

The Doctrine of Man

from *Great Doctrines of the Bible* by William Evans

I. THE CREATION AND ORIGINAL CONDITION OF MAN.

1. MAN MADE IN THE IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF GOD.

Gen. 1:26—"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." 9:6—"For in the image of God made he man." What is meant by the terms *image* and *likeness*? *Image* means the shadow or outline of a figure, while *likeness* denotes the resemblance of that shadow to the figure. The two words, however, are practically synonymous. That man was made in the image and likeness of God is fundamental in all God's dealings with man (1 Cor. 11:7; Eph. 4:21-24; Col. 3:10; James 3:9). We may express the language as follows: Let us make man in our image to be our likeness.

a) The Image of God Does Not Denote Physical Likeness.

God is Spirit; He does not have parts and passions as a man. Consequently Mormon and Swedenborgian views of God as a great human are wrong. Deut. 4:15 contradicts such a physical view of God. Some would infer from Psa. 17:15—"I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness," that in some remote way, a physical likeness is suggested. The R.V., however, changes somewhat the sense of this verse, and reads: "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with *beholding* thy form." See also Num. 12:8, R.V. It is fair to believe, however, that erectness of posture, intelligence of countenance, and a quick, glancing eye characterized the first man. We should also remember that the manifestations in the Old Testament, and the incarnation must throw some light upon this subject.

b) Nor Are the Expressions "Image" and "Likeness" Exhausted When We Say That They Consisted in Man's Dominion Over Nature, and the Creation of God in General.

Indeed the supremacy conferred upon man presupposed those spiritual endowments, and was justified by his fitness, through them, to exercise it.

c) Positively, We Learn from Certain Scriptures in What This Image and Likeness Consisted.

Eph. 4:23, 24—"And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness

and true holiness (R.V., holiness of truth)." Col. 3:10—"And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." It is clear from these passages that the image of God consists in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness; moral, not physical likeness.

d) The Original Man Was Endowed with Intellectual Faculties.

He had sufficient intelligence to give names to the animals as they were presented before him (Gen. 2:19, 20). Adam had not only the power of speech, but the power of reasoning and thought in connection with speech. He could attach words to ideas. This is not the picture, as evolution would have us believe, of an infantile savage slowly groping his way towards articulate speech by imitation of the sounds of animals.

e) The Original Man Possessed Moral and Spiritual Faculties.

Consider the moral test in Genesis 3. Adam had power to resist or to yield to moral evil. Sin was a volitional thing. Christ, the second Adam, endured a similar test (Matt. 4).

From all this it is evident that man's original state was not one of savagery. Indeed there is abundant evidence to show that man has been degraded from a very much higher stage. Both the Bible and science agree in making man the crowning work of God, and that there will be no higher order of beings here on the earth than man. We must not forget that while man, from one side of his nature, is linked to the animal creation, he is yet supra-natural—a being of a higher order and more splendid nature; he is in the image and likeness of God. Man has developed not *from* the ape, but *away from* it. He never was anything but potential man. "No single instance has yet been adduced of the transformation of one animal species into another, either by natural or artificial selection; much less has it been demonstrated that the body of the brute has ever been developed into that of the man. The links that should bind man to the monkey have not been found. Not a single one can be shown. None have been found that stood nearer the monkey than the man of today."—*Agassiz*.

II. THE FALL OF MAN.

The doctrine of the Fall of Man is not peculiar to Christianity; all religions contain an account of it, and recognize the great and awful fact. Had there been no such account as that found in Genesis 3, there would still have remained the problem of the fall and sin.

Yet, the doctrine of the fall has a relation to Christianity that it does not have to other religions, or religious systems. The moral character of God as seen in the Christian religion far surpasses the delineation of the Supreme Being set forth in any other religion, and thus heightens and intensifies its idea of sin. It is when men consider the very high character of God as set forth in Christianity, and then look at the doctrine of sin, that they find it hard to reconcile the fact that God, being the moral Being He is, should ever allow sin to come into the world. To some minds these two things seem incompatible.

1. THE SCRIPTURAL ACCOUNT OF THE FALL OF MAN.

The third chapter of Genesis gives the fullest account of this awful tragedy in the experience of mankind. Other scriptures: Rom. 5:12-19; I Tim. 2:14; Gen. 6:5; 8:21; Psa. 14; Rom. 3:10-23.

The purpose of the Genesis narrative is not to give an account of the manner in which sin came into the *world*, but how it found its advent into the *human race*. Sin was already in the world, as the existence of Satan and the chaotic condition of things in the beginning, strikingly testify.

The reasonableness of the narrative of the fall is seen in view of the condition of man after he had sinned with his condition when he left the hand of the Creator. Compare Gen. 1:26 with 6:5, and Psa. 14. If the fall of man were not narrated in Genesis we should have to postulate some such event to account for the present condition in which we find man. In no part of the Scripture, save in the creation account as found in the first two chapters of Genesis, does man appear perfect and upright. His attitude is that of rebellion against God, of deepening and awful corruption.

2. VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS OF THE NARRATIVE OF THE FALL OF MAN.

Some look upon the whole narrative as being an *allegory*. Adam is the rational part of man; Eve, the sensual; the serpent, external excitements to evil. But the simplicity and artlessness of the narrative militates against this view.

Others, again, designate the narrative as being a *myth*. It is regarded as a truth invested in poetic form; something made up from the folklore of the times. But why should these few verses be snatched out of the chapter in which they are found and be called mythical, while the remaining verses are indisputably literal?

Then there is the *literal interpretation*, which takes the account as it reads, in its perfectly natural sense, just as in the case of the other parts of the same chapter. There is no intimation in the account itself that it is not to be regarded as literal history. It certainly is part of a historical book. The geographical locations in connection with the story are historic. The curse upon the man, upon the woman, and upon the ground are certainly literal. It is a fact that death is in the world as the wages of sin. Unquestionably Christ, and the other Scripture writers regard the event as historical and literal: of. Matt. 19:4; Mark 10:6; 2 Cor. 11:3; I Tim. 2:13-15; I Cor. 15:56.

3. THE NATURE OF THE FALL.

It must be kept in mind that Adam and Eve were free moral agents. That while they were sinless beings, it was yet possible for them to sin, just as it was possible for them not to sin. A careful reading of the narrative leads to the following remarks:

The sin of our first parents was purely volitional; it was an act of their own determination. Their sin was, like all other sin, a voluntary act of the will.

It came from an outside source, that is to say, it was instigated from without. There was no sin in the nature of the first human pair. Consequently there must have been an ungodly principle already in the world. Probably the fall of Satan and the evil angels had taken place already.

The essence of the first sin lay in the denial of the divine will; an elevation of the will of man over the will of God.

It was a deliberate transgressing of a divinely marked boundary; an overstepping of the divine limits.

In its last analysis, the first sin was, what each and every sin committed since has been, a positive disbelief in the word of the living God. A belief of Satan rather than a belief in God.

It is helpful to note that the same lines of temptation that were presented to our first parents, were presented to Christ in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1-11), and to men ever since then (1 John 2:15-17). Satan's program is short and shallow after all.

4. THE RESULTS OF THE FALL.

a) On Our First Parents—Adam and Eve.

The results of sin in the experience of our first parents were as follows:

The ground was cursed, so that henceforth it would not yield good alone (Gen. 3:17).

Sorrow and pain to the woman in child-bearing, and subjection of woman to the man (Gen. 3:16).

Exhausting physical labor in order to subsist (Gen. 3:19).

Physical and spiritual death (Gen. 3:19; 3:3; 5:5; Rom. 5:12).

Of course, with all this came also a fear of God, a shame because of sin, a hiding from God's presence, and finally, an expulsion from the garden (Gen. 3:8-11, 32-24).

b) On the Race—Various Theories.

There are three general views held with regard to the effect of Adam's sin upon the race. Before looking at the strictly Scriptural view in detail, let us briefly state these three theories:

That Adam's sin affected himself only; that every human being born into the world is as free from sin as Adam was. The only effect the first sin had upon the race was that of a bad example. According to this theory man is well morally and spiritually. This view of the case is false because the Scriptures recognize all men as guilty and as possessing a sinful nature; because man, as soon as he attains the age of responsibility commits sinful acts, and there is no exception to this rule; because righteousness is impossible without the help of God, otherwise redemption would be by works of righteousness which we have done, and this the Scripture contradicts. According to this view man is perfectly well. (The Pelagian theory.)

That while Adam's sin, as guilt, is not imputed to man, he is yet destitute of original righteousness, and, without divine help, is utterly unable to attain it. God, however, bestows upon each individual, at the dawn of consciousness, a special gift of His Spirit, which is sufficient to enable man to be righteous, if he will allow his will to cooperate with God's Spirit. According to this view man is only half sick, or half well. This view also is false because the Scriptures clearly state that man is utterly unable to do a single thing to save himself. (The Semi-Pelagian theory.)

That because of the unity of the race in Adam, and the organic unity of mankind, Adam's sin is therefore imputed to his posterity. The nature

which man now possesses is like to the corrupted nature of Adam. Man is totally unable to do anything to save himself. According to this theory man is not only not well, nor half well, but totally dead. (The Augustinian theory.)

SCRIPTURAL TEACHING.

(1) All men, without respect of condition or class, are sinners before God.

Rom. 3:9, 10, 22, 23; Psa. 14; Isa. 53:6. There may be a difference in the degree, but not in the fact of sin. All men, Jew and Gentile, have missed the mark, and failed to attain to God's standard. There is none righteous, no, not one.

(2) This universal sinful condition is vitally connected with the sin of Adam.

Rom. 5:12—"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." "For the judgment was by one to condemnation" (5:16). "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners" (5:19). All men were in Adam when he sinned; fallen he, fallen they. Herein lies the truth of the organic unity of the race. "In Adam all die." Two questions are raised here: How can man be held responsible for a depraved nature?—this touches the matter of *original sin*; and How can God justly impute Adam's sin to us?—this deals with the question of the *imputation of sin*.

(3) The whole world rests under condemnation, wrath, and curse.

Rom. 3:19—"That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." Gal. 3:10; Eph. 2:3. The law of God demands a perfect obedience; but no son of man can yield such obedience; hence the curse of a broken law rests upon those breaking it. The wrath of God abides on all not vitally united by faith to Jesus Christ (John 3:36).

(4) Unregenerate men are regarded as children of the devil, and not sons of God.

1 John 3:8-10; John 8:44—"Ye are of your father the devil." 1 John 5:19—"And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness (in the wicked one, R.V.)."

(5) The whole race of men are in helpless captivity to sin and Satan.

Rom. 7, chapter entire; John 8:31-36; Eph. 2:3.

(6) The entire nature of man, mentally, morally, spiritually, physically, is sadly affected by sin.

The *understanding* is darkened (Eph. 4:18; 1 Cor. 2:14); the *heart* is deceitful and wicked (Jer. 17:9, 10); the *mind and conscience* are defiled (Gen. 6:5; Titus 1:15); the *flesh and spirit* are defiled (2 Cor. 7:5); the *will* is enfeebled (Rom. 7:18); and we are utterly destitute of any Godlike qualities which meet the requirements of God's holiness (Rom. 7:18).

What does all this mean? A. H. Strong, in his *Systematic Theology*, explains the matter somewhat as follows: It does not mean the entire absence of conscience (John 8:9); nor of all moral qualities (Mark 10:21); nor that men are prone to every kind of sin (for some sins exclude others). It does mean, however, that man is totally destitute of love to God which is the all absorbing commandment of the law (John 5:42); that the natural man has an aversion to God (Rom. 8:7); that all that is stated under (6) above is true of man; that man is in possession of a nature that is constantly on the downgrade, and from the dominion of which he is totally unable to free himself (Rom. 7:18, 23).

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