

The Depth of the Fall

by J.C. Philpot

J.C. Philpot's sermon delves into the profound depths of human depravity and the essential role of divine grace for salvation.

Scripture: Genesis 6:5, Psalm 51:5, Proverbs 4:23, Jeremiah 17:9, Mark 7:21, Romans 1:29, Romans 8:7, Ephesians 2:3, Colossians 1:21

Topics: "Total Depravity", "Human Nature"

Description

J.C. Philpot delves into the depth of the fall of man, emphasizing the clear and decisive testimonies in the Scriptures that reveal the sinful nature of humanity before God. From the murder of Abel to the depiction of human depravity in Romans, the Bible paints a vivid picture of man's fallen state and the wickedness that stems from the heart. Despite outward reforms brought by Christianity, the human heart remains corrupt and rebellious, described as a fountain of evil that continues to spew forth wickedness. The ultimate revelation is that the carnal mind is enmity against God, a position of enduring and irreconcilable hatred towards the Creator.

Transcript

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Most clear and decisive are the testimonies which the Holy Spirit has given in the word of truth to the depth of the fall--so clear and decisive that the wonder is how men professing to receive the Scriptures as an inspired revelation can dispute or deny what is so plainly declared by Him who cannot be deceived and who cannot lie. In fact, the whole testimony of God from first to last--from the page which records the murder of the martyred Abel to that which writes on the heavenly city, "For outside are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whoever loves and makes a lie"--is a declaration of what man is as a fallen sinner before the eyes of infinite Purity. What man has done when left to himself, and therefore what human nature is, as a turbid and corrupt fountain, to pour forth such streams of unutterable abomination, is most vividly drawn by the apostle Paul in Romans 1:21-32.

Look at the summing up of the long catalogue of crime, enough to make the sun hide its face from such debasement of that nature created in the image of God, once so fair and beautiful, so innocent and so pure, in which not a vain thought or sensual desire ruffled the calm of that spotless heart in which the

features of its glorious Creator so brightly shone. Compare man in Paradise with the brutal monster, the obscene wretch of the pagan sty thus described--"They are filled with all unrighteousness, evil, greed, and wickedness. They are full of envy, murder, disputes, deceit, and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, arrogant, proud, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, and unmerciful. Although they know full well God's just sentence--that those who practice such things deserve to die--they not only do them, but even applaud others who practice them." (Romans 1:29-32)

Can human language paint man's portrait in darker colors? Is there one bright tint to relieve this mass of shade? one fair and beautiful quality to redeem human nature from such unqualified denunciation? But it may be said, Paul is here describing the Gentile world, and picturing the abominations practiced in his days, before Christianity had dawned upon the earth, before that mild and beneficent dispensation had shone into the dark corners of the globe, and put to flight the crimes of heathenism and idolatry. True, he is describing the depths of human depravity as then manifested in the Gentile world, the crimes practiced without remorse or shame by the polished Greek and civilized Roman; and that his description is not exaggerated is well known to every one at all acquainted with the literature of that period. But after all this deduction, the question still recurs--How did human nature come to be so outwardly vile, unless it were inwardly base? How could lips utter words, how could hands perpetrate deeds of such filth and blood, unless the heart first conceived the thoughts which brought forth such horrid fruit? Surely the fountain must be bitter, to give forth such bitter waters; the tree must be corrupt, to bear such "grapes of gall," the wine of which is "the poison of dragons and the cruel venom of asps."

But has Christianity done so much? Has it reformed mankind and regenerated the human race? It has, thanks be to God, done much for man and more for woman; it has banished into darkness crimes once committed in the light of day; it has alleviated the horrors of war; elevated woman to the side of man, whence she was originally taken; and spread principles of morality and kindness far and wide, which influence the minds of thousands who still live and die in all the darkness and death of unregeneracy.

But beyond this outward reformation--and that most scanty and partial--the heart of man is still a fountain of evil, casting forth its wickedness. It is still corrupt to the very center, foul to the very core--a running, reeking, heaving, fermenting mass of filth and folly, full of deceit and hypocrisy, unbelief and infidelity, murmuring and blasphemy, lust and sensuality, murder and enmity, rebellion and despair, increasing in wickedness down to its lowest depths--for far, far beyond all human sight, unfathomable abysses of crime stretch themselves, which, like a volcano, only make themselves known by the boiling lava which they continually throw up.

One sentence of the Holy Spirit has often struck our mind as depicting more than any other what the heart of man really is--"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." (Rom. 8:7.) Enmity against God must not only include in its bosom the seeds of every other crime, but be in itself the worst of all crimes. To be an enemy to God must be a most awful position for a creature of his hand to stand in; but to be enmity itself must be the concentrated essence of sin and misery. An enemy may be reconciled, appeased, turned into a friend; but enmity, never. That dies, if die it can, fighting; that is proof against all love; that seeks only occasion by the very kindness of its benefactor to hate him more--hates him most for his goodness; that knows no pity, feels no remorse, is subject to no control, is unappeasable and irreconcilable, and would sooner bear its own inward hell of hate than enjoy a heaven of love.

And when we think for a moment who and what the great and glorious God is, against whom this reptile heart bears an enmity so enduring and so wicked; when we view him by the eye of faith as filling heaven and earth with his glory, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, and yet day after day loading all his creatures with benefits, and to his people so full of the tenderest love and compassion--then to see a dying mortal, whom one frown can hurl from all the pride of health and vigor into the lowest hell of misery and woe, spewing forth, like some miserable toad, his spit and venom against the glorious King of kings and Lord of lords--well may we stand amazed at the height of that presumption and the depth of that wickedness which can so arm a 'worm of earth' against the 'Majesty of heaven'.

But worse than all, to come nearer home, to find our own heart, our own carnal mind, still what the Holy Spirit has described it, "enmity" against the God of all our mercies--that is the worst, the cruelest blow of all!

Men fight against sovereign grace; yet what but sovereign grace can meet a case so desperate as ours? What but a salvation without money and without price, what but the length and breadth, and depth, and height of the dying love of an incarnate God, and the atoning blood of a dear Redeemer can suit or save such miserable wretches! And what but the almighty power and invincible grace of the Holy Spirit can communicate to the soul, sunk so low into carnality and death, that wondrous birth from above whereby it is "delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son?"

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