

Genesis 3:1-24

by John Calvin

John Calvin's sermon on Genesis 3 explores the nature of temptation, the consequences of sin, and the promise of redemption through Christ.

Scripture: Genesis 3:1, Psalm 139:7, Isaiah 65:25, Romans 5:12, James 1:14

Topics: "Original Sin", "Fall Of Man"

Description

John Calvin preaches about the consequences of the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, highlighting the rebellion and disobedience of Adam and Eve, leading to the introduction of sin and its effects on humanity. He emphasizes the cunning deception of Satan through the serpent, the lack of true repentance and humility in Adam and Eve's responses, and the shift from innocence to shame and fear. Calvin also delves into the concept of original sin, the corrupt nature of man, and the need for repentance and dependence on God's grace for salvation.

Transcript

1. Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

1. Porro serpens erat callidior omni bestia agri, quam fecerat Jehova Deus: et dixit ad mulierem, Etiamne dixit Deus, Non comedetis ex omni arbore horti?

2. And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

2. Et dixit mulier ad serpentem, De fructu arborum horti vescimur.

3. But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

3. At de fructu arboris quae est in medio horti, dixit Deus, Non comedetis ex ea, neque contingetis eam, ne forte moriamini.

4. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

4. Tunc dixit serpens ad mulierem, Non moriendo moriemini.

5. For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

5. Scit enim Deus quod in die qua comedetis ex ea, aperientur oculi vestri, et eritis sicut dii, scientes bonum et malum.

6. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

6. Et vidit mulier quod bona esset arbor ad vescendum, et quod delectabilis esset oculis, et desiderabilis arbor ad intelligendum: et tulit de fructu ipsius, et comedit: deditque etiam viro suo qui erat cum ea, et ipse comedit.

7. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

7. Et aperti sunt oculi amborum ipsorum, et cognoverunt quod nudi essent: et consuerunt folia ficus, feceruntque sibi cingula.

8. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.

8. Audierunt autem vocem Jehovae Dei deambulantis per hortum ad auram diei: et abscondit se Adam et uxor ejus a facie Jehovae Dei, in medio arborum horti.

9. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?

9. Vocavitque Jehova Deus Adam, et dixit ei Ubi es tu?

10. And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.

10. Et ait, Vocem tuam audivi in horto, et timui, quia nudus eram, et abscondi me.

11. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?

11. Tunc dixit, Quis indicavit tibi quod nudus esses? nonne ex ipsa arbore de qua praeceperam tibi ne comederes, comedisti?

12. And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

12. Et ait Adam, Mulier quam dedisti ut esset mecum, ipsa dedit mihi de arbore, et comedi.

13. And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

13. Dixitque Jehova Deus ad mulierem, Cur hoc fecisti? Et ait mulier, Serpens seduxit me, et comedi.

14. And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:

14. Et dixit Jehova ad serpentem, Quia fecisti hoc, maledictus eris prae omni animali, et prae omni bestia agri: super ventrem tuum gradieris, et pulverem comedes omnibus diebus vitae tuae.

15. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

15. Et inimicitias ponam inter te et inter mulierem, et inter semen tuum et inter semen ejus: ipsum vulnerabit te in capite, et tu vulnerabis ipsum in calcaneo.

16. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

16. Ad mulierem dixit, Multiplicando multiplicabo dolorem tuum, et conceptum tuum: cum dolore paries filios, et ad virum tuum erit desiderium tuum, ipseque dominabitur tibi.

17. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

17. Adae vero ait, Quia paruisti voci uxoris tuae, et comedisti ex arbore de qua praeceperam tibi, dicens, Non comedes ex ea: maledicta terra propter te: in labore comedes eam cunctis diebus vitae tuae.

18. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;

18. Et spinam et tribulum germinabit tibi, et comedes herbam agri.

19. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

19. In sudore vultus tui vesceris pane, donec revertaris in terram: quia ex ea sumptus es: nam pulvis es, et in pulverem reverteris.

20. And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living.

20. Et vocavit Adam nomen uxoris suae Hava, quia ipsa est mater omnis viventis.

21. Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

21. Fecitque Jehova Deus Adae et uxori ejus tunicas pelliceas, et induit eos.

22. And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:

22. Tunc dixit Jehova Deus, Ecce, Adam factus est tanquam unus ex nobis, sciendo bonum et malum: nunc autem ne forte mittat manum suam, et accipiat etiam de arbore vitae, et comedat, et vivat in seculum.

23. Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

23. Et emisit eum Jehova de horto Heden, ad colendum terram ex qua sumptus fuerat.

24. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

24. Et ejecit Adam, et collocavit ab Oriente horti Heden cherubim, et laminam gladii versatilis, ad custodiendum viam arboris vitae.

1. Now the serpent was more subtil In this chapter, Moses explains, that man, after he had been deceived by Satan revolted from his Maker, became entirely changed and so degenerate, that the image of God, in which he had been formed, was obliterated. He then declares, that the whole world, which had been created for the sake of man, fell together with him from its primary original; and that in this ways much of its native excellence was destroyed. But here many and arduous questions arise.

For when Moses says that the serpent was crafty beyond all other animals, he seems to intimate, that it had been induced to deceive man, not by the instigation of Satan, but by its own malignity. I answer, that the innate subtlety of the serpent did not prevent Satan from making use of the animal for the purpose of effecting the destruction of man. For since he required an instrument, he chose from among animals that which he saw would be most suitable for him: finally, he carefully contrived the method by which the snares he was preparing might the more easily take the mind of Eve by surprise.

Hitherto, he had held no communication with men; he, therefore, clothed himself with the person of an animal, under which he might open for himself the way of access. Yet it is not agreed among interpreters in what sense the serpent is said to be ■■■■ (aroom, subtle ,) by which word the Hebrews designate the prudent as well as the crafty . Some, therefore, would take it in a good, others in a bad sense. I think, however, Moses does not so much point out a fault as attribute praise to nature because God had endued this beast with such singular skill, as rendered it acute and quick-sighted beyond all others.

But Satan perverted to his own deceitful purposes the gift which had been divinely imparted to the serpent. Some captiously cavil, that more acuteness is now found in many other animals. To whom I answer, that there would be nothing absurd in saying, that the gift which had proved so destructive to the human race has been withdrawn from the serpent: just, as we shall hereafter see, other punishments were also inflicted upon it. Yet, in this description, writers on natural history do not materially differ from Moses, and experience gives the best answer to the objection; for the Lord does not in vain command his own disciples to be 'prudent as serpents,' (Mt 10:16.)

But it appears, perhaps, scarcely consonant with reason, that the serpent only should be here brought forward, all mention of Satan being suppressed. I acknowledge, indeed, that from this place alone nothing more can be collected than that men were deceived by the serpent. But the testimonies of Scripture are sufficiently numerous, in which it is plainly asserted that the serpent was only the mouth of the devil; for not the serpent but the devil is declared to be 'the father of lies,' the fabricator of imposture, and the author of death.

The question, however, is not yet solved, why Moses has kept back the name of Satan. I willingly subscribe to the opinion of those who maintain that the Holy Spirit then purposely used obscure figures,

because it was fitting that full and clear light should be reserved for the kingdom of Christ. In the meantime, the prophets prove that they were well acquainted with the meaning of Moses, when, in different places, they cast the blame of our ruin upon the devil. We have elsewhere said, that Moses, by a homely and uncultivated style, accommodates what he delivers to the capacity of the people; and for the best reason; for not only had he to instruct an untaught race of men, but the existing age of the Church was so puerile, that it was unable to receive any higher instruction.

There is, therefore, nothing absurd in the supposition, that they, whom, for the time, we know and confess to have been but as infants, were fed with milk. Or (if another comparison be more acceptable) Moses is by no means to be blamed, if he, considering the office of schoolmaster as imposed upon him, insists on the rudiments suitable to children. They who have an aversion to this simplicity, must of necessity condemn the whole economy of God in governing the Church. This, however, may suffice us, that the Lord, by the secret illumination of his Spirit, supplied whatever was wanting of clearness in outward expressions; as appears plainly from the prophets, who saw Satan to be the real enemy of the human race, the contriver of all evils, furnished with every kind of fraud and villainy to injure and destroy.

Therefore, though the impious make a noise, there is nothing justly to offend us in this mode of speaking by which Moses describes Satan, the prince of iniquity, under the person of his servant and instrument, at the time when Christ, the Head of the Church, and the Sun of Righteousness, had not yet openly shone forth. Add to this, the baseness of human ingratitude is more clearly hence perceived, that when Adam and Eve knew that all animals were given, by the hand of God, into subjection to them, they yet suffered themselves to be led away by one of their own slaves into rebellion against God.

As often as they beheld any one of the animals which were in the world, they ought to have been reminded both of the supreme authority, and of the singular goodness of God; but, on the contrary, when they saw the serpent an apostate from his Creator, not only did they neglect to punish it, but, in violation of all lawful order, they subjected and devoted themselves to it, as participators in the same apostasy. What can be imagined more dishonorable than this extreme depravity? Thus, I understand the name of the serpent, not allegorically, as some foolishly do, but in its genuine sense.

Many persons are surprised that Moses simply, and as if abruptly, relates that men have fallen by the impulse of Satan into eternal destruction, and yet never by a single word explains how the tempter himself had revolted from God. And hence it has arisen, that fanatical men have dreamed that Satan was created evil and wicked as he is here described. But the revolt of Satan is proved by other passages of Scripture; and it is an impious madness to ascribe to God the creation of any evil and corrupt nature; for when he had completed the world, he himself gave this testimony to all his works, that they were very good. Wherefore, without controversy, we must conclude, that the principle of evil with which Satan was endued was not from nature, but from defection; because he had departed from God, the fountain of justice and of all rectitude. But Moses here passes over Satan's fall, because his object is briefly to narrate the corruption of human nature; to teach us that Adam was not created to those multiplied miseries under which all his posterity suffer, but that he fell into them by his own fault. In reflecting on the number and nature of those evils to which they are obnoxious, men will often be unable to restrain themselves from raging and murmuring against God, whom they rashly censure for the just punishment of their sin. These are their well-known complaints that God has acted more mercifully to swine and dogs than to them. Whence is this, but that they do not refer the miserable and ruined state, under which we languish, to the sin of Adam as they ought? But what is far worse, they fling back upon God the charge of being the cause of all the inward vices of the mind, (such as its horrible blindness, contumacy against God, wicked desires,

and violent propensities to evil;) as if the whole perverseness of our disposition had not been adventitious. 154 The design, therefore, of Moses was to show, in a few words, how greatly our present condition differs from our first original, in order that we may learn, with humble confession of our fault, to bewail our evils. We ought not then to be surprised, that, while intent on the history he purposed to relate, he does not discuss every topic which may be desired by any person whatever.

We must now enter on that question by which vain and inconstant minds are greatly agitated; namely, Why God permitted Adam to be tempted, seeing that the sad result was by no means hidden from him? That He now relaxes Satan's reins, to allow him to tempt us to sin, we ascribe to judgment and to vengeance, in consequence of man's alienation from himself; but there was not the same reason for doing so when human nature was yet pure and upright. God, therefore, 155 permitted Satan to tempt man, who was conformed to His own image, and not yet implicated in any crime, having, moreover, on this occasion, allowed Satan the use of an animal 156 which otherwise would never have obeyed him; and what else was this, than to arm an enemy for the destruction of man?

This seems to have been the ground on which the Manichaeans maintained the existence of two principles. 157 Therefore, they have imagined that Satan, not being in subjection to God, laid snares for man in opposition to the divine will, and was superior not to man only, but also to God himself. Thus, for the sake of avoiding what they dreaded as an absurdity, they have fallen into execrable prodigies of error; such as, that there are two Gods, and not one sole Creator of the world, and that the first God has been overcome by his antagonist.

All, however, who think piously and reverently concerning the power of God, acknowledge that the evil did not take place except by his permission. For, in the first place, it must be conceded, that God was not in ignorance of the event which was about to occur; and then, that he could have prevented it, had he seen fit to do so. But in speaking of permission, I understand that he had appointed whatever he wished to be done. Here, indeed, a difference arises on the part of many, who suppose Adam to have been so left to his own free will, that God would not have him fall.

They take for granted, what I allow them, that nothing is less probable than that God should be regarded as the cause of sin, which he has avenged with so many and such severe penalties. When I say, however, that Adam did not fall without the ordination and will of God, I do not so take it as if sin had ever been pleasing to Him, or as if he simply wished that the precept which he had given should be violated. So far as the fall of Adam was the subversion of equity, and of well-constituted order, so far as it was contumacy against the Divine Law-giver, and the transgression of righteousness, certainly it was against the will of God; yet none of these things render it impossible that, for a certain cause, although to us unknown, he might will the fall of man.

It offends the ears of some, when it is said God willed this fall; but what else, I pray, is the permission of Him, who has the power of preventing, and in whose hand the whole matter is placed, but his will? I wish that men would rather suffer themselves to be judged by God, than that, with profane temerity, they should pass judgment upon him; but this is the arrogance of the flesh to subject God to its own test. I hold it as a settled axiom, that nothing is more unsuitable to the character of God than for us to say that man was created by Him for the purpose of being placed in a condition of suspense and doubt; wherefore I conclude, that, as it became the Creator, he had before determined with himself what should be man's future condition.

Hence the unskilful rashly infer, that man did not sin by free choice. For he himself perceives, being convicted by the testimony of his own conscience, that he has been too free in sinning. Whether he sinned by necessity, or by contingency, is another question; respecting which see the Institution, 158 and the treatise on Predestination.

And he said unto the woman The impious assail this passage with their sneers, because Moses ascribes eloquence to an animal which only faintly hisses with its forked tongue. And first they ask, at what time animals began to be mute, if they then had a distinct language, and one common to ourselves and them. The answer is ready; the serpent was not eloquent by nature, but when Satan, by divine permission, procured it as a fit instrument for his use, he uttered words also by its tongue, which God himself permitted. Nor do I doubt that Eve perceived it to be extraordinary, and on that account received with the greater avidity what she admired. Now, if men decide that whatever is unwonted must be fabulous, God could work no miracle. Here God, by accomplishing a work above the ordinary course of nature, constrains us to admire his power. If then, under this very pretext, we ridicule the power of God, because it is not familiar to us, are we not excessively preposterous? Besides, if it seems incredible that beasts should speak at the command of God, how has man the power of speech, but because God has formed his tongue? The Gospel declares, that voices were uttered in the air, without a tongue, to illustrate the glory of Christ; this is less probable to carnal reason, than that speech should be elicited from the mouth of brute animals. What then can the petulance of impious men find here deserving of their invective? In short, whosoever holds that God in heaven is the Ruler of the world, will not deny his power over the creatures, so that he can teach brute animals to speak when he pleases, just as he sometimes renders eloquent men speechless. Moreover the craftiness of Satan betrays itself in this, that he does not directly assail the man, but approaches him, as through a mine, in the person of his wife. This insidious method of attack is more than sufficiently known to us at the present day, and I wish we might learn prudently to guard ourselves against it. For he warily insinuates himself at that point at which he sees us to be the least fortified, that he may not be perceived till he should have penetrated where he wished. The woman does not flee from converse with the serpent, because hitherto no dissension had existed; she, therefore, accounted it simply as a domestic animal.

The question occurs, what had impelled Satan to contrive the destruction of man? Curious sophists have feigned that he burned with envy, when he foresaw that the Son of God was to be clothed in human flesh; but the speculation is frivolous. For since the Son of God was made man in order to restore us, who were already lost, from our miserable overthrow, how could that be foreseen which would never have happened unless man had sinned? If there be room for conjectures, it is more probable that he was driven by a kind of fury, (as the desperate are wont to be,) to hurry man away with himself into a participation of eternal ruin. But it becomes us to be content with this single reasons that since he was the adversary of God, he attempted to subvert the order established by Him. And, because he could not drag God from his throne, he assailed man, in whom His image shone. He knew that with the ruin of man the most dreadful confusion would be produced in the whole world, as indeed it happened, and therefore he endeavored, in the person of man, to obscure the glory of God. 159 Rejecting, therefore, all vain figments, let us hold fast this doctrine, which is both simple and solid.

Yea, has God said? This sentence is variously expounded and even distorted, partly because it is in itself obscure, and partly because of the ambiguous import of the Hebrew particle. The expression **■ ■ ■ ■** (aph ki,) sometimes signifies "although" or "indeed," and sometimes, "how much more." 160 David Kimchi takes it in this last sense, and thinks that many words had passed between them on both sides, before the

serpent descended to this point; namely, that having calumniated God on other accounts, he at length thus concludes, Hence it much more appears how envious and malignant he is towards you, because he has interdicted you from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But this exposition is not only forced, it is proved to be false by the reply of Eve. More correct is the explanation of the Chaldean paraphrast, 'Is it true that God has forbidden? etc.' 161 Again, to some this appears a simple , to others an ironical interrogation. It would be a simple interrogation, if it injected a doubt in the following manner: 'Can it be, that God should forbid the eating of any tree whatever?' but it would be ironical, if used for the purpose of dissipating vain fear; as, 'It greatly concerns God, indeed, whether you eat of the tree or not! It is, therefore, ridiculous that you should think it to be forbidden you!' I subscribe the more freely to the former opinion, because there is greater probability that Satan, in order to deceive more covertly, would gradually proceed with cautious prevarications to lead the woman to a contempt of the divine precept. There are some who suppose that Satan expressly denies the word which our first parents had heard, to have been the word of God. Others think, (with whom I rather agree,) that, under the pretext of inquiring into the cause, he would indirectly weaken their confidence in the word. And certainly the old interpreter has translated the expression, 'Why has God said?' 162 which, although I do not altogether approve, yet I have no doubt that the serpent urges the woman to seek out the cause, since otherwise he would not have been able to draw away her mind from God. Very dangerous is the temptation, when it is suggested to us, that God is not to be obeyed except so far as the reason of his command is apparent. The true rule of obedience is, that we being content with a bare command, should persuade ourselves that whatever he enjoins is just and right. But whosoever desires to be wise beyond measure, him will Satan, seeing he has cast off all reverence for God, immediately precipitate into open rebellion. As it respects grammatical construction, I think the expression ought to be translated, 'Has God even said?' or, 'Is it so that God has said?' 163 Yet the artifice of Satan is to be noticed, for he wished to inject into the woman a doubt which might induce her to believe that not to be the word of God, for which a plausible reason did not manifestly appear.

Of every tree of the garden Commentators offer a double interpretation of these words. The former supposes Satan, for the sake of increasing envy, to insinuate that all the trees had been forbidden. "Has God indeed enjoined that you should not dare to touch any tree?" The other interpretation, however, is, "Have you not then the liberty granted you of eating promiscuously from whatever tree you please?" The former more accords with the disposition of the devil, who would malignantly amplify the prohibitions and seems to be sanctioned by Eve's reply. For when she says, We do eat of all, one only excepted, she seems to repel the calumny concerning a general prohibition. But because the latter sense of the passage, which suggests the question concerning the simple and bare prohibition of God, was more apt to deceive, it is more credible that Satan, with his accustomed guile, should have begun his temptation from this point, 'Is it possible for God to be unwilling that you should gather the fruit of any tree whatever?' The answer of the woman, that only one tree was forbidden, she means to be a defense of the command; as if she would deny that it ought to seem harsh or burdensome, since God had only excepted one single tree out of so great an abundance and variety as he had granted to them. Thus, in these words there will be a concession, that one tree was indeed forbidden; then, the refutation of a calumny, because it is not arduous or difficult to abstain from one tree, when others, without number are supplied, of which the use is permitted. It was impossible for Eve more prudently or more courageously to repel the assault of Satan, than by objecting against him, that she and her husband had been so bountifully dealt with by the Lord, that the advantages granted to them were abundantly sufficient, for she intimates that they would be most ungrateful if, instead of being content with such affluence they should desire more than was lawful. When she says, God has forbidden them to eat or to touch, some suppose the second word to be added for the

purpose of charging God with too great severity, because he prohibited them even from the touch 164 But I rather understand that she hitherto remained in obedience, and expressed her pious disposition by anxiously observing the precept of God; only, in proclaiming the punishment, she begins to give ways by inserting the adverb "perhaps," 165 when God has certainly pronounced, "Ye shall die the death." 166 For although with the Hebrews ■■ (pen) does not always imply doubt, yet, since it is generally taken in this sense, I willingly embrace the opinion that the woman was beginning to waver. Certainly, she had not death so immediately before her eyes, should she become disobedient to God, as, she ought to have had. She clearly proves that her perception of the true danger of death was distant and cold.

4. And the serpent said unto the woman Satan now springs more boldly forward; and because he sees a breach open before him, he breaks through in a direct assault, for he is never wont to engage in open war until we voluntarily expose ourselves to him, naked and unarmed. He cautiously approaches us at first with blandishments; but when he has stolen in upon us, he dares to exalt himself petulantly and with proud confidence against God; just as he now seizing upon Eve's doubt, penetrates further, that he may turn it into a direct negative. It behoves us to be instructed, by much examples, to beware of his snares, and, by making timely resistance, to keep him far from us, that nearer access may not be permitted to him. He now, therefore, does not ask doubtingly, as before, whether or not the command of God, which he opposes, be true, but openly accuses God of falsehood, for he asserts that the word by which death was denounced is false and delusive. Fatal temptation! when while God is threatening us with death, we not only securely sleep, but hold God himself in derision!

5. For God doth know. There are those who think that God is here craftily praised by Satan, as if He never would prohibit men from the use of wholesome fruit. But they manifestly contradict themselves, for they at the some time confess that in the preceding member of the sentence he had already declared God to be unworthy of confidence, as one who had lied. Others suppose that he charges God with malignity and envy, as wishing to deprive man of his highest perfection; and this opinion is more probable than the other. Nevertheless, (according to my judgments) Satan attempts to prove what he had recently asserted, reasoning, however, from contraries: 167 God, he says, has interdicted to you the tree, that he may not be compelled to admit you to the participation of his glory; therefore, the fear of punishment is quite needless. In short, he denies that a fruit which is useful and salutary can be injurious. When he says, God does know, he censures God as being moved by jealousy: and as having given the command concerning the tree, for the purpose of keeping man in an inferior rank.

Ye shall be as gods. Some translate it, 'Ye shall be like angels.' It might even be rendered in the singular number, 'Ye shall be as God.' I have no doubt that Satan promises them divinity ; as if he had said, For no other reason does God defraud you of the tree of knowledge, than because he fears to have you as companions. Moreover, it is not without some show of reason that he makes the Divine glory, or equality with God, to consist in the perfect knowledge of good and evil; but it is a mere pretense, for the purpose of ensnaring the miserable woman. Because the desire of knowledge is naturally inherent in and happiness is supposed to be placed in it; but Eve erred in not regulating the measure of her knowledge by the will of God. And we all daily suffer under the same disease, because we desire to know more than is right, and more than God allows; whereas the principal point of wisdom is a well-regulated sobriety in obedience to God.

6. And when the woman saw This impure look of Eve, infected with the poison of concupiscence, was both the messenger and the witness of an impure heart. She could previously behold the tree with such sincerity, that no desire to eat of it affected her mind; for the faith she had in the word of God was the best

guardian of her heart, and of all her senses. But now, after the heart had declined from faith, and from obedience to the word, she corrupted both herself and all her senses, and depravity was diffused through all parts of her soul as well as her body. It is, therefore, a sign of impious defection, that the woman now judges the tree to be good for food, eagerly delights herself in beholding it, and persuades herself that it is desirable for the sake of acquiring wisdom; whereas before she had passed by it a hundred times with an unmoved and tranquil look. For now, having shaken off the bridle, her mind wanders dissolutely and intemperately, drawing the body with it to the same licentiousness. The word **לְהַסְכִּיל** (lehaskil ,) admits of two explanations: That the tree was desirable either to be looked upon or to impart prudence . I prefer the latter sense, as better corresponding with the temptation.

And gave also unto her husband with her From these words, some conjecture that Adam was present when his wife was tempted and persuaded by the serpent, which is by no means credible. Yet it might be that he soon joined her, and that, even before the woman tasted the fruit of the tree, she related the conversation held with the serpent, and entangled him with the same fallacies by which she herself had been deceived. Others refer the participle **יְמִינָהּ** (immah ,) "with her," to the conjugal bond, which may be received. But because Moses simply relates that he ate the fruit taken from the hands of his wife, the opinion has been commonly received, that he was rather captivated with her allurements than persuaded by Satan's impostures. 168 For this purpose the declaration of Paul is adduced,

'Adam was not deceived, but the woman.'

(1Ti 2:14.)

But Paul in that place, as he is teaching that the origin of evil was from the woman, only speaks comparatively. Indeed, it was not only for the sake of complying with the wishes of his wife, that he transgressed the law laid down for him; but being drawn by her into fatal ambition, he became partaker of the same defection with her. And truly Paul elsewhere states that sin came not by the woman, but by Adam himself, (Ro 5:12.) Then, the reproof which soon afterwards follows 'Behold, Adam is as one of us,' clearly proves that he also foolishly coveted more than was lawful, and gave greater credit to the flatteries of the devil than to the sacred word of God.

It is now asked, What was the sin of both of them? The opinion of some of the ancients, that they were allured by intemperance of appetite, is puerile. For when there was such an abundance of the choicest fruits what daintiness could there be about one particular kind? Augustine is more correct, who says, that pride was the beginning of all evils, and that by pride the human race was ruined. Yet a fuller definition of the sin may be drawn from the kind of temptation which Moses describes.

For first the woman is led away from the word of God by the wiles of Satan, through unbelief. 169 Wherefore, the commencement of the ruin by which the human race was overthrown was a defection from the command of God. But observe, that men then revolted from God, when, having forsaken his word, they lent their ears to the falsehoods of Satan. Hence we infer, that God will be seen and adored in his word; and, therefore, that all reverence for him is shaken off when his word is despised.

A doctrine most useful to be known, for the word of God obtains its due honor only with few so that they who rush onward with impunity in contempt of this word, yet arrogate to themselves a chief rank among the worshippers of God. But as God does not manifest himself to men otherwise than through the word, so neither is his majesty maintained, nor does his worship remain secure among us any longer than while we obey his word. Therefore, unbelief was the root of defection; just as faith alone unites us to God.

Hence flowed ambition and pride, so that the woman first, and then her husband, desired to exalt themselves against God. For truly they did exalt themselves against God, when, honor having been divinely conferred upon them, they not contented with such excellence, desired to know more than was lawful, in order that they might become equal with God. Here also monstrous ingratitude betrays itself. They had been made in the likeness of God; but this seems a small thing unless equality be added.

Now, it is not to be endured that designing and wicked men should labor in vain, as well as absurdly, to extenuate the sin of Adam and his wife. For apostasy is no light offense, but detestable wickedness, by which man withdraws himself from the authority of his Creator, yea, even rejects and denies him. Besides it was not simple apostasy, but combined with atrocious contumelies and reproaches against God himself. Satan accuses God of falsehoods of envy, and of malignity, and our first parents subscribe to a calumny thus vile and execrable.

At length, having despised the command of God, they not only indulge their own lust, but enslave themselves to the devil. If any one prefers a shorter explanation, we may say unbelief has opened the door to ambition, but ambition has proved the parent of rebellion, to the end that men, having cast aside the fear of God, might shake off his yoke. On this account, Paul teaches us that by the disobedience of Adam sin entered into the world. Let us imagine that there was nothing worse than the transgression of the command; we shall not even thus have succeeded far in extenuating the fault of Adam.

God, having both made him free in everything, and appointed him as king of the world, chose to put his obedience to the proof, in requiring abstinence from one tree alone. This condition did not please him. Perverse declaimers may plead in excuse, that the woman was allured by the beauty of the tree, and the man ensnared by the blandishments of Eve. Yet the milder the authority of God, the less excusable was their perverseness in rejecting it. But we must search more deeply for the origin and cause of sin.

For never would they have dared to resist God, unless they had first been incredulous of his word. And nothing allured them to covet the fruit but mad ambition. So long as they firmly believing in God's word, freely suffered themselves to be governed by Him, they had serene and duly regulated affections. For, indeed, their best restraint was the thoughts which entirely occupied their minds, that God is just, that nothing is better than to obey his commands and that to be loved by him is the consummation of a happy life.

But after they had given place to Satan's blasphemy, they began, like persons fascinated, to lose reason and judgment; yea, since they were become the slaves of Satan; he held their very senses bound. Still further, we know that sins are not estimated in the sight of God by the external appearance, but by the inward disposition.

Again, it appears to many absurd, that the defection of our first parents is said to have proved the destruction of the whole race; and, on this accounts they freely bring an accusation against God. Pelagius, on the other hand, lest, as he falsely feared, the corruption of human nature should be charged upon God, ventured to deny original sin. But an error so gross is plainly refuted, not only by solid testimonies of Scripture, but also by experience itself. The corruption of our nature was unknown to the philosophers who, in other respects, were sufficiently, and more than sufficiently, acute. Surely this stupor itself was a signal proof of original sin. For all who are not utterly blind perceive that no part of us is sound; that the mind is smitten with blindness, and infected with innumerable errors; that all the affections of the heart are full of stubbornness and wickedness; that vile lusts, or other diseases equally fatal, reign there; and that all

the senses burst forth 170 with many vices. Since, however none but God alone is a proper judge in this cause, we must acquiesce in the sentence which he has pronounced in the Scriptures. In the first place, Scripture clearly teaches us that we are born vicious and perverse. The cavil of Pelagius was frivolous, that sin proceeded from Adam by imitation. For David, while still enclosed in his mother's womb, could not be an imitator of Adam, yet he confesses that he was conceived in sin, (Ps 51:5.) A fuller proof of this matter, and a more ample definition of original sin, may be found in the Institutes; 171 yet here, in a single word, I will attempt to show how far it extends. Whatever in our nature is vicious -- since it is not lawful to ascribe it to God -- we justly reject as sin. 172 But Paul (Ro 3:10) teaches that corruption does not reside in one part only, but pervades the whole soul, and each of its faculties. Whence it follows, that they childishly err who regard original sin as consisting only in lust, and in the inordinate motion of the appetites, whereas it seizes upon the very seat of reason, and upon the whole heart. To sin is annexed condemnation, 173 or, as Paul speaks,

'By man came sin, and by sin, death,' (Ro 5:12.)

Wherefore he elsewhere pronounces us to be 'the children of wrath;' as if he would subject us to an eternal curse, (Eph 2:3.) In short, that we are despoiled of the excellent gifts of the Holy Spirit, of the light of reason, of justice, and of rectitude, and are prone to every evil; that we are also lost and condemned, and subjected to death, is both our hereditary condition, and, at the same time, a just punishment which God, in the person of Adam, has indicted on the human race. Now, if any one should object, that it is unjust for the innocent to bear the punishment of another's sin, I answer, whatever gifts God had conferred upon us in the person of Adam he had the best right to take away, when Adam wickedly fell. Nor is it necessary to resort to that ancient figment of certain writers, that souls are derived by descent from our first parents. 174 For the human race has not naturally derived corruption through its descent from Adam; but that result is rather to be traced to the appointment of God, who, as he had adorned the whole nature of mankind with most excellent endowments in one man, so in the same man he again denuded it. But now, from the time in which we were corrupted in Adam, we do not bear the punishment of another's offense, but are guilty by our own fault.

A question is mooted by some, concerning the time of this fall, or rather ruin. The opinion has been pretty generally received, that they fell on the day they were created; and, therefore Augustine writes, that they stood only for six hours. The conjecture of others, that the temptation was delayed by Satan till the Sabbath, in order to profane that sacred day, is but weak. And certainly, by instances like these, all pious persons are admonished sparingly to indulge themselves in doubtful speculations. As for myself, since I have nothing to assert positively respecting the time, so I think it may be gathered from the narration of Moses, that they did not long retain the dignity they had received; for as soon as he has said they were created, he passes, without the mention of any other thing, to their fall. If Adam had lived but a moderate space of time with his wife, the blessing of God would not have been unfruitful in the production of offspring; but Moses intimates that they were deprived of God's benefits before they had become accustomed to use them. I therefore readily subscribe to the exclamation of Augustine, 'O wretched freewill, which, while yet entire, had so little stability!' And, to say no more respecting the shortness of the time, the admonition of Bernard is worthy of remembrance: 'Since we read that a fall so dreadful took place in Paradise, what shall we do on the dunghill?' At the same time, we must keep in memory by what pretext they were led into this delusion so fatal to themselves, and to all their posterity. Plausible was the adulation of Satan, 'Ye shall know good and evil;' but that knowledge was therefore accursed, because it was sought in preference to the favor of God. Wherefore, unless we wish, of our own accord, to fasten the

same snares upon ourselves, let us learn entirely to depend upon the sole will of God, whom we acknowledge as the Author of all good. And, since the Scripture everywhere admonishes us of our nakedness and poverty, and declares that we may recover in Christ what we have lost in Adams let us, renouncing all self-confidence, offer ourselves empty to Christ, that he may fill us with his own riches.

7. And the eyes of them both were opened . It was necessary that the eyes of Eve should be veiled till her husband also was deceived; but now both, being alike bound by the chain of an unhappy consent, begin to be sensible of their wretchedness although they are not yet affected with a deep knowledge of their fault. They are ashamed of their nakedness, yet, though convinced, they do not humble themselves before God, nor fear his judgements as they ought; they even do not cease to resort to evasions. Some progress, however, is made; for whereas recently they would, like giants, assault heaven by storm; now, confounded with a sense of their own ignominy, they flee to hiding-places. And truly this opening of the eyes in our first parents to discern their baseness, clearly proves them to have been condemned by their own judgment. They are not yet summoned to the tribunal of God; there is none who accuses them; is not then the sense of shame, which rises spontaneously, a sure token of guilt? The eloquence, therefore, of the whole world will avail nothing to deliver those from condemnation, whose own conscience has become the judge to compel them to confess their fault. It rather becomes us all to open our eyes, that, being confounded at our own disgrace, we may give to God the glory which is his due. God created man flexible; and not only permitted, but willed that he should be tempted. For he both adapted the tongue of the serpent beyond the ordinary use of nature, to the devil's purpose, just as if any one should furnish another with a sword and armor; and then, though the unhappy event was foreknown by him, he did not apply the remedy, which he had the power to do. On the other hand, when we come to speak of man, he will be found to have sinned voluntarily, and to have departed from God, his Maker, by a movement of the mind not less free than perverse. Nor ought we to call that a light fault, which, refusing credit to the word of God, exalted itself against him by impious and sacrilegious emulation, which would not be subject to his authority, and which, finally, both proudly and perfidiously revolted from him. Therefore, whatever sin and fault there is in the fall of our first parents remains with themselves; but there is sufficient reason why the eternal counsel of God preceded it, though that reason is concealed from us. We see, indeed, some good fruit daily springing from a ruin so dreadful, inasmuch as God instructs us in humility by our miseries and then more clearly illustrates his own goodness; for his grace is more abundantly poured forth, through Christ, upon the world, than it was imparted to Adam in the beginning. Now, if the reason why this is so lies beyond our reach, it is not wonderful that the secret counsel of God should be to us like a labyrinth. 175

And they sewed fig - leaves together . What I lately said, that they had not been brought either by true shame or by serious fear to repentance, is now more manifest. They sew together for themselves girdles of leaves. 176 For what end? That they may keep God at a distance, as by an invincible barrier! Their sense of evil, therefore, was only confused, and combined with dulness, as is wont to be the case in unquiet sleep. There is none of us who does not smile at their folly, since, certainly, it was ridiculous to place such a covering before the eyes of God. In the meanwhile, we are all infected with the same disease; for, indeed, we tremble, and are covered with shame at the first compunctions of conscience; but self-indulgence soon steals in, and induces us to resort to vain trifles, as if it were an easy thing to delude God. Therefore unless conscience be more closely pressed there is no shadow of excuse too faint and fleeting to obtain our acquiescence; and even if there be no pretext whatever, we still make pleasures for ourselves, and, by an oblivion of three days' duration, we imagine that we are well covered. 177 In short, the cold and faint 178 knowledge of sin, which is inherent in the minds of men, is here described by Moses, in order that they may be rendered inexcusable. 179 Then (as we have already said) Adam and

his wife were yet ignorant of their own vileness, since with a covering so light they attempted to hide themselves from the presence of God.

8. And they heard the voice of the Lord God . As soon as the voice of God sounds, Adam and Eve perceive that the leaves by which they thought themselves well protected are of no avail. Moses here relates nothing which does not remain in human nature, and may be clearly discerned at the present day. The difference between good and evil is engraven on the hearts of all, as Paul teaches, (Ro 2:15;) but all bury the disgrace of their vices under flimsy leaves till God, by his voice, strikes inwardly their consciences.

Hence, after God had shaken them out of their torpor, their alarmed consciences compelled them to hear his voice. Moreover, what Jerome translates, 'at the breeze after midday,' 180 is, in the Hebrew, 'at the wind of the day;' 181 the Greeks, omitting the word 'wind,' have put 'at the evening.' 182 Thus the opinion has prevailed, that Adam, having sinned about noon, was called to judgment about sunset. But I rather incline to a different conjecture, namely, that being covered with their garment, they passed the night in silence and quiet, the darkness aiding their hypocrisy; then, about sunrise, being again thoroughly awakened, they recollected themselves.

We know that at the rising of the sun the air is naturally excited; together, then, with this gentle breeze, God appeared; but Moses would improperly have called the evening air that of the day . Others take the word as describing the southern part or region; and certainly רוּחַ (ruach) sometimes among the Hebrews signifies one or another region of the world. 183 Others think that the time is here specified as one least exposed to terrors, for in the clear light there is the greater security; and thus, they conceive, is fulfilled what the Scripture declares that they who have accusing consciences are always anxious and disquieted, even without any danger.

To this point they refer what is added respecting the wind, as if Adam was terrified at the sound of a falling leaf. But what I have advanced is more true and simple, that what was hid under the darkness of the night was detected at the rising of the sun. Yet I do not doubt that some notable symbol of the presence of God was in that gentle breeze; for although (as I have lately said) the rising sun is wont daily to stir up some breath of air, this is not opposed to the supposition that God gave some extraordinary sign of his approach, to arouse the consciences of Adam and his wife.

For, since he is in himself incomprehensible, he assumes, when he wishes to manifest himself to men, those marks by which he may be known. David calls the winds the messengers of God, on the wings of which he rides, or rather flies, with incredible velocity. (Ps 104:3.) But, as often as he sees good, he uses the winds, as well as other created things, beyond the order of nature, according to his own will. Therefore, Moses, in here mentioning the wind, intimates (according to my judgment) that some unwonted and remarkable symbol of the Divine presence was put forth which should vehemently affect the minds of our first parents. This resource, namely, that of fleeing from God's presence, was nothing better than the former; since God, with his voice alone, soon brings back the fugitives. It is written,

'Whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I traverse the sea, if I take wings and ascend above the clouds, if I descend into the profound abyss, thou, Lord, wilt be everywhere,'

(Ps 139:7.)

This we all confess to be true; yet we do not, in the meantime, cease to snatch at vain subterfuges; and we fancy that shadows of any kind will prove a most excellent defense. Nor is it to be here omitted, that he, who had found a few leaves to be unavailing, fled to whole trees; for so we are accustomed, when shut out from frivolous cavils, to frame new excuses, which may hide us as under a denser shade. When Moses says that Adam and his wife hid themselves 'in the midst of the tree 184 of Paradise,' I understand that the singular member is put for the plural; as if he had said, among the trees.

9. And the Lord God called unto Adam . They had been already smitten by the voice of God, but they lay confounded under the trees, until another voice more effectually penetrated their minds. Moses says that Adam was called by the Lord. Had he not been called before? The former, however, was a confused sound, which had no sufficient force to press upon the conscience. Therefore God now approaches nearer, and from the tangled thicket of trees 185 draws him, however unwilling and resisting, forth into the midst. In the same manner we also are alarmed at the voice of God, as soon as his law sounds in our ears; but presently we snatch at shadows, until he, calling upon us more vehemently, compels us to come forward, arraigned at his tribunal. Paul calls this the life of the Law, 186 when it slays us by charging us with our sins. For as long as we are pleased with ourselves, and are inflated with a false notion that we are alive, the law is dead to us, because we blunt its point by our hardness; but when it pierces us more sharply, we are driven into new terrors.

10. And he said , I heard thy voice . Although this seems to be the confession of a dejected and humbled man, it will nevertheless soon appear that he was not yet properly subdued, nor led to repentance. He imputes his fear to the voice of God, and to his own nakedness, as, if he had never before heard God speaking without being alarmed, and had not been even sweetly exhilarated by his speech. His excessive stupidity appears in this, that he fails to recognize the cause of shame in his sin; he, therefore, shows that he does not yet so feel his punishment, as to confess his fault. In the meantime, he proves what I said before to be true, that original sin does not reside in one part of the body only, but holds its dominion over the whole man, and so occupies every part of the soul, that none remains in its integrity; for, notwithstanding his fig-leaves, he still dreads the presence of God.

11. Who told thee that thou wast naked ? An indirect reprimand to reprove the sottishness of Adam in not perceiving his fault in his punishment, as if it had been said, not simply that Adam was afraid at the voice of God, but that the voice of his judge was formidable to him because he was a sinner. Also, that not his nakedness, but the turpitude of the vice by which he had defiled himself, was the cause of fear; and certainly he was guilty of intolerable impiety against God in seeking the origin of evil in nature. Not that he would accuse God in express terms; but deploring his own misery, and dissembling the fact that he was himself the author of it, he malignantly transfers to God the charge which he ought to have brought against himself. What the Vulgate translates, 'Unless it be that thou hast eaten of the tree,' 187 is rather an interrogation. 188 God asks, in the language of doubt, not as if he were searching into some disputable matter, but for the purpose of piercing more acutely the stupid man, who, laboring under fatal disease, is yet unconscious of his malady; just as a sick man, who complains that he is burning, yet thinks not of fever. Let us, however remember that we shall profit nothing by any prevarications but that God will always bind us by a most just accusation in the sin of Adam. The clause, "whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat," is added to remove the pretext of ignorance. For God intimates that Adam was admonished in time; and that he fell from no other cause than this, that he knowingly and voluntarily brought destruction upon himself. Again, the atrocious nature of sin is marked in this transgression and rebellion; for, as nothing is more acceptable to God than obedience, so nothing is more intolerable than

when men, having spurned his commandments, obey Satan and their own lust.

12. The woman whom thou gavest to be with me . The boldness of Adam now more clearly betrays itself; for, so far from being subdued, he breaks forth into coarser blasphemy. He had before been tacitly expostulating with God; now he begins openly to contend with him, and triumphs as one who has broken through all barriers. Whence we perceive what a refractory and indomitable creature man began to be when he became alienated from God; for a lively picture of corrupt nature is presented to us in Adam from the moment of his revolt.

'Every one,' says James, 'is tempted by his own concupiscence,' (Jas 1:14;)

and even Adam, not otherwise than knowingly and willingly, had set himself, as a rebel, against God. Yet, just as if conscious of no evil, he puts his wife as the guilty party in his place. 'Therefore I have eaten,' he says, 'because she gave.' And not content with this, he brings, at the same time, an accusation against God; objecting that the wife, who had brought ruin upon him, had been given by God. We also, trained in the same school of original sin, are too ready to resort to subterfuges of the same kind; but to no purpose; for howsoever incitements and instigations from other quarters may impel us, yet the unbelief which seduces us from obedience to God is within us; the pride is within which brings forth contempt.

13. And the Lord God said unto the woman . God contends no further with the man, nor was it necessary; for he aggravates rather than diminishes his crime, first by a frivolous defense, then by an impious disparagement of God, in short, though he rages he is yet held convicted. The Judge now turns to the woman, that the cause of both being heard, he may at length pronounce sentence. The old interpreter thus renders God's address: 'Why hast thou done this?' 189 But the Hebrew phrase has more vehemence; for it is the language of one who wonders as at something prodigious. It ought therefore rather to be rendered, 'How hast thou done this?' 190 as if he had said, 'How was it possible that thou shouldst bring thy mind to be so perverse a counsellor to thy husband?'

The serpent beguiled me . Eve ought to have been confounded at the portentous wickedness concerning which she was admonished. Yet she is not struck dumb, but, after the example of her husband, transfers the charge to another; by laying the blame on the serpent, she foolishly, indeed, and impiously, thinks herself absolved. For her answer comes at length to this: 'I received from the serpent what thou hadst forbidden; the serpent, therefore, was the impostor.' But who compelled Eve to listen to his fallacies, and even to place confidence in them more readily than in the word of God? Lastly, how did she admit them, but by throwing open and betraying that door of access which God had sufficiently fortified? But the fruit of original sin everywhere presents itself; being blind in its own hypocrisy, it would gladly render God mute and speechless. And whence arise daily so many murmurs, but because God does not hold his peace whenever we choose to blind ourselves?

14. And the Lord God said unto the serpent . He does not interrogate the serpent as he had done the man and the woman; because, in the animal itself there was no sense of sin, and because, to the devil he would hold out no hope of pardon. He might truly, by his own authority, have pronounced sentence against Adam and Eve, though unheard. Why then does he call them to undergo examination, except that he has a care for their salvation? This doctrine is to be applied to our benefit. There would be no need of any trial of the cause, or of any solemn form of judgment, in order to condemn us; wherefore, while God insists upon extorting a confession from us, he acts rather as a physician than as a judge. There is the same reason why the Lords before he imposes punishment on man, begins with the serpent. For corrective

punishments (as we shall see) are of a different kind, and are inflicted with the design of leading us to repentance; but in this there is nothing of the sort.

It is, however, doubtful to whom the words refer, whether to the serpent or to the devil. Moses, indeed, says that the serpent was a skillful and cunning animal; yet it is certain, that, when Satan was devising the destruction of man, the serpent was guiltless of his fraud and wickedness. Wherefore, many explain this whole passage allegorically, and plausible are the subtleties which they adduce for this purpose. But when all things are more accurately weighed, readers endued with sound judgment will easily perceive that the language is of a mixed character; for God so addresses the serpent that the last clause belongs to the devil. If it seem to any one absurd, that the punishment of another's fraud should be exacted from a brute animal, the solution is at hand; that, since it had been created for the benefit of man, there was nothing improper in its being accursed from the moment that it was employed for his destruction. And by this act of vengeance God would prove how highly he estimates the salvation of man; just as if a father should hold the sword in execration by which his son had been slain. And here we must consider, not only the kind of authority which God has over his creatures, but also the end for which he created them, as I have recently said. For the equity of the divine sentence depends on that order of nature which he has sanctioned; it has, therefore, no affinity whatever with blind revenge. In this manner the reprobate will be delivered over into eternal fire with their bodies; which bodies, although they are not self-moved, are yet the instruments of perpetrating evil. So whatever wickedness a man commits is ascribed to his hands, and, therefore, they are deemed polluted; while yet they do not more themselves, except so far as, under the impulse of a depraved affection of the heart, they carry into execution what has been there conceived. According to this method of reasoning, the serpent is said to have done what the devil did by its means. But if God so severely avenged the destruction of man upon a brute animal, much less did he spare Satan, the author of the whole evil, as will appear more clearly in the concluding part of the address.

Thou art cursed above all cattle This curse of God has such force against the serpents as to render it despicable, and scarcely tolerable to heaven and earth, leading a life exposed to, and replete with, constant terrors. Besides, it is not only hateful to us, as the chief enemy of the human race, but, being separated also from other animals, carries on a kind of war with nature; for we see it had before been so gentle that the woman did not flee from its familiar approach. But what follows has greater difficulty because that which God denounces as a punishment seems to be natural; namely, that it should creep upon its belly and eat dust. This objection has induced certain men of learning and ability to say, that the serpent had been accustomed to walk with an erect body before it had been abused by Satan. 191 There will, however, be no absurdity in supposing, that the serpent was again consigned to that former condition, to which he was already naturally subject. For thus he, who had exalted himself against the image of God, was to be thrust back into his proper rank; as if it had been said, 'Thou, a wretched and filthy animal, hast dared to rise up against man, whom I appointed to the dominion of the whole world; as if, truly, thou, who art fixed to the earth, hadst any right to penetrate into heaven. Therefore, I now throw thee back again to the place whence thou hast attempted to emerge, that thou mayest learn to be contented with thy lot, and no more exalt thyself, to man's reproach and injury.' In the meanwhile he is recalled from his insolent motions to his accustomed mode of going, in such a way as to be, at the same time, condemned to perpetual infamy. To eat dust is the sign of a vile and sordid nature. This (in my opinion) is the simple meaning of the passage, which the testimony of Isaiah also confirms, (Isa 65:25;) for while he promises under the reign of Christ, the complete restoration of a sound and well-constituted nature, he records, among other things, that dust shall be to the serpent for bread. Wherefore, it is not necessary to seek for any fresh change in each particular which Moses here relates.

15. I will put enmity . I interpret this simply to mean that there should always be the hostile strife between the human race and serpents, which is now a

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