

# The Sin, the Sinner, and the Sentence.

by Horatius Bonar

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*The sermon explores the nature of sin, the sinner, and the sentence, using the story of Adam and Eve's fall in the Garden of Eden as a backdrop.*

**Scripture:** Genesis 3:1

**Topics:** "Sin and Redemption", "The Nature of Temptation"

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## Description

Horatius Bonar explores the profound implications of sin as depicted in Genesis 3, illustrating the fall of humanity through the temptation of Eve by the serpent. He emphasizes the nature of temptation, the shame that follows sin, and the dread of facing God after disobedience. Bonar highlights God's response to sin, revealing His plan for redemption through the promise of a deliverer, and the provision of clothing for Adam and Eve as a symbol of God's grace. Ultimately, he underscores the importance of faith in God's promise and the necessity of divine covering for our shame.

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## Transcript

Genesis 3

The first two chapters gave us creation's perfection. Like a newly finished statue, there it stands. The chisel has given its last touch. The sculptor is satisfied; pronounces it very good, and rests. All is fair. Earth is like heaven. But now the descent begins. The steps are no longer upward, but downward. Creaturehood cannot stand alone. The moment that it is left to itself it totters, it falls. It must be joined to the Creator before it can stand. The fall is the first step towards this everlasting union, in virtue of which creation is to become infallible.

I. The TEMPTER. Outwardly the serpent, inwardly the devil; hence called "the old serpent;" hence the Apostle says, "as the serpent beguiled Eve," and "lest Satan should get advantage over us." This is the first demoniacal possession. Afterwards we read that the devils entered the herd; that Satan entered Judas; that he filled the heart of Ananias. In speaking to man he must use some fleshly form. Thus by means of the serpent he communicates with man.

II. The TEMPTATION. The tempter makes use of the testing-tree, and points to it as a mark of restraint and tyranny. His object is to separate Adam and Eve from God; to produce the evil heart of unbelief, which would make them depart from the living God. For this end he suggests doubts on three points,

(1.) As to God's goodness- in prohibiting the tree.

(2.) His faithfulness- in fulfilling His threats.

(3.) His truthfulness- in deceiving them as to the real nature of the tree. Having got Eve to listen, he leads her on, and then flatly contradicts God. You shall not surely die.

III. The BAIT. (1.) Negative, you shall not die. (2.) Positive, you shall be as God, knowing good and evil. The first was to remove the dread of danger, the second to lead on. Knowledge! Knowledge like that of God! Intellectual ambition- this is man's first snare, and it shall be his last. Worship of intellect and genius. Human supremacy in mind. Progress! Not in the knowledge of God Himself (Satan does not dare promise that); but of good and evil. Does not this imply that evil is in itself a strange attraction? To know evil man will do and dare as much as to know good. Evil is in his eyes an empire of boundless range, to whose utmost limits he sincerely would penetrate. Hence his love of the "sensational." The opening of the eye to see afar off, whether into space or time, or the substance of things, is an irresistible bait. For the obtaining of a wider range of vision, what will man not do?

IV. The SUCCESS. The tempter triumphs. Woman, "the weaker vessel," yields. She falls, and in falling, drags her husband down.

Three things win her over.

(1.) The tree is good for food. Why then not eat of it as of all the rest? Yet for this she had only Satan's word. But "the lust of the flesh" prevailed.

(2.) It is pleasant to the eyes; it looked goodly, and the lust of the eye prevailed.

(3.) It makes wise; it is the tree of knowledge. She needs to be wise, and she will not wait God's time, nor take it in God's way; but in her own, or rather the devil's. Wisdom is the devil's bait; wisdom apart from the God only wise- apart from Him who is the wisdom of God. What harm is there in wisdom, says he still; and so with this sophistry he leads men into knowledge where God is not; into literature where God is not, and where Christ is unknown.

V. The SHAME. We are unfit to be seen, is the first feeling that arises after the sin; unfit to be seen by any one, even by one another; unfit for the sun to shine upon. A covering or darkness is their only refuge. Now they know what nakedness is. The virus of the forbidden tree has shot through them, and the sense of disobedience clouds their conscience; they now for the first time know the distinction between their lovely and unlovely parts- the clean and the unclean. They take the nearest and the broadest leaf, and twist it over them. Here it is simply covering, in after days it became ornament as well.

VI. The DREAD. How shall we look on God, or God look on us? God comes down- they flee, as far off as possible, into the covert of the trees. Their fig-leaves were more for themselves, this is for God. They dare not face Him. They dread His anger. O folly! To hide from God! Yet man has always done so; his doing deeds in darkness or when alone, which he would not do in the light or before the others, is the same feeling as here.

VII. The TRIAL. God summons them. They come forth and stand at His bar. He questions them, and brings out their whole guilt step by step. They blame each other, they blame God, they blame the serpent. But they sullenly admit the deed. Poor excuses! What can palliate sin? What will God accept as palliation?

Guilty on their own admission; this is the verdict.

VIII. The SENTENCE. Each of the guilty parties receives judgment.

(1.) The Serpent. As the instrument he is cursed, and as the representative of the old serpent. A greater than the serpent is here. In this curse on the serpent, God reveals His love to the sinning race, and tells that instead of cursing the victim, as no doubt Satan expected, he means to take his part against Satan- to raise up a deliverer, the Son of the woman, who, though not without wounds, will destroy man's enemy. The man with the bruised heel is to be the bruiser of the serpent's head.

(2.) The Woman. No curse, but still a chastisement, a memorial of her sin; as the first in sin she is to be in subjection, and though through child-bearing she is to be the source of blessing, yet this very thing shall be in sorrow, to remind her of her sin.

(3.) The Man. No curse on himself, but on the ground for his sake. Fruitfulness in evil is the doom of the soil; sorrow and death, toil and sweat is the doom of man. Yet these after all are earthly. They do not separate from the love of God.

IX. THE MAN'S FAITH. He names his wife according to the promise; mother of the living, not of the dead mother of him who is the living one, the resurrection and the life. Adam believed God, and was justified; he accepted God's testimony to the coming Messiah as the living One, though born of her who had brought in death, and he became partaker of life eternal.

X. GOD'S CLOTHING FOR MAN. Coats of skins; those of the slain sacrifices, provided by God himself, better and more durable than the fig-leaves; types of heavenly clothing, and pre-intimations of the source from which that clothing was to come- of the materials of which that clothing was to be composed, that is, the life and death of the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. This was what the Lord meant when he said, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him," and what Paul meant when he said, "Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ." Yes; the Son of God has come to clothe us! He has provided the garments, and He puts them on. They are fair and goodly; washed white in His own blood; glorious as the sun. He asks us to take them; no, He entreats us to allow Him to put them upon us." Buy of me white clothing, that you may be clothed, and that the shame of your nakedness do not appear" (Revelation 3:18).

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