

The Primitive and Present State of Man Compared

by Samuel Davies

The sermon compares the primitive and present state of man, highlighting the ruin caused by Adam's sin and the redemption brought by Christ's righteousness.

Topics: "Original Sin", "Redemption Through Christ"

Description

Samuel Davies preaches about the ruin of mankind by the fall of Adam and the method of redemption by Jesus Christ. He emphasizes the importance of understanding these truths and feeling suitably affected by them for salvation. Davies explains how the sin of Adam subjected all mankind to death and various calamities, highlighting the disparity between the present and primitive state of man. He argues that the miseries and death of mankind are proof of the imputation of Adam's sin to them, and even the brutal creation suffers as a consequence of the fall. Davies urges the audience to reflect on their degeneracy, embrace humility, and seek deliverance through Jesus Christ.

Transcript

The Primitive and Present State of Man Compared

by Samuel Davies, Hanover, Virginia; December 10, 1758

"For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man; how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ." Romans 5:17

The ruin of mankind by the fall of Adam, and the method of redemption by Jesus Christ, are subjects of the utmost importance in the Christian religion. And it is necessary we should have some competent knowledge of them, and be suitably affected with them: otherwise, we cannot be recovered from the ruins of the grand apostasy, nor enjoy the salvation of the gospel. I do not mean, that it is absolutely necessary for any man, much less for plain and illiterate understandings, to know all the niceties of theological controversy, and to be able to solve all the difficulties and objections--which the ignorance, arrogance, or curiosity of wrangling and presumptuous disputants have started upon these heads. But the substance and importance of the truths themselves, their principal consequences as to us, and the duties resulting from them--these we ought to understand and feel.

This knowledge and sense of these things, is as necessary to our salvation, as a sense of sickness, and a knowledge of the means of cure--is to the recovery of the sick. And, whatever obscurity and perplexity attend these subjects, we have sufficient light from our Bibles, from observation and experience, to obtain such a degree of knowledge and sense of them, as is sufficient for this purpose.

These subjects, therefore, shall now employ an hour of your precious time. And may the blessed Spirit of God enable me to reveal, and you to receive--the knowledge of his own truths, without adulteration, without corrupt mixtures of human invention, and without partiality and self-flattery! And may He deeply impress our hearts with the knowledge we acquire, and make it a lively principle of practice!

The ruin and recovery of mankind, by the first and second Adam, is the subject of the apostle in the context. His immediate design is to show, the parity in some respects, and the disparity in others, between these two public people.

We have an instance of this parity and disparity in my text.

The instance of PARITY in this: That as the offence of Adam gave death a universal dominion over all his numerous posterity; so the grace and righteousness of Christ procure and bestow everlasting life to all those who receive these blessings. "As, by one man's offence, death reigned by one; so they, who receive the abundance of grace, and the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ."

The instance of DISPARITY is this: The superior efficacy of the grace and righteousness of Christ--to procure and bestow life; above that of the offence of Adam--to subject mankind to the dominion of death. "If, by one man's offence, death reigned, how much more shall they reign in life, who receive the abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness from Jesus Christ?"

If the offence of Adam was sufficient for the condemnation of all his posterity--how much more sufficient is the grace and righteousness of the second Adam, to justify and save all who have a saving interest in him.

The expression is very strong and emphatic-- "The abundance of grace;" an overflowing, a redundance of grace; not only sufficient--but more than sufficient to repair all the ruinous consequences of Adam's fall; sufficient to procure more blessings, than he or his posterity would have enjoyed--even if he had never offended. And sufficient to render the reign, the dominion of life, more glorious and triumphant, than his sin rendered the reign or dominion of death dismal and irresistible. We may gain more by Jesus Christ--than we lost in Adam. He cannot only raise human nature out of its ruins--but repair it in a more glorious form, than that in which it came from the hands of its divine Author at first!

The two great truths which the Apostle has chiefly in view in my text, are these:

that by the sin of Adam--all mankind are subjected to the power of death;

and, that all who truly receive the blessings of redemption through Christ, are delivered from the death to which they are exposed by the sin of Adam, and also entitled to a more glorious and happy life, than that which they lost by Adam's sin.

Or, in other words, that the blessings of redemption, by Christ, are even more than sufficient to recover us from all the ruinous consequences of the fall of Adam.

These, I say, are the truths the apostle has chiefly in view--and these I intend chiefly to illustrate. But I would also make some transient remarks on one or two strong and beautiful expressions, which the apostle uses in my text; and which are certainly worthy of notice.

"Death reigned." How dreadfully striking is the representation! Death is represented as a mighty all-conquering king, that reigned undethroned, uncontrolled, through a long succession of thousands of years, over all mankind, from generation to generation; keeping them in slavery and terror; arresting, imprisoning, stripping them of all their enjoyments, and depriving them even of their lives--at his pleasure.

Death, in this sense, reigns . . .

king of kings--as well as of their subjects;

the sovereign lord of absolute monarchs--as well as of their slaves;

the conqueror of conquerors--as well as of their helpless captives.

The power of death is royal, the power of a king! Death reigns! This wide world is his kingdom--the kingdom of death! And all mankind are his subjects, his slaves! How shocking is the idea!

"By the trespass of the one man--death reigned through that one man" It was the one offence of one man, which gave death his royal dominion. Then death was proclaimed and crowned king of our world--and all mankind pronounced his subjects. Oh! the unspeakable mischiefs of that one offence!

But what a glorious contrast strikes our view, in the antithesis, as to those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness! "They shall reign"-- they shall be made kings, invested with royal power and dignity. They shall reign in life--Life shall be the wide-extended territory over which they shall have full dominion. Life shall be the ornament of their crown, the regalia of their reign. They shall reign in life, in opposition to the reign of death; they shall have dominion over that gloomy lord of the sons of Adam. The offspring of the dust, the dying children of Adam the sinner, the feeble mortals that were once the subjects, the slaves of the tyrant death--shall reign in life!

What a glorious, surprising, miraculous advancement is this! And for this they are indebted, not to themselves--but to the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, who has conquered death for them, and dignified them with life and immortality. "They shall reign in life, by one--Jesus Christ." One Jesus Christ is sufficient to accomplish this illustrious revolution. Oh! what wonders has he wrought! and how worthy is he to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing! Revelation 5:12.

The emphasis will appear still farther, if we take notice of the comparison implied in the text. If death reigned--then much more shall they reign. If death reigned by one offence--then much more shall they reign by the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness. If death reigned by one Adam, much more shall they reign by one--Jesus Christ. He is much more able to quicken, to save, and glorify--than the first Adam was to kill and destroy. His spiritual children shall reign in life, much more absolutely, illustriously, and uncontrollably, than ever death reigned over the sons of Adam.

What a glorious exaltation is this! To have the same command over life--as death has had over the enjoyments and lives of mankind! To be as victorious over death, and all its host of sickness and sorrow--as death once was over life and all its pleasures! What a grand and noble representation!

I now proceed to the ILLUSTRATION of the great truths the apostle has chiefly in view in this verse; and I begin with the first.

That, by the sin of Adam, all mankind are subjected to, the power of death.

It is the more necessary to insist upon this, as the doctrine of original sin, as it is commonly called, is not only disputed in our age and country--but too generally denied, and represented as a Calvinistic fiction, supported neither by Scripture nor reason, inferring blasphemous reflections upon the divine perfections, and degrading the dignity of human nature.

We now hear eulogies upon the powers of man, the dignity of his nature, and I know not what: as though these powers had never been shattered by the first fall.

We often hear and read such harangues as these, "Can we suppose that a righteous and good God would inflict punishment upon millions of millions of his own creatures, for an offence committed by another so long before they had a being; for an offence in which they had no concurrence, and which they could not possibly have prevented? Is this consistent with the mercy or the justice of God? What horrid ideas must this raise in our minds of our heavenly Father--as an arbitrary, cruel tyrant, that dooms us to bear his displeasure for a crime in which we had no hand! Has not this doctrine a tendency to cool our love, and excite our horror of him, as the enemy of the race of man? And does it not also tend to cherish a base and sneaking spirit, from an apprehension that we are degraded depraved creatures, instead of that conscious greatness of mind, which proceeds from a sense of the dignity of human nature?"

We are also told, "That as this is not the doctrine of reason, no neither is it that of revelation; that there are but few passages of Scripture that so much as seem to countenance it; and that these will easily admit of another sense: that this, however, cannot be the sense of them, because it is contrary to reason, which a revelation from God can never contradict."

A great deal to this purpose is pleaded; and the representation is so popular and pleasing, as flattering their vanity--that mankind are naturally disposed to embrace it! And those are looked upon as the generous friends of human nature, who entertain such high sentiments of man; whereas those who look upon mankind as a degraded race of creatures--are esteemed intolerant, sour, malevolent creatures, who would dishonor the noble workmanship of God, and overwhelm themselves and others with melancholy.

But, let us not be deterred by this, from an impartial examination of the subject. It is likely that in this, as well as in other matters of difference, both parties have gone to extremes; and we are most likely to find the truth in the midway between them. Moderation is a virtue, and also a guide to truth; and may it always actuate and direct our minds!

You may observe, that it is not my present design, nor that of my text, to consider that part of original sin which consists in the corruption of our nature derived from Adam; but only that which consists in the imputation of his guilt to us--or our exposedness to punishment, on account of his sin.

Here I would inquire, whether we do suffer punishment on account of Adam's first sin? and how far this punishment may justly extend?

To discover this, I shall compare the primitive and present state of our world, and of mankind in it, as it is represented to us by revelation, reason, experience, and observation.

If the present state of our world is the same with that in which Adam was created, and if all mankind now are placed in the same state and circumstances that he was placed in, while in innocence--then we may conclude, that his posterity do not suffer, or are not punished for his sin; or that the guilt of it is not imputed to them.

But if our world is thrown into disorder since his fall, rendered less commodious and more injurious to mankind; and, as it were, branded with the displeasure of God; if mankind, since his fall, groan under a variety of miseries, to which man in his primitive state was not subject; miseries, which cannot justly be inflicted upon a race of innocent creatures, and which are evident indications and effects of divine vengeance; if these miseries are evidently inflicted upon mankind for the sin of their first father, and not their own; if they have lost that holiness which adorned human nature, when first formed, and are morally corrupt and depraved--if this, I say, is the case--then it is evident, we are a fallen race, and lie under the penal effects of Adam's offence.

Now, if we take a view of the primitive state of our world, and of man in it, as it is given us by Moses--the ancient Jewish historian and law-giver in the beginning of Genesis, we shall find it vastly different from the present state.

In the primitive state, the world was so constituted, as to furnish man with the supports and comforts of life, without hard labor and toil. This is evident from the gracious grants made to the new-made man: "And God said: I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food." Genesis 1:29.

This is also evident, from the curse denounced upon the earth after man's fall. Genesis 3:17-19. "Unto Adam God said: Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return!"

This loss of fruitfulness in the earth--or its fruitfulness in thorns and thistles, and things of no use--this toil and sweat to procure even bread, the most common support of life--had no place in the state of innocence, because it is here expressly denounced as the punishment of Adam's sin. But that cannot be threatened or inflicted as a punishment of an offence, which the person endured before his offence. That the state of innocence was a state of ease and spontaneous plenty, we may infer also from the fatherly care of the Creator, in planting a garden in Eden, richly furnished with every tree pleasant to the eye, or good for food, and placing the man there to look after it, not for his toil--but for his pleasure, and to live upon the divine bounty, spontaneously springing out of the earth. Genesis 2:8, 9.

This is one instance of the dissimilitude between the primitive state of our earth--and the present. Instead of this universal fertility of the earth, and the spontaneous plenty of Eden--how great a part of the globe lies waste, in hideous, sandy deserts, in wildernesses of useless or noxious shrubs, in bleak and naked mountains, and horrid abrupt ridges of barren rocks! What intemperate seasons, what parching droughts, and drowning rains, what nipping frosts and withering heats! What devastations by earthquakes and floods, what blastings and mildews, what consumptions by wild beasts, by locusts, caterpillars, and swarms of nameless insects--are the fruits of the earth subject to!

And what scanty harvests, what severe famines and dearths proceed from these causes! How many pine away and die by this scarcity! What coarse, insipid, and unwholesome provisions are a great part of mankind obliged to live upon, especially in the eternal winter of Iceland and Greenland; the burning, sandy wastes of Africa; and other barren, inhospitable climates?

And is this the paradisaic state of our earth? Did it come out of the hands of its Maker exposed to such disorders, and so scantily furnished with provisions for the sustenance and comfort of its inhabitants? Does it appear like a region designed for the residence of a race of creatures in favor with their Creator? Or, rather does it not appear, like the wilds of Siberia, a country into which criminals are transported, and which bears the evident marks of the displeasure of its Maker?

Does not its present disordered state pronounce upon all the sons of Adam, the curse once denounced against Adam, "Cursed is the ground for your sake!" May we not read this curse in every brier and bramble, in every tract of barren land, in every blasted field and scanty harvest? It is evident, the curse affects the ground, not only as to Adam--but also his posterity, through all generations; and, therefore, as it was once inflicted, so it is still continued, on account of his SIN, for which they suffer, as well as himself.

Again; is the present state of labor and toil the same with the primitive state of man? It must be owned, that the life of Adam in Paradise was not a life of idleness--for such a life cannot be a happiness--but a burden, to a reasonable creature formed for action. It must also be owned, that a gracious God, according to his usual art, has brought good out of evil, and turned the labor and sweat inflicted at the fall as a curse, into a blessing--as it prevents much sin, which men in a state of idleness would fall into. For none are more liable to temptation, or more ready to employ themselves in doing evil--than the idle. And hence we see the general prevalence of vice, irreligion, and debauched pleasures among the rich, who can support themselves without labor.

But then this happy conversion of the curse into a blessing, is altogether owing to the dispensation of grace in Christ, or the new covenant, under which God has been pleased to place our world, after the breach of the first covenant. This degree of labor and toil, as it was originally imposed upon Adam, and is still continued upon his posterity--is a curse, a proper punishment for his sin. This is evident from the form of its first denunciation, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you--Cursed is the ground because of you." That is, because you have sinned, therefore, cursed is the ground for your sake; and, therefore, "through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground!"

This, you see, was the curse of a broken law, the punishment of sin, in its original design, whatever new turn may be given to it by the hand of a Mediator, under a dispensation of grace. And it has eventually, as well as in its own nature, proved a curse in all ages.

What labor and fatigue, what hurry and distraction of business run through all ranks of mankind, except a few idle drones, whose indolence is more uneasy than labor itself! What intense application, what anxious contrivance, what painful labor of the head, if not of the hand, exhaust even those who get their livings by more genteel methods--the statesmen, the lawyer, the merchant, etc.!

But if we descend to the lower classes of mankind, the mechanic, the farmer, the common soldier, the mariner, the slave--what toils and hardships, what anxious and fatiguing nights and days do they endure, even to furnish a bare subsistence for themselves and families! And, after all their labor and care, they

often suffer need. What days, and months, and years of toiling and sweating, what wearied bones and aching limbs do they endure! And, after all, how poorly do they live! This labor and care hinders their improvement in knowledge, so that they continue ignorant all their lives, and hardly ever enjoy any of the pleasures befitting a rational nature. This deprives them of the pleasure and ease of leisure; and, what is worse than all, it is the occasion of their neglecting the one thing needful, while they are distracted with many things.

How unlike is this to the happy life of Adam in the garden of Eden! Is it not a matter of sense and experience, that the curse of labor and toil denounced upon him, reaches also to his posterity; and, consequently, that they are punished for his sin?

Can we suppose that God would doom a number of reasonable, immortal creatures, capable of such high employments, to dig under the earth in mines, or upon its surface in the field--to endure so many toils and hardships, night and day, by land and sea, to procure a poor subsistence for themselves and their dependants; I say, can we suppose this, without supposing that it is inflicted as a penalty for sin? And it is evident, it must be for the sin of our first father, on whom it was denounced.

In this instance, you see, there is a visible disparity between the present and original state of our world and human nature; and this disparity is penal; that is, it is inflicted upon Adam and his posterity as the punishment of his sin.

Let us now proceed to another instance, which, for brevity's sake, must be very comprehensive; and that is, man in the state of innocence was not liable to death, or the separation of soul and body. This we may certainly infer from death's being the penalty threatened to his disobedience; but if he had been liable to it while he was innocent, it could not be threatened as a penalty. When it is said, "In the day you eat--you shall surely die," it is certainly implied, "While you do not eat--you shall not die; or you shall continue to live." So when God pronounces the sentence upon him, after his offence, "Dust you are, and unto dust shall you return," he undoubtedly denounces something new, to which man was not exposed before, and something penal, on account of his sin, Genesis 3:19. This Paul also asserts in express terms. "By man," says he, "by the first man, Adam, came death," 1 Corinthians 15:21. So also, "By one man," namely, Adam, "sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, in that all have sinned," Romans 5:12. This, therefore, is certain, that death had no place in a state of innocence.

And hence it follows, that the world around was so disposed, as to have no tendency to take away the life of man. Those poisonous animals and vegetables, that now destroy human life, and those beasts of prey, which now sometimes devour man as their food--either had not these noxious qualities, or were under such providential restraints that they could not exert them. Those explosions of lightning above, and earthquakes below; that unwholesome, pestilential air, and all those disorders in the material world, which, in the present state of things, are fatal to mankind--had no place in the paradisaic state of the earth; for if they had existed, and exerted their power, death would have been the natural and unavoidable consequence.

We cannot suppose Adam's body was invulnerable, so that the tooth of a lion, the poison of a serpent, or the weight of a mountain could make no impression upon it; nor can we suppose it would have lived, though torn and devoured by beasts of prey, struck with lightning, or buried in an earthquake. Such injuries would undoubtedly have dissolved the frame, and brought on death; and the most probable security against it is, that there would have been no powers in nature to do it such injuries; but these

noxious and deadly qualities have been superadded to them since the introduction of sin.

Lions, and tigers, and snakes, and other animals that now destroy mankind, and also poisonous plants, did, no doubt, exist before the fall of Adam; but then they either had not these hurtful qualities, or they did not exert them upon man, while innocent. These qualities were weapons of war put into their hands, when they were employed to fight their Maker's quarrel, upon the revolt of mankind. We have more than conjecture, we have Scripture evidence for this, as far as it refers to the brute creation; for Adam was constituted their lord, and they were not to injure him--but serve him. Thus the Divine charter ran, "God blessed them, (that is, the new-made pair,)--and God said unto them, Replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the fowl of the air, and over everything that moves upon the earth," Genesis 1:28. To this also the Psalmist refers, "You have made him to have dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet; all sheep and oxen, yes, and the beasts of the field;" that is, wild beasts; "the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatever passes through the paths of the seas." Psalm 8:6-8.

Thus man was invested with dominion over all the brute creation, including the most fierce, ungovernable, and poisonous; and this implied an exemption from all injuries, and especially deadly injuries from them. It would have been but a sorry dominion, if a snake or wild beast might lie in ambush for his lord and kill him. We, therefore, conclude, that all the harms that mankind are liable to, from brute creatures, had no place in the world--until sin entered into it.

We may also infer, farther, that since man, in his primitive state, was not liable to death, neither was he liable to sickness, pain, and mortal accidents. Death is the consequence and final result of these pains, sicknesses, and accidents; and therefore we cannot suppose them to exist in a state that did not admit of death. Death is often used in Scripture in a large sense, and signifies not only the separation of soul and body--but afflictions, pains, miseries, especially such as are the causes and concomitants of death. In this latitude it may be understood in the first threatening: and, if so, man's exemption from death, in his primitive state, implied an exemption from all the afflictions, pains, and miseries, that are often included in that word.

There is one species of pain, which we may be sure, from express Scripture, human nature would have been free from, had it continued innocent: pains which a tender heart cannot think of without sympathy; pains, which affect the tenderest and fairest, and, I may add, the best part of mankind; which are always agonizing, sometimes mortal; and which attended our entrance into this world; I mean the pains of child-bearing. The command was given early, "Be fruitful and multiply," Genesis 1:28; so that Adam and Eve would have had a numerous posterity, though they had never sinned. But, after the fall, this sentence was passed upon guilty, trembling Eve, "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception: in sorrow shall you bring forth children." Genesis 3:16. Here, pain and sorrow are annexed to the whole process of our formation in the womb; sorrow in conception, and sorrow in bringing forth children. That this would not have been the attendant of the propagation of mankind in a state of innocence, I prove as before. If this had been the attendant of conception and birth in that state, it could not have been inflicted as the punishment of sin: for that cannot be the punishment of sin, which we must suffer though we should not sin.

Now, as this species of pain and sickness could not have afflicted mankind in a state of innocence, may we not, by a parity of reason, conclude, that neither would they have been subject to any other kind of pain or sickness; and that, as Adam was immortal, so he had no seeds or principles of any disease in his

constitution, nor was he liable to any hurtful accidents from without.

But if this was the primitive state of human nature, alas! how vastly different from it is the present! And, since the terrible alteration, occasioned by Adam's sin, sensibly affects mankind in every age, as well as himself, how lamentably evident is it, that they share in the penal effects of his sin!

Death has reigned from Adam to Moses, from Moses to Christ, and from Christ to the present generation; death has reigned over people of every character and every age. And how painful and tormenting are its agonies, and the struggles of dissolving nature! When you view a dying man in his last conflict, with all the shocking symptoms of death strong upon him, can you imagine, that in this way man would have made his passage from world to world, if he did not lie under the imputation of guilt, and the displeasure of his Maker?

How terrible is the prospect of death before it comes! How does it embitter the pleasures of life! and how many does the fear of it keep in cruel bondage all their days!

What sicknesses, pains, sorrows, and hurtful accidents, are mankind exposed to in every age, before they ripen into death--the grand result of these long-continued calamities! And what distress do the living and the healthy suffer by sympathy, from the sufferings and death of others, especially of dear friends and relatives!

What desolations, what distresses and deaths are spread over the face of the earth--by famine, war, pestilence, earthquakes, hurricanes, extremities of heat and cold, and all the nameless disorders to which the natural and moral world is now exposed! How many mischiefs have mankind suffered from savage and poisonous animals, which were made the subjects of man in his primitive state! All these mischiefs, as we have seen, had no place in the state of innocence; but are the penal consequences of the sin of the first man--and it is a matter of daily observation, that they reach to his posterity also.

It was his sin that occasioned the rebellion of the brute creation against mankind; that armed serpents and vipers with deadly stings and poisons, and the lion, the tiger, the bear, and other beasts of prey, with rage, and all the powers of slaughter. These are the executioners of the Divine displeasure, turned loose upon a race of rebels, to avenge the quarrel of their Maker!

These miseries not only affect the adult--but also the young descendants of Adam, before they have done good or evil in their own persons. How many dangerous and deadly accidents are these young immortals exposed to, even while enclosed and guarded by the womb! And with what pain and risk of life do they make their entrance into the world! And how many of them are maimed or perish in the very porch of life! It is often a dubious struggle, whose life must go, the mother's or the child's; and sometimes both perish together. Here I must enlarge a little upon the pains and sorrows of conception and birth, because this is more expressly the penal consequences of the first offence.

During the tedious months of pregnancy, what sick qualms, what nausea and loathing; what unnatural longing; what languor of spirits, and hysterical disorders; what anxious and trembling expectations of the painful hour, and what danger of miscarriages even from trifling accidents; and when the painful hour comes, what exquisite anguish and violent throes--so violent and exquisite, that the pains of a travailing woman are become a proverbial expression, to signify the greatest possible misery. How many lose their life in that distressing hour, or receive such injuries as from which they never recover!

Thus the manner of our entrance into the world intimates, that we are a race of creatures out of favor with God, and lie under his displeasure from generation to generation. You daughters of Eve, while I drop a sympathizing tear over your miseries, I must put you in mind, that you are suffering the bitter effects of the original curse--that you are degenerate creatures yourselves, and the mothers of a guilty and degenerate race! Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God; and let the sorrows and pains of conception and child-bearing be turned into blessings--by bringing you to a deep sense of your original guilt and depravity.

In so tender and urgent a case, I cannot but anticipate the subject of, perhaps, some future discourse, and put you in mind, that though your gender was first in the transgression, and you still feel the effects of the old curse denounced upon your mother Eve; Jesus Christ, the great deliverer, is also the seed of the woman; and in this view, the race of man is indebted to your gender for their deliverance. This seed of the woman, the second Adam, is able and willing to save you in due time, from all the consequences of the curse--if you apply to him by faith.

This may be Paul's meaning, "The woman being deceived was in the transgression; notwithstanding, she shall be saved in child-bearing, or by child-birth," 1 Timothy 2:15, by giving birth to the great deliverer, who was made and born of a woman. Or, as others understand it, she shall be saved in child-bearing, saved even though she continues to bear children with sorrow and pain, and suffers the fruits of the old curse inflicted upon the gender; that shall not hinder her everlasting salvation--if she continue in faith and love, and holiness with sobriety.

But to return to the case of INFANTS. If they escape with life into the world--then what various calamities are immediately ready to attack the little strangers! How much do they suffer from the unskillfulness, carelessness, or poverty of their parents and nurses! What various nameless diseases and pains, bruises and fatal accidents, are they subject to: the sense of which they express by their crying, the only language they are capable of! What multitudes of them die in their tender years, before they have answered any of the purposes of the present life, only to give their parent a double trouble, first in nursing them--and then in suffering the bereavement of them!

It is computed, that at least one half of mankind die under seven years old; and the greater part of this half die before they are moral agents, or capable of personal sin or duty, even in the lowest degree. Whatever therefore they suffer, must be for the sin of another, even Adam their common father, whose offence subjected him and all his posterity to the power of death and the various calamities that precede it. To these early subjects of death, many suppose the apostle refers, when he says, "Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." Romans 5:14; that is, over infants, who had not sinned actually in their own persons, as Adam did.

Now is this world, which is so replenished with destructive powers, causes of sickness, sorrow, and death, and which render these miseries inevitable according to the present course of nature: is this world, I say, in that order and harmony, in which it was formed for the residence of upright man? Has it not passed through some dismal alteration, when the earth, the sea, the air, the fire, animals, and vegetables, are full of the principles of sickness, misery, and death, which were once all friendly to human life, and subservient to its preservation or pleasure?

Does it not look like a palace turned into a prison--to confine and punish obnoxious rebels? Are these frail, sickly, mortal bodies, such as the pure soul of Adam animated, when it first came out of the hands of its

Creator? Does man now retain his original dominion over the brute inhabitants of the earth, the sea, or air? Or have they not rebelled against him--because he has rebelled against his Maker? Is not the curse denounced against Eve, entailed upon all her daughters? And is not the sentence passed upon Adam, "Dust you are, and unto dust you shall return," executed upon all his children-- executed upon them in such a manner, as shows, it is for his sin and not their own; and therefore executed upon his infant offspring, before they have contracted personal guilt by actual sin?

Are not human bodies now formed so as to be proper recipients of sickness, and various forms of miseries and deaths? And is not all nature around them adapted to answer these dreadful purposes? I repeat this, because I think great stress ought to be laid upon it. It appears evident to me, that sorrow, pain, sickness, death, and all the miseries to which mankind are now subject, are natural, unavoidable, and necessary, in the present state of the natural and moral world; and that the present state of things is in righteous judgment adapted and disposed to inflict these miseries: and since innocent man was not liable to them, it follows, that the name and disposition of the world is altered, on account of Adam's sin. Nothing is more natural, in the present state of things, than sickness and death to the human body; than the fierceness, poison, and the various destructive qualities, of many animals and vegetables; than storms, earthquakes, unwholesome air, and other causes of misery and death to mankind. These things are natural; I mean to say, agreeable to the established laws of nature, in the present state of the world.

And if these things had existed with these qualities in the primitive state, diseases, desolations, and death, would have been their natural, necessary, and unavoidable effects. But since the effects did not exist, neither did their causes. Hence it follows, that the whole frame of our world was judicially altered for the worse, in punishment of Adam's sin. And since this world was intended for the habitation of his posterity, as well as his own habitation; and since they suffer the terrible effects of that alteration which it endured as the punishment of his sin; it follows farther, that they share in his punishment, and therefore that the guilt of his sin is somehow laid to their charge.

What then can be more evident, even from daily experience and observation, than that all mankind do, in fact, suffer for the sin of their first parent, or that the guilt of his sin is imputed to them, and punished upon them? Whether this is consistent with the Divine perfections, and how it comes to pass, we may consider at some other opportunity; we are now only inquiring into the fact; and that it is fact, cannot be denied, without denying a matter of universal sensation and observation.

There are two other instances of dissimilitude between the present and primitive state of man, which I might very properly insist upon; namely, that man was innocent and holy in his original state, and also entitled to everlasting happiness; but that in his present state, both these are forfeited. The time that remains, I shall employ in answering an objection, that the arguments that have been offered may continue firm and unshaken.

It may be objected, that the misery and death of mankind can be no proof of the imputation of Adam's sin to them, because the various tribes of mere animals are exposed to the same. They all return to the dust, as well as man. They are subject to sickness, famine, hurtful accidents, toil, and labor. They bring forth their young with pain and danger. They tyrannize over one another, and many of the greater live upon the small. In short, they share in most of the miseries of human nature, and suffer some peculiar to themselves. And yet we cannot suppose, that their first ancestor sinned, and that his guilt is imputed to them, and they are punished for it. Why then may we not suppose, that mankind suffer such calamities, without the imputation of the sin of their first ancestor Adam?

To this I answer,

First, That we have no evidence from Scripture or reason, that the brutal creation was formed for immortality, or that they were originally intended to be free from death. But as to man, it has been proved, that in his original state he was not liable to death, nor any of its antecedent or concomitant calamities--but that his gracious Maker intended he should live and be happy forever, if he continued forever obedient. Now this consideration shows there is a wide difference between the case of man--and that of brutes. In their primitive state, and according to the original destination of their Creator, they appear to have been intended for death, and consequently for the calamities and pains, and sicknesses, that are the causes and attendants of death. It is probable, they were originally intended to be food for man, and for one another, even in the state of innocence. Hence, Peter says, Natural brute beasts, or natural animals without reason, were made to be taken and destroyed.

Now, if they were made for this purpose, their being taken and destroyed is not a punishment for any previous guilt--but only using them according to their original design. But man was not intended for this purpose; he was not made for death at his first creation; and consequently his being subjected to it, must be a punishment that supposes previous sin and guilt. It is no punishment to a brute that it does not enjoy the privileges and immunities of man in his original state: because these were never intended for the brutal nature. But if Adam's posterity are stripped of these privileges and immunities which belonged to their nature in him, and which were ensured both to him and them, if he continued obedient; and if they are stripped of these on account of his sin: then it is evident his sin is imputed to them, and they are punished for it. This answer will account for the death of mere animals, and the sufferings which death necessarily includes or pre-supposes. But as they are exposed to many sufferings, which death does not necessarily include or pre-suppose, this answer alone is not sufficient; therefore I add,

Secondly, That there is great reason to conclude, that even the brutal tribes of creatures do suffer by the fall of Adam; that they have lost that ease, peace, security, and plenty, in which they would have lived, had he never sinned; and incurred a variety of miseries in consequence of his offence. When they became fierce, savage, and rebellious towards him, they would of course become mischievous and destructive to one another. The poison of the viper and serpent, the carnivorous rage of the lion, the tiger and the bear, which were intended primarily as a punishment to guilty man, would naturally render them injurious to their fellow-brutes. When weeds and plants received their hurtful qualities, in consequence of Adam's sin, they would, according to the course of nature, be injurious to the beasts that might feed upon them. The barrenness of the earth, the desolations occasioned by intemperate seasons, hurricanes, earthquakes, and other disorders introduced into the material world, by the sin of man--must affect the brutes, as well as man. These must involve them in pain, sickness, death, and various calamities. When their lord was guilty of rebellion against his Master in heaven, his subjects also share in his sufferings: his whole territory is cast into confusion, and all its inhabitants, of every rank, must painfully feel the terrible change. The ground was cursed for his sake; and why may we not suppose the creatures that dwelt upon it were cursed for his sake also? This curse would ultimately affect him, because their sickness and other calamities would disable them from serving him. Indeed it is the conduct of Providence in every age to involve the brutes in the same punishments with mankind. Thus the deluge, the fire and earthquake that destroyed Sodom, the plagues of Egypt, and other public judgments, swept off beasts as well as men, though the sin of men were the cause of these judgments.

That which chiefly confirms me in this belief, is, the authority of Paul. "The creature, (says he,) was made subject to vanity, not willingly--but by reason of him who has subjected it;" that is, the inanimate and brutal

creation is reduced into a state of vanity, confusion, and misery--not willingly, not of its own accord, not as the effect of any natural tendency to it, nor as the punishment of its own sin; but it was reduced into this state by a righteous God, who subjected it to vanity, as a just punishment for the sin of man.

And as it felt the effects of the first Adam's fall, so it shall share in the glorious deliverance wrought by the second Adam; and it was subjected to vanity with a view to this; for, the apostle adds, "God subjected it in hope that the creature itself"--even the inanimate and brutal creation also, as well as the children of God, "shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God." Their being delivered from the bondage of corruption, implies, that they now lie under it. And this phrase, "the bondage of corruption," may include all the disorders and miseries they are now groaning under; and since they were not subjected to this willingly, or of their own accord, or for anything they had done, it follows, they were judicially subjected to it on account of the sin of man. His first sin was a universal mischief to all the inhabitants of the world formed for his residence, both animate and inanimate, rational and irrational: and is the source of all the disorders and miseries that any part of this lower creation groans under.

When I view the matter in this light, I am ready to retract the former answer, and to rest in this as sufficient; and perhaps, not only the miseries--but even the death of the animal creation, which in the former answer I accounted for in another way, may be entirely owing to this cause, even the sin of man, their lord and proprietor. "The bondage of corruption," to which that has exposed them, is a phrase that may, and perhaps must, include death, as well as other miseries.

I hope you will excuse me, that I have dwelt so long upon these arguments, and left so little room for a practical improvement. My design has been to give you a rational, solid, deep conviction of this important though mortifying truth. And as some of the topics I have reasoned from are not very common, and may be new to most of you, I thought it necessary to dwell the longer upon them.

Upon a review of the whole, let me exhort you:

To impress your minds deeply with a sense of your degeneracy, that you may cherish humility, and be the more solicitous for deliverance. And,

To improve all the calamities of life, to make you sensible of this.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/samuel-davies/the-primitive-and-present-state-of-man-compared/>

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