have cause to eat with sorrow for sin; and all, even the happiest in this world, have some allays to their joy: troops of diseases, disasters, and deaths, in various shapes, entered the world with sin, and still ravage it. *Secondly*, That the righteousness of God is to be acknowledged in all the sad consequences of sin. *Wherefore then should a living man complain?* Yet, in this part of the sentence, there is also a mixture of mercy. He shall sweat, but his toil shall make his rest the more welcome when he returns to his earth, as to his bed; he shall grieve, but he shall not starve; he shall have sorrow, but in that sorrow he shall eat bread, which shall strengthen his heart under his sorrows. He is not sentenced to eat dust as the serpent, only to eat the herb of the field.

3. His life also is but short. Considering how full of trouble his days are, it is in favour to him that they are few; yet death being dreadful to nature (yea, even though life be unpleasant) *that* concludes the sentence.

"Thou shalt *return to the ground out of which thou wast taken*; thy body, that part of thee which was taken out of the ground, shall return to it again; for *dust thou art*."

This points either to the first original of his body; it was made *of the dust*, nay it was *made dust*, and was still so; so that there needed no more than to recall the grant of immortality, and to withdraw the power which was put forth to support it, and then he would, of course, *return to dust*. Or to the present corruption and degeneracy of his mind: *Dust thou art*, that is,

"Thy precious soul is now lost and buried in the dust of the body and the mire of the flesh; it was made spiritual and heavenly, but it has become carnal and earthly."

His doom is therefore read:

"*To dust thou shalt return*. Thy body shall be forsaken by thy soul, and become itself a lump of dust; and then it shall be lodged in the grave, the proper place for it, and mingle itself with the dust of the earth,"

*our dust, #Ps 104:29. Earth to earth, dust to dust.* Observe here,

(1.) That man is a mean frail creature, *little* as dust, the small dust of the balance--*light* as dust, altogether lighter than vanity--*weak* as dust, and of no consistency. Our strength is not the strength of stones; he that made us considers it, and *remembers that we are dust, #Ps 103:14*. Man is indeed the *chief part of the dust of the world (#Pr 8:26)*, but still he is dust.

(2.) That he is a mortal dying creature, and hastening to the grave. Dust may be raised, for a time, into a little cloud, and may seem considerable while it is held up by the wind that raised it; but, when the force of that is spent, it falls again, and returns to the earth out of which it was raised. Such a thing is man; a great man is but a great mass of dust, and must return to his earth.

(3.) That sin brought death into the world. If Adam had not sinned, he would not have died, #Ro 5:12. God entrusted Adam with a spark of immortality, which he, by a patient

continuance in well- doing, might have blown up into an everlasting flame; but he foolishly blew it out by wilful sin: and now death is *the wages of sin, and sin is the sting of death.*

II. We must not go off from this sentence upon our first parents, which we are all so nearly concerned in, and feel from, to this day, till we have considered two things:--

1. How fitly the sad consequences of sin upon the soul of Adam and his sinful race were represented and figured out by this sentence, and perhaps were more intended in it than we are aware of. Though that misery only is mentioned which affected the body, yet that was a pattern of spiritual miseries, the curse that entered into the soul.

(1.) The pains of a woman in travail represent the terrors and pangs of a guilty conscience, awakened to a sense of sin; from the conception of lust, these sorrows are greatly multiplied, and, sooner or later, will come upon the sinner like pain upon a woman in travail, which cannot be avoided.

(2.) The state of subjection to which the woman was reduced represents that loss of spiritual liberty and freedom of will which is the effect of sin. The dominion of sin in the soul is compared to that of a husband (#Ro 7:1-5), the sinner's desire is towards it, for he is fond of his slavery, and it rules over him.

(3.) The curse of barrenness which was brought upon the earth, and its produce of briars and thorns, are a fit representation of the barrenness of a corrupt and sinful soul in that which is good and its fruitfulness in evil. It is all overgrown with thorns, and nettles cover the face of it; and therefore it is *nigh unto cursing*, #Heb 6:8.

(4.) The toil and sweat bespeak the difficulty which, through the infirmity of the flesh, man labours under, in the service of God and the work of religion, so hard has it now become to *enter into the kingdom of heaven*. Blessed be God, it is not impossible.

(5.) The embittering of his food to him bespeaks the soul's want of the comfort of God's favour, which is life, and the bread of life.

(6.) The soul, like the body, returns to the dust of this world; its tendency is that way; it has an earthy taint, #Joh 3:31.

2. How admirably the satisfaction our Lord Jesus made by his death and sufferings answered to the sentence here passed upon our first parents.

(1.) Did travailing pains come in with sin? We read of the *travail of Christ's soul* (#Isa 53:11); and the pains of death he was held by are called *wdinai* (#Ac 2:24), *the pains of a woman in travail*.

(2.) Did subjection come in with sin? Christ was made under the law, #Ga 4:4.

(3.) Did the curse come in with sin? Christ was made a curse for us, died a cursed death, #Ga 3:13.

(4.) Did thorns come in with sin? He was crowned with thorns for us.

(5.) Did sweat come in with sin? He for us did sweat as it were great drops of blood.

(6.) Did sorrow come in with sin? He was a man of sorrows, his soul was, in his agony, exceedingly sorrowful.

(7.) Did death come in with sin? He became obedient unto death. Thus is the plaster as wide as the wound. Blessed be God for Jesus Christ!

Ver. 20.

God having named the man, and called him *Adam*, which signifies *red earth*, Adam, in further token of dominion, named the woman, and called her *Eve*, that is, *life*. Adam bears the name of the dying body, Eve that of the living soul. The reason of the name is here given (some think, by Moses the historian, others, by Adam himself): *Because she was* (that is, was to be) *the mother of all living*. He had before called her *Ishah--woman*, as a wife; here he calls her *Evah--life*, as a mother. Now,

1. If this was done by divine direction, it was an instance of God's favour, and, like the new naming of Abraham and Sarah, it was a seal of the covenant, an assurance to them that, notwithstanding their sin and his displeasure against them for it, he had not reversed that blessing wherewith he had blessed them: *Be fruitful and multiply*. It was likewise a confirmation of the promise now made, that the seed of the woman, of this woman, should break the serpent's head.
2. If Adam did it of himself, it was an instance of his faith in the word of God. Doubtless it was not done, as some have suspected, in contempt or defiance of the curse, but rather in a humble confidence and dependence upon the blessing.

(1.) The blessing of a reprieve, admiring the patience of God, that he should spare such sinners to be the parents of all living, and that he did not immediately shut up those fountains of the human life and nature, because they could send forth no other than polluted, poisoned, streams.

(2.) The blessing of a Redeemer, and promised seed, to whom Adam had an eye, in calling his wife *Eve--life*; for he should be the life of all the living, and in him all the families of the earth should be blessed, in hope of which he thus triumphs.

Ver. 21.

We have here a further instance of God's care concerning our first parents, notwithstanding their sin. Though he corrects his disobedient children, and put them under the marks of his displeasure, yet he does not disinherit them, but, like a tender father, provides the herb of the field for their food and *coats of skins* for their clothing. Thus the father provided for the returning prodigal, #Lu 15:22,23. If the Lord had been pleased to kill them, he would not have done this for them. Observe,

1. That clothes came in with sin. We should have had no occasion for them, either for defence or decency, if sin had not made us naked, to our shame. Little reason therefore we have to be proud of our clothes, which are but the badges of our poverty and infamy.
2. That when God made clothes for our first parents he made them warm and strong, but coarse and very plain: not robes of scarlet, but coats of skin. Their clothes were made, not of silk and satin, but plain skins; not trimmed, nor embroidered, none of the ornaments which the daughters of Sion afterwards invented, and prided themselves in. Let the poor, that are meanly clad, learn hence not to complain: having food and a covering, let them be content; they are as well done to as Adam and Eve were. And let the rich, that are finely clad, learn hence not to make the putting on of

apparel their adorning, #1Pe 3:3.

3. That God is to be acknowledged with thankfulness, not only in giving us food, but in giving us clothes also, #Ge 28:20. The wool and the flax are his, as well as *the corn and the wine*, #Ho 2:9.

4. These coats of skin had a significance. The beasts whose skins they were must be slain, slain before their eyes, to show them what death is, and (as it is #Ec 3:18) that they may see that they themselves were beasts, mortal and dying. It is supposed that they were slain, not for food, but for sacrifice, to typify the great sacrifice, which, in the latter end of the world, should be offered once for all. Thus the first thing that died was a sacrifice, or Christ in a figure, who is therefore said to be the *Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*. These sacrifices were divided between God and man, in token of reconciliation: the flesh was offered to God, a whole burnt-offering; the skins were given to man for clothing, signifying that, Jesus Christ having offered himself to God a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour, we are to clothe ourselves with his righteousness as with a garment, that the shame of our nakedness may not appear. Adam and Eve made for themselves aprons of fig-leaves, a covering too narrow for them to *wrap themselves in*, #Isa 28:20. Such are all the rags of our own righteousness. But God made them coats of skins; large, and strong, and durable, and fit for them; such is the righteousness of Christ. Therefore *put on the Lord Jesus Christ*.

Ver. 22.

Sentence being passed upon the offenders, we have here execution, in part, done upon them immediately. Observe here,

I. How they were justly disgraced and shamed before God and the holy angels, by the ironical upbraiding of them with the issue of their enterprise:

*"Behold, the man has become as one of us, to know good and evil! A goodly god he makes! Does he not? See what he has got, what preferments, what advantages, by eating forbidden fruit!"*

This was said to awaken and humble them, and to bring them to a sense of their sin and folly, and to repentance for it, that, seeing themselves thus wretchedly deceived by following the devil's counsel, they might henceforth pursue the happiness God should offer in the way he should prescribe. God thus *fills their faces with shame, that they may seek his name*, #Ps 83:16. He puts them to this confusion, in order to their conversion. True penitents will thus upbraid themselves:

*"What fruit have I now by sin? #Ro 6:21. Have I gained what I foolishly promised myself in a sinful way? No, no, it never proved what it pretended to, but the contrary."*

II. How they were justly discarded, and shut out of paradise, which was a part of the sentence implied in that, *Thou shalt eat the herb of the field*. Here we have,

1. The reason God gave why he shut man out of paradise; not only because he had put forth his hand, and taken of the tree of knowledge, which was his sin, but lest he should again put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life (now forbidden him by the divine sentence, as before the tree of knowledge was forbidden by the law), and should dare to eat of that tree, and so profane a divine sacrament and defy a

divine sentence, and yet flatter himself with a conceit that thereby he should live forever. Observe,

(1.) There is a foolish proneness in those that have rendered themselves unworthy of the substance of Christian privileges to catch at the signs and shadows of them. Many that like not the terms of the covenant, yet, for their reputation's sake, are fond of the seals of it.

(2.) It is not only justice, but kindness, to such, to be denied them; for, by usurping that to which they have no title, they affront God and make their sin the more heinous, and by building their hopes upon a wrong foundation they render their conversion the more difficult and their ruin the more deplorable.

2. The method God took, in giving him this bill of divorce, and expelling and excluding him from this garden of pleasure. He turned him out, and kept him out.

(1.) He turned him out, from the garden to the common. This is twice mentioned: *He sent him forth* (#Ge 3:23), and then *he drove him out*, #Ge 3:24. God bade him go out, told him that that was no place for him, he should no longer occupy and enjoy that garden; but he liked the place too well to be willing to part with it, and therefore God *drove him out*, made him go out, whether he would or no. This signified the exclusion of him, and all his guilty race, from that communion with God which was the bliss and glory of paradise. The tokens of God's favour to him and his delight in the sons of men, which he had in his innocent estate, were now suspended; the communications of his grace were withheld, and Adam became weak, and like other men, as Samson when the *Spirit of the Lord had departed from him*. His acquaintance with God was lessened and lost, and that correspondence which had been settled between man and his Maker was interrupted and broken off. He was driven out, as one unworthy of this honour and incapable of this service. Thus he and all mankind, by the fall, forfeited and lost communion with God. But whither did he send him when he turned him out of Eden? He might justly have chased him out of the world (#Job 18:18), but he only chased him out of the garden. He might justly have cast him down to hell, as he did the angels that sinned when he shut them out from the heavenly paradise, #2Pe 2:4. But man was only sent to till the ground out of which he was taken. He was sent to a place of toil, not to a place of torment. He was sent to the ground, not to the grave,--to the work house, not to the dungeon, not to the prison-house,--to hold the plough, not to drag the chain. His tilling the ground would be recompensed by his eating of its fruits; and his converse with the earth whence he was taken was improvable to good purposes, to keep him humble, and to remind him of his latter end. Observe, then, that though our first parents were excluded from the privileges of their state of innocency, yet they were not abandoned to despair, God's thoughts of love designing them for a second state of probation upon new terms.

(2.) He kept him out, and forbade him all hopes of a re-entry; for he *placed at the east of the garden of Eden* a detachment of *cherubim*, God's hosts, armed with a dreadful and irresistible power, represented by flaming swords which turned every way, on that side the garden which lay next to the place whither Adam was sent, to keep the way that led to the tree of life, so that he could neither steal nor force an entry; for who can make a pass against an angel on his guard or gain a pass made good by such force? Now this intimated to Adam,

[1.] That God was displeased with him. Though he had mercy in store for him, yet at present he was angry with him, was turned to be his enemy and fought against him, for here was a sword drawn (#Nu 22:23); and he was to him a consuming fire, for it was a flaming sword.

[2.] That the angels were at war with him; no peace with the heavenly hosts, while he was in rebellion against their Lord and ours.

[3.] That the way to the tree of life was shut up, namely, that way which, at first, he was put into, the way of spotless innocency. It is not said that the cherubim were set to keep him and his for ever from the tree of life (thanks be to God, there is a paradise set before us, and a tree of life in the midst of it, which we rejoice in the hopes of); but they were set to keep that way of the tree of life which hitherto they had been in; that is, it was henceforward in vain for him and his to expect righteousness, life, and happiness, by virtue of the first covenant, for it was irreparably broken, and could never be pleaded, nor any benefit taken by it. The command of that covenant being broken, the curse of it is in full force; it leaves no room for repentance, but we are all undone if we be judged by that covenant. God revealed this to Adam, not to drive him to despair, but to oblige and quicken him to look for life and happiness in the promised seed, by whom the flaming sword is removed. God and his angels are reconciled to us, and a new and living way into the holiest is consecrated and laid open for us.