

The Total Depravity of Man Chapter 6 NATURE

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Transcript

The Total Depravity of Man

Chapter 6

NATURE

In the preaching chapter we showed how Scripture casts light on the great moral problem of how an inherently corrupt nature originates in each child from the beginning of its existence without its Creator being the Author of sin. David declared, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Ps. 51:5). He described his depravity as innate and not created, as derived from his mother and not his Maker, showing that defilement is transmitted directly from Adam through the channel of human propagation. The same fact was expressed by our Lord when He said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" (John 3:6). In the Old Testament the word "flesh" is used as a general term for human nature or mankind: "Let all flesh bless his holy name" (Ps. 145:21) —that is, all men; "All flesh is grass" (Isa. 40:6)—the life of every member of our race is frail and fickle. The term occurs in the New Testament in the same sense: "Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved" (Matt. 24:22); "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight" (Rom. 3:20)—by his own obedience no man can merit acceptance with God. Corruption of the Flesh But since mankind is fallen and human nature is depraved, the term "flesh" becomes the expression of that fact; and every time it is used in Scripture in a moral sense it refers to the corruption of our entire beings, without any distinction between our visible and invisible parts—body and mind. This is evident from those passages where "the flesh" is contrasted with "the spirit" or the new nature (Rom. 8:5-6; I Cor. 2:11; Gal. 5:17). When the apostle declared, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7:18), he had reference to far more than his body with its appetites, namely, his entire natural man, with all its faculties, powers and propensities. The whole was polluted, and therefore nothing good could issue from him until divine grace was imparted. Again, when we find "hatred, emulations, wrath, and envyings" included in that incomplete list of the horrible "works of the flesh" supplied by Galatians 5, it is quite plain that the word takes in far more than the corporeal parts of our persons; even more so when we find that these works are set over against "the fruit of the spirit," each of which consists of the exercise of some inward quality or grace. Thus it is clear that when Christ declared, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" He signified that that which is propagated by fallen man is depraved, that whatever comes into this world by ordinary generation is carnal and corrupt, causing the heart itself to be deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. It is evident also from the immediate context (John 3:3-5), for what He affirmed in verse 6 was in

order to demonstrate the absolute need of regeneration. Our Lord was contrasting the first birth with the new birth, and showing how imperative is the latter because we are radically tainted from the outset. All by nature are essentially evil, nothing but "flesh"; everything in us is contrary to holiness. Our very nature is vitiated, and by no process of education or culture can it be refined and made fit for the kingdom of God. The faculties which men receive at birth have a carnal bias, an earthly trend, a distaste for the heavenly and divine, and are inclined only to selfish aims and groveling pursuits. In the most polished or religious society, equally with the vulgar and profane, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh" and can never be anything better. Prune and trim a corrupt tree as much as you will, it can never be made to yield good fruit. Every man must be born again before he can be acceptable to a holy God. We shall now attempt to answer the still more difficult question, In what does the vitiation of man by the fall consist? Precisely what is the nature of human depravity? That is far more than a question of academical interest which concerns none but teachers of theology. It is one of deep doctrinal and practical importance. All of us, especially preachers, should be quite clear on this point, for a mistake here is liable to lead to erroneous conclusions and serious consequences. This has indeed proved to be the case, for not a few who were sound and orthodox in many other respects have answered this question in a way that inevitably led them seriously to weaken, if not altogether to repudiate, the full responsibility of fallen man, and caused them to become hyper-Calvinists and Antinomians. We shall endeavor carefully to define and describe the present condition of the natural man, beginning with the negative side and pointing out a number of things in which human depravity does not consist. First, the fall does not result in the extinguishment of that spirit which was a part of man's complex being when created by God. It did not either in the case of our first parents or in any of their descendants. It has, however, been argued from the divine threat made to Adam, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," that such was the case, that since Adam did not immediately die physically he must have done so spiritually. That is certainly a fact, yet it requires to be interpreted by Scripture. It is quite wrong to suppose that because Adam's body did not die, his spirit did. It was not something in Adam which died, but Adam himself—in his relation to God. The same is true of his offspring. They are indeed "dead in trespasses and sins" toward God, from the beginning of their existence, but nothing within them is positively dead in the ordinary meaning of that word. In the scriptural sense of the term, "death" never signifies annihilation, but separation. At physical death the soul is not extinguished but separated from the body; and the spiritual death of Adam was not the extinction of any part of his being but the severance of his fellowship with a holy God. The same is true of all his children. The exact force of the solemn statement that they are "dead in trespasses and sins" is divinely defined for us as "being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart" (Eph. 4:18). When Christ represented the father as saying, "This my son was dead, and is alive again" (Luke 15:24), He most certainly did not mean that the prodigal had ceased to exist, but that while he remained "in the far country" he was cut off from his father, and that he had now returned to him. The lake of fire into which the wicked shall be cast is designated "the second death" (Rev. 20:14), not signifying that they shall then cease to be, but that they are "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (II Thess. 1:9). That fallen man is possessed of a spirit is clear: "The LORD... formeth the spirit of man within him" (Zech. 12:1); "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?" (I Cor. 2:11); "The spirit shall return unto God who gave it" (Eccles. 12:7). Man was created a tripartite being, consisting of spirit and soul and body (I Thess. 5:23), and no part of him ceased to exist when he fell. Second, the fall did not issue in the loss of any man's faculties. It did not divest man of reason, conscience or moral taste, for that would have converted him into another species of being. As reason remained, he still had the power of distinguishing between truth and falsehood; conscience still enabled him to distinguish between what was right and wrong,

between what was a duty and a crime; and moral taste capacitated him to perceive the contrasts in the sphere of the excellent and beautiful. It is most important to be clear on this point: The fall has not touched the substance of the soul—that remains entire with all its original endowments of intellect, conscience and will. These are the characteristic elements of humanity, and to deprive man of them would be to unman him. They exist in the criminal as well as in the saint. They all have an essential unity in the wholeness of the human person. That is to say, they are coordinate faculties, though each has a sphere that is peculiar to itself. Collectively, they constitute the rational, moral, accountable being. It is not the mere possession of them which makes men evil or good; the manner and motive of their use makes their actions sinful or holy. Corruption of Man's Spirit No, the fall deprived man of no mental or moral faculty, but it took from him the power to use them right. These faculties were all brought under the malignant influence of sin, so that man was no longer capable of doing anything pleasing to God. Depravity is all—pervading, extending to the whole man. It was not, as different theorists have supposed, confined to one department of his being—to the will as contra-distinguished from the understanding, or to the understanding as contra-distinguished from the will. It was not restricted to the lower appetites, as contrasted with our higher principles of action. Nor did it affect the heart alone, considered as the seat of the affections. On the contrary, it was a disease from which every organ has suffered. As found in the understanding, it consists of spiritual ignorance, blindness, darkness, foolishness. As found in the will, it is rebellion, perverseness, a spirit of disobedience. As found in the affections, it is hardness of heart, a total insensibility to and distaste for spiritual and divine things. The entrance of sin into the human constitution has not only affected all the faculties, so as to produce a complete disqualification for any spiritual exercise in any form, but it has crippled and enervated them in their exercise within the sphere of truth and holiness. They were vitiated in respect to everything wearing the image of God, the image of goodness and excellence. Third, the fall has not resulted in the loss of man's freedom of will, his power of volition as a moral faculty. Admittedly this is a much harder point to cover than either of the above. Not because Scripture is ambiguous in its teaching, nor even because it contains any seeming contradictions, but because of the philosophical and metaphysical difficulties it raises in the minds of those who give it careful thought. The fall certainly did not reduce man to the condition of a stock or stone, or even to an irrational animal. He retained that rational power of volition which was a part of his original constitution, so that he was still able to choose spontaneously. It is equally certain that man is not free to do as he pleases in any absolute sense, for then he would be a god, omnipotent. In his unfallen state Adam was made subservient to and dependent on the Lord. So it is with his children. Their wills are required to be fully subordinated to that of their Maker and Governor. Moreover, their freedom is strictly circumscribed by the supreme rule of divine providence, as it opens doors for them or shuts doors against them. As pointed out, though each distinct faculty of the soul has a sphere that is peculiar to itself, yet they are coordinate; therefore the will is not to be thought of as an independent, self-determining entity, standing apart from the other faculties and superior to them, capable of reversing the judgments of the mind or acting contrary to the desires of the heart. Rather the will is influenced and determined by them. As G. S. Bishop most helpfully pointed out, "The true philosophy of moral action and its process is that of Genesis 3:6. 'And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food [sense-perception, intelligence], and a tree to be desired [affections], she took and ate thereof [the will].'" Thus the freedom of the will is also limited by the bounds of human capabilities. It cannot, for example, go beyond the extent of knowledge possessed by the mind. It is impossible for me to observe, love and choose any object I am totally unacquainted with. Thus it is the understanding, rather than the will, which is the dominant faculty and factor. Hence, when Scripture delineates the condition of fallen men it attributes their alienation from God to "the ignorance that is in them" (Eph. 4:18), and speaks of regenerated men as being "renewed in knowledge" (Col. 3:10). The limitations of human freedom pointed

out above pertain alike to man unfallen or fallen, but the entrance of sin into the human constitution has imposed much greater limitations. While it is true that man is as truly free now as Adam was before his apostasy, yet he is not as morally free as he was. Fallen man is free in the sense that he is at liberty to act according to his own choice, without compulsion from without; yet, since his nature has been defiled and corrupted, he is no longer free to do that which is good and holy. Great care needs to be taken lest our definition of the freedom of fallen man clashes with such scriptures as Psalm 110:3; John 6:44; Romans 9:16; for he only wills now according to the desires and dictates of his evil heart. It has been well said that the will of the sinner is like a manacled, fettered prisoner in a cell. His movements are hampered by his chains, and he is hindered by the walls that confine him. He is free to walk, but in such a constrained way and within such a limited space that his freedom is bondage—bondage to sin. Whether we understand "the will" to be simply the faculty of volition by which the soul chooses or refuses, or whether we regard it as the faculty of volition together with all else within us which affects the choice—reason, imagination, longing—still fallen man is quite free in exercising volition according to his prevailing disposition and desire at the moment. Internal freedom is here used in contrast with external restraint or compulsion. Where the latter is absent the individual is at liberty to decide according to his pleasure. Where the Arminian errs on this point is to confound power with "will," insisting that the sinner is equally able to choose good as evil. That is a repudiation of his total depravity or complete vassalage to evil. By the fall man came under bondage to sin, and became the captive of the devil. Even so, he first yields voluntarily to the enticements of his own lusts before he commits any act of sin, nor can Satan lead him into any wrongdoing without his own consent. The natural man does as he pleases, but he pleases himself only in one direction—selfward and downward, never Godward and upward. As Romans 6:20 says of the saints while in their unregenerate state, "For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness." In all his sinning man acts as a free agent, for he is forced neither by God nor by Satan. When he breaks the law he does so by his own option, and not by coercion from another. In so doing he is freely acting out his own fallen nature. Thus it is a mistake to say that a bias of the mind or a propensity of heart is destructive of his volition. Both must be self-moved in order for there to be responsibility and guilt, and both are self-moved. The murderer is not compelled to hate his victim. Though he cannot prevent his inward hatred by any mere exercise of will, yet he can refrain from the outward act of murder by his own volition; therefore he is blameworthy when he fails to do so. These are indisputable facts of our own consciousness. Fourth, the fall has not resulted in any reduction, still less the destruction, of man's responsibility. If all of the above is carefully pondered this should be quite evident. Human responsibility is the necessary corollary of divine sovereignty. Since God is the Creator, since He is supreme Ruler over all, and since man is just a creature and a subject, there is no escape from his accountability to his Maker and rightful Lord. For what is man responsible? Man is obligated to answer to the relationship which exists between him and his Creator. Man occupies the place of creaturehood, subordination, utter dependency for every breath he draws, and therefore must acknowledge God's dominion, submit to His authority, and love Him with all his strength and heart. Human responsibility is discharged by recognizing God's rights and acting accordingly, by rendering Him His due. It is the practical acknowledgment of His ownership and government. We are justly required to be in constant subjection to His will, to exercise in His service the faculties He has given us, to use the means He has appointed, to improve the opportunities and advantages He has granted us. Our whole duty is to glorify God. From the above definition it should be crystal clear that the fall did not, and could not to the slightest degree, cancel or impair human responsibility. The fall did not change the fundamental relationship between the Creator and the creature. God is the Owner of sinful man as truly and as fully as He was of sinless man. God is still our Sovereign, and we His subjects. Furthermore, as pointed out above, fallen man is still in possession of all those faculties which qualify for discharging his

responsibility. Admittedly, the baby in arms and the poor idiot are not morally accountable for their actions. But it is reasonable that those who have reached the age when they are capable of distinguishing between right and wrong are morally accountable for their deeds. Fallen man, though his understanding is spiritually darkened, still possesses rationality. Fallen man, though under the dominion of sin, has his power of volition, and is under binding obligation to make a right and good choice every time, to resist temptations and refrain from evil-doing, as any human court of justice insists. Whatever difficulties may be theoretically involved in the fact that man's nature is now totally depraved and that he is in bondage to sin, still God has not lost His right to command because man has lost his power to obey. While the fall has cast us out of God's favor, it has not released us from His authority. It was not God who took from man his spiritual strength and deprived him of his ability to do that which is well pleasing in His sight. Man was originally endowed with power to meet the requirements of his Maker. It was by his own madness and wickedness that he threw away his power. As a human monarch does not forfeit his rights to allegiance from his subjects when they become rebels, but rather maintains his prerogative by demanding that they cease their insurrection and return to their fealty, so the King of kings has an infinite right to demand that lawless rebels shall become loyal subjects. If God could justly require of us no more than we are now able to render Him, it would follow that the more we enslaved ourselves by evil habits, the less would be our liability—a palpable absurdity! Not only is man's responsibility insisted on throughout the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation, but it is also asserted by man's own conscience. Whatever quibbles the individual raises from depravity, and however he argues from his moral impotence that his deeds are not criminal, he repudiates such reasoning where his fellow sinners are concerned. When others wrong him, he neither denies their accountability nor offers excuse for them. If he is cruelly slandered, robbed of his possessions or maltreated in his body, instead of saying of the culprit, "Poor fellow, he could not help himself; Adam is to blame," he promptly appeals to the police and seeks redress in the law courts. Moreover, when the sinner is quickened and awakened by the Holy Spirit, far from complaining against God's righteous demands, he freely owns himself as deserving to be eternally damned for his vile rebellion. He acknowledges that he was fully responsible and that he is "without excuse." He feels the burden of his guilt, and humbles himself before God in sincere repentance. Under this aspect of our subject we are endeavoring to supply an answer to the question What is connoted by the term "total depravity"? Wherein lies the essential difference or differences between man as un-fallen and fallen? Precisely what is the nature of that awful malady which afflicts us? We have considered what it does not consist of, showing that man has not ceased to be a complete and tripartite being, that he is in possession of that spirit which is a necessary part of his constitution; that the fall has not resulted in the loss of any faculties of his soul; that he has not been deprived of the freedom of his will or power of volition; and that there has been no lessening of his responsibility as a creature accountable to God. Turning now to what has resulted from the fall, we find that there are a negative and a positive side, that there were certain good things of which we were deprived, and that there were some evil things which we derived. Only as both of these are taken into consideration can we obtain a full answer to our question. First, by the fall man lost the moral image of God. As briefly pointed out earlier, the "image of God," in which man was originally created, refers to his moral nature. It was that which made him a spiritual being. As Calvin expressed it, "It includes all the excellencies in which the nature of man surpasses all the other species of animals." What that "image" consisted of is intimated in Ephesians 4:24 and Colossians 3:10, where a detailed summary of that image is supplied. Our being "renewed" in the image (at regeneration) clearly implies it to be the same divine image in which man was made at the beginning. In those two passages it is described as consisting of "righteousness and true holiness" and the "knowledge of God." Let us now enlarge upon each of those component parts. By "righteousness" we are to understand, as everywhere in Scripture, conformity to the

divine law. Before the fall there was entire harmony between the whole moral nature of man and all the requirements of that law which is "holy, and just, and good" (Rom. 7:12). This was much more than a merely negative innocence or freedom from everything sinful (or even bias or tendency toward it, which is all that Socinians allow), namely, something nobler, higher and more spiritual. There was perfect agreement between the constitution of our first parents and the rule of conduct set before them, not only in their external actions but also in the very springs of those actions, in the innermost parts of their beings—in their desires and motives, in all the tendencies and inclinations of their hearts and minds. As Ecclesiastes 7:29 declares, God "made man upright," which does not refer to the carriage of his body, except so far as that shadowed forth his moral excellence. That righteousness was lost at the fall, but is in principle restored at regeneration, when God writes His laws in our hearts and puts them in our minds, when He imparts to us a love and a taste for them, and makes us willingly subject to their authority. By "holiness" we are to understand chastity and undefilement of being. As righteousness was that which gave Adam rapport with the divine law, so holiness was that which made him fit for fellowship with his Maker. There was in him that spotless purity of nature which fitted him for communion with the holy One, for holiness is not only a relationship, but a moral quality too—not only a separation from all that is evil, but the endowment and possession of that which is good. Jehovah is "glorious in holiness" (Exodus 15:11), therefore those with whom He converses must be personally suited to Himself. None but the pure in heart shall see God (Matt. 5:8). It is inconceivable that God by an immediate act would have created any other kind of rational and responsible being than one that was pure and perfect, especially since he was to be the archetype of mankind. As Thornwell so aptly expressed it, "Holiness was the inheritance of his [man's] nature—the birthright of his being. It was the state in which all his faculties received their form." That holiness was lost when man fell, but by regeneration and sanctification it is restored to the elect who are made "partakers of his holiness" (Heb. 12:10). This principle of holiness, communicated to them at the new birth, develops as they grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord. By "knowledge" we are to understand the cognizance of God Himself. As Adam's holiness or purity of heart capacitated him to "see God" in the spiritual sense of the word, he also was enabled to know God by the Holy Spirit's indwelling of him. As Goodwin pointed out, "Where holiness was, we may be sure the Spirit was too.... The same Spirit (as in the regenerate) was in Adam's heart to assist his graces and to cause them to flow and bring forth, and to move him to live according to those principles of life given to him." It is clear that since Adam was created in maturity of body he must have been created in maturity of mind, and that there was then in him what we acquire only by slow experience. Adam was able to apprehend and appreciate God for what He is in Himself. He had a true and intuitive knowledge of the perfections of the Deity, the heartfelt realization of Their excellence. That knowledge of God was lost at the fall, by Adam and to his offspring, but it is restored to the elect at regeneration, when He shines "in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (II Cor. 4:6). Second, by the fall man lost the life of God. The soul was not only made by God but for God, fitted to know, enjoy and commune with Him; and its life is in Him. But evil necessarily severs from the holy One. Then instead of being alive in God the soul is dead in sin. Not that the soul has ceased to be, for Scripture distinguishes sharply between life and existence: "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth" (I Tim. 5:6). This is moral or spiritual death, not of being, but of well-being. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (I John 5:12). To have the Son of God for my very own is to have everything that is really worth having; to be without Him, no matter what temporal things I may momentarily possess, is to be an utter pauper. "Life"—spiritual and eternal life—is a comprehensive expression to include all the blessedness which man is capable of enjoying here and hereafter. He that has "life" is eternally saved, accepted in the Beloved, admitted into the divine favor, made partaker of the divine nature, made righteous and holy in the sight of

God. He that is without "life" is destitute of all these things. To be separated from God is necessarily to be deprived of everything which makes life worth living, for He is "the fountain of life" (Ps. 36:9), and therefore of light, of glory, of blessedness. No finite mind can conceive—still less can any human pen express—the fullness of those words "the fountain of life." We can only compare other passages of the Scripture which make known something of their meaning. As we do so, we learn that there is at least a threefold life which God's people receive from Him. First, His benign approbation: "in his favour is life" (Ps. 30:5). In Leviticus 1:4 the word is rendered "accepted" and in Deuteronomy 33:16, "good will." But the verse which best enables us to understand its force is "O Naphtali, satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the LORD" (Deut. 33:23). Those who are favorably regarded by God need nothing more, can desire nothing better. To have the goodwill of the triune Jehovah is life indeed, the acme of blessedness. To be out of His favor is to be dead to all that is worthwhile. Second, joy and blessedness of soul. "O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee... to see thy power and thy glory... because thy loving-kindness is better than life" (Ps. 63:1-3). God's life in His people capacitates them to delight themselves in Him. Thus it was here. David was in rapt adoration of the divine attributes. His soul longed to have further communion with God, and he resolved to seek Him diligently, to have enlarged views of the divine perfections and experiential discoveries of His excellence, in anticipation of the blessedness of heaven. He prized that more than anything else. The natural man values his life above all else. Not so the spiritual man. To him God's loving-kindness is better than all the comforts and luxuries of temporal life, better than the longest and most prosperous natural life. The loving-kindness of God is itself the present spiritual life of the saint, as it is also both an earnest and a foretaste of the life everlasting. It refreshes his heart, strengthens his soul and sends him on his way rejoicing. Thousands of people are weary of life, but no Christian is ever weary of God's loving-kindness. The latter is infinitely better than the "life" of a king or a millionaire, for it has no sorrow added to it, no inconvenience in it, no evils accompanying it. Physical death will put the final period to the earthly existence of the most privileged, but it will not end God's loving-kindness, for that is from everlasting to everlasting. It is esteemed by the believer beyond everything else, for it is the spring from which every blessing proceeds. In God's loving-kindness the covenant of grace originated. His loving-kindness gave Christ to His people and them to Him. By His loving-kindness they are drawn to Him (Jer. 31:3), are given a saving knowledge of Him, are brought to know personally the love which He has for them. Without God's loving-kindness life is but death. Well may each believer exclaim, "Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee." In other words: "I will revel in Thy perfections and exult in Thee. I will seek to render something of the homage which is Thy due." That life which God gives His children consists not only in their being the objects of His benign approbation, in the experiential enjoyment of His loving-kindness, but also in the reception of a principle of righteousness and holiness by which they are fitted to appreciate Him, and for want of which the unregenerate cannot enjoy Him, for they are "alienated from the life of God" (Eph. 4:18). It is clear, both from the immediate context and from the remainder of the verse, that the "life of God" there has a particular reference to holiness, for the opposite appears in verse 17: "Henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind." The contrast is further pointed up in verse 18: "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." The unconverted are wholly dominated by their depraved nature. Their minds are in a state of moral poverty, engaged only with vain things; their understandings are devoid of spiritual intelligence, lacking any power to apprehend truth or appreciate the beauties of virtue; their souls are estranged from God, with an inveterate aversion of Him; their hearts are calloused, steeled against Him. Thus the corruption and depravity of the natural man are set over against the grace and holiness communicated at the new birth, here termed "the life of God." Third, by the fall man lost his love for God. There are two cardinal emotions that influence to action: love

and hatred. The one cannot be without the other, for that which is contrary to what is desired will be repellent: "Ye that love the LORD, hate evil" (Ps. 97:10). Of the perfect Man the Father said, "Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows" (Ps. 45:7). The Lord said, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (Rom. 9:13). It is the great work of grace in the redeemed to direct and fasten those affections on their proper objects. When we put right our love and hatred, we prosper in the spiritual life. Fallen man differs from un-fallen man in this: They both have the same affections, but they are misplaced in us, so that we now love what we should hate, and hate what we should love. Our affections are like bodily members out of joint—as if the arms should hang down backward. To direct our love and hatred right is the very essence of true spirituality: to love all that is good and pure, to hate all that is evil and vile; for love moves us to seek union with what is good and to make it our own, as hatred repels and makes us leave alone what is loathsome. Now love was made for God, for He alone is its adequate and suited Object as well as its Source. Love is inherent in His attributes, His law, His ordinances, His dealings with us. But hatred was made for the serpent and sin. God is infinitely lovely in Himself, and if things are to be valued according to the greatness and excellence of them, then God is to be supremely valued, for every perfection centers and is found fully in Him. To love Him above everything else is an act of homage due to Him for who and what He is. There is everything in God to excite esteem, adoration and affection. Goodness is not an object of dread, but of attraction and delight. God freely supplied Adam with all that He required from him. Since Adam was created with perfect moral rectitude of heart and with a holy state of mind, he was fully competent to love God with all his being. He saw the divine perfections shining forth. The heavens declared God's glory, the firmament showed His handiwork, and His excellence was mirrored in everything around Adam. He realized what God deserved from him, and he was impressed with His blessedness. Adam's heart was filled with a sense of the Lord's ineffable beauty, and admiring and adoring thoughts of Him filled his mind, moving him to give Him the worship and submission to which He is infinitely entitled. Love for God gave unity of action to all the faculties of Adam's soul; for since this love was the dominant principle in him, it made all the functions of those faculties express his devotion to God. Hence, when love for God died within Adam, his faculties lost not only their original unity and orderliness but the power to use them right. All his faculties came under an evil and hostile influence, and were debased in their action. The natural man is without a single spark of true affection for God. "But I know you," said the omniscient Searcher of hearts to the religious Jews, "that ye have not the love of God in you" (John 5:42). Being without any love to God, all the outward acts of the natural man are worthless in His sight: "They that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8:8), for they lack the root from which they must proceed in order for any fruit to be desirable to Him. Love is that which animates the obedience which is agreeable to God: "If a man love me, he will keep my words" (John 14:23). Love is the very life and substance of everything which is gratifying to God. As the principle of obedience, love takes the precedence, for faith works by love (Gal. 5:6). Note the order in the injunction "Let us consider one another to provoke [1] unto love and [2] to good works" (Heb. 10:24). Stir up the affections and good works will follow, as a stirring up of the coals causes the flames to rise. It is love which makes all the divine commandments "not grievous" (1 John 5:3). We heartily agree with Charnock: "In that one word love, God hath wrapped up all the devotion He requires of us." Certainly our souls ought to be ravished with Him, for He is infinitely worthy of our choicest affections and strongest desires. Love is a thing acceptable in itself, but nothing can be acceptable to God without it. "They that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). The most decorous and punctilious forms of devotion are worthless if they lack vitality and sincerity. True worship proceeds from love, for it is the exercise of heavenly affections, the pouring out of its homage to Him who is "altogether lovely." Love is the best thing we can render God, and it is His

right in every service. Without it we are an abomination to Him: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha" (I Cor. 16:22). Fourth, by the fall our first parents and all mankind lost communion with God. This was enjoyed at the beginning, for God made man with faculties capable of this privilege, and designed him to have holy converse with Him. Indeed this was the paramount blessing of that covenant under which Adam was placed, and it was a foretaste of that more intimate communion which would have been his eternal portion had he survived his probation. But the apostasy of Adam and Eve deprived first them, and then their posterity of this inestimable privilege. This was the immediate and inevitable result of their revolt, whether we contemplate it from either the divine or the human side, "for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?" (II Cor. 6:14). Two cannot walk together except they be agreed (Amos 3:3). The holy One will not favorably manifest Himself to rebels or admit them into His presence as friends. After their fall our first parents no longer had the desire that He should do so. Having lost all love for God, they had no desire for Him, but hated and dreaded Him. Here, then, is the terrible nature of human depravity. From the negative side it consists of man's loss of the moral image of God—consciously felt by our first parents in the shameful sense they had of their nakedness. They also lost the life of God, so that they became alienated from His favor, devoid of joy, emptied of holiness—faintly perceived by them, as was evident from their attempt to make themselves more presentable by manufacturing aprons of fig leaves. Their love to God was lost, so that they no longer revered and adored Him, but were repelled by His perfections—manifested by them in fleeing from Him as soon as they were conscious of His approach. They lost communion with God, so that they were utterly unfit for His presence finalized by His driving them from Eden. None but the regenerate can estimate how irreparable was man's forfeiture by the fall, and how dreadful is the condition of the natural man. We have already pointed out a number of things in which the depravity of human nature does not consist, and some of the inestimable blessings of which man was deprived by the fall. We now turn to the affirmative side, or a consideration of those evils which have come upon human nature as the result of our first parents' apostasy from God. We do not agree with those who teach that a merely negative thing—the absence of good—is transmitted from Adam and Eve to their descendants, via the channel of natural generation and propagation. Rather we are fully persuaded that something positive—an active principle of evil—is communicated from parents to their children. While we do not consider that sin is a substance or a material thing, we are sure that it is very much more than a mere abstraction and nonentity. Man's very nature is corrupted; the virus of evil is in his blood. While there is privation in sin—a nonconformity to God's law—there is also a real positive potency in it to mischief. Sin is a power, as holiness is a power, but a power working to disorder and death. It has been said by some that "men's natures are not now become sinful by putting anything in them to defile them, but by taking something from them which should have preserved them holy." But we much prefer the statement of the Westminster Catechism: The sinfulness of that estate into which man fell consisteth in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of the righteousness wherein he was created, and the corruption of his nature, whereby he is utterly indisposed and disabled, and made opposite unto all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually, which is commonly called original sin, and from which sin proceed all actual transgressions. That fallen human nature is not only devoid of all godliness, but also thoroughly impregnated with everything that is devilish, may surely be argued from the two different kinds of sin of which every man is guilty: those of omission, in which there is failure to perform good works, and those of commission, or contempt of the law of God. Something answerable to both of those must exist in our sinful nature, otherwise we declare the cause inadequate to produce the effect. While the absence of holiness explains the former, only the presence of positive evil accounts for the latter.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/aw-pink/the-total-depravity-of-man-chapter-6-nature/>

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