

# Present Truth

*The Bible alone as the only rule of faith and practice; faith alone as the only means of acceptance with God; and Christ alone as the only mediator between God and men.*

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**Present Truth** is a magazine dedicated to the restoration of New Testament Christianity in this generation. It is especially committed to upholding the truth of justification by faith in this time when it is being threatened by humanism, emotionalism, and ecumenism. Our publication is based on the principle of *sola Scriptura* – the Bible and the Bible only as a rule of faith and practice (2 Tim. 3:15-17). We desire to give the gospel trumpet a certain sound (1 Cor. 14:7-9), that through words easy to be understood (Hab. 2:2) people may “be established in the present truth” (2 Pet. 1:12) and like Noah be proclaimers of the righteousness of Christ (2 Pet. 2:5).

**Editor:** Richard Marin

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**Contributors:** Since truth is above the preferences and prejudices of any denomination, the editors welcome articles from anyone and will judge them on their merit alone.

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## Editorial introduction: Pink Foundations

Most of you are familiar with the words “head of state” and “fellowship”, but few have heard of the word *headship*. In this issue we will explore this uncommon word.

Our last issue pointed to the Prince of the Covenant as the federal head of his people. Jesus Christ is the Prince who fulfilled all the requirements that God made of his people in Daniel 9 24. He did all this in the First Century of the Christian Era. As humanity’s new representative he began where Adam began and before the end of Daniel’s seventy weeks the man Christ Jesus had made atonement for sin, brought in everlasting righteousness, and anointed heaven’s Most Holy Place.

It was our statements about pre-millennialism and the last days that brought the greatest reaction to that issue of **Present Truth**. While we include here a couple of those responses in our letters section, it is our desire to fully unfold our eschatology in a future issue. It is true, however, that this current issue provides an excellent foundation for future articles dealing with last-day events.

In this issue we invite Dr. Arthur Pink to make crystal clear what “federal headship” means. In our three main articles he should also remove any doubts as to whether “federal headship” is a vital teaching of Holy Scripture or not.

Before you read these articles we would like to point out two concerns:

**First:** some reject the truth of “federal headship” because they have embraced New Age arguments that deny *vicarious substitution*. Among many today the idea is gaining acceptance that Christ and humanity are part of a great circle of life in which divinity and humanity blend. When this form of spiritualism enters Christianity it tries to make the humanity of

Christ indistinguishable from our own sinful humanity. It then proposes that what Christ did, I *actually* did and what Christ suffered, I *actually* suffered. While this may sound good on the surface in essence it does away with any need for something to be done *vicariously*, in my place.

This is how they reason: "Since I (or any other human being in the mystical circle of life, for that matter) have already lived a perfect life and died an atoning death there is nothing that needs to be credited to my account." In this way the Bible doctrine of *imputation* is discarded and a person becomes their own Savior. Before you say "I thank God I'm not like them," remember that even in Protestant strongholds like Lutheranism (and in some of our own past issues) these theories have arisen under the designations of "objective and subjective justification."

**Secondly:** some reject the truth of "federal headship" because it has been yoked with the idea that the atonement of Christ on the cross was *limited*. We do not believe in a limited atonement on the cross. We believe that Christ died for all humanity (1 John 2:2; Heb. 2:9) and that the sins of every human being were carried by him on the cross (Isa. 53:6). For this reason we reject the idea that before the foundation of the world God chose certain individuals to save and certain others to condemn to eternal death. We believe that Christ came as the new Adam and in order to participate in the blessings of his actions one must abandon the first Adam and enter the Second. Together with the Apostle Paul we believe that some people enter Christ before others (Rom. 16:7; 2 Cor. 5:17) and that no one enters Christ apart from personal faith (Phil. 3:9, Eph. 1:12-13; Gal. 3:22-27). In this we differ from Arthur Pink who apparently believed that entrance into Christ took place before the foundation of the world and that Christ only carried the sins of those select few to the cross.

While we disagree with Dr Pink about the timing of entering into Christ, we believe that he clearly teaches here the Bible doctrine of "federal headship."



## LETTERS

Thank you for a wonderfully clear and concise presentation of "The Last Days and the Gospel" [Vol. 8, #4]. This is as clear and Christ centered a presentation as I have seen.

W. D.W., Baptist pastor;  
Pennsylvania, USA

I recently received a copy of Present Truth, Vol. 8, No. 4. In the first part, the author presents, and seemingly proves his point, that the promises to Israel are fulfilled in Jesus Christ, and that all true believers are children of Abraham. So far, so good.

However, in the second part, at the end of the booklet, I see "Seven points of [Pre-millennial] agreement" listed and asserted, but with none of the lengthy proofs that accompany the first part of the booklet. Indeed, some of the points seem to contradict the statements on p. 28 ff. Am I to expect further explanation in a later volume? I hope so, because, as we know, assertion is not proof. I eagerly await further dissertation on the Eschaton.

R. H.,  
Michigan, USA

Thank you for the Vol. 8, #4 issue of Present Truth. I will gladly receive additional issues...

Of course this does not mean that I agree that your Bible teaching is always accurate.

For example, in your chapter, "The Israel of God" you express your conclusions clearly, that "seed of Abraham is Jesus Christ." Galatians 3:29 says that all who are Christians are "the seed of Abraham." Do you want to be real literal and say that every Christian is Jesus Christ?...

...Your conclusion of v. 29 is that all the Greeks are Jews in Christ, being literal seed of Abraham. Should you not also

conclude that all slaves in Christ are really all free men, and all females in Christ are really now all males?

Sincerely yours, from one, who, like you, is earnestly desirous to know and convey Bible truth.

**R. D. C.**, Baptist Pastor  
Washington, USA

...a few thoughts about your recent **Present Truth** (Vol.8 #2). Thank you for the copy.

Many good things. Many correct concepts. Much of what you shared I say "amen" to.

There were several concerns in "The Ultimate Gospel".

**A.** On page15 [you wrote]: "And when our Substitute and Representative was resurrected, glorified, and translated into heavenly places this salvation surpassed even what Adam and Eve had in their provisional state in Eden."

Very confusing to me. My understanding is that Adam and Eve's salvation was exactly the same as anyone else's salvation... the gospel... the Lamb of God... His life, His death, His resurrection and glorification.

***Editor's response:***

*A. Thank you for helping me clarify this confusing statement. We agree that Adam and Eve's salvation was exactly the same as anyone else's. But before their fall they didn't need salvation. In Eden they were accepted on condition of obedience. In their sinless state they were capable of perfectly obeying God's law and their eternal security depended on passing their probation. It was after the fall that they needed a Lamb to live and die in their place. Eternal life no longer depended on their obedience but on Christ's substitutionary obedience.*

### **Reader's letter (contd.):**

**B.** On pages 18, 19 it seems you are drawing a very fine line. I think I understand what you are trying to say. I am speaking of [your sentence], "We must conclude that our decision to accept Jesus is not what saves us."

[According to] Acts 4:12; Jn.1:12; 3:36; [and] 5:24; believing, receiving, accepting Jesus Christ is appropriating salvation... the good news.

### ***Editor's response:***

*B. We agree that the salvation purchased by Christ on this earth becomes ours by believing, receiving, and accepting Jesus as our personal Savior. In that article I was trying to counter salvation by works, salvation by baptism, salvation by sanctification, and salvation by **decision** (known as "decisional regeneration"). Decisional regeneration bases one's salvation on **their** decision rather than on Christ's decision in Gethsemane to save us. Those who teach this error stress the need to know the day, hour, and minute of one's regeneration. While many reacted to our opposition to "baptismal regeneration" (see Vol 8, #3) it was surprising that you are the only one to react to our opposition to the popular doctrine of "decisional regeneration."*

### **Reader's letter (contd.):**

**C.** Out of 13 pages you had 3 brief paragraphs on the fruit of the gospel. It seems like the apostle Paul is much heavier into fruit than you might suggest.

**D.** Your presentation... [gave the impression that] lifestyle meant nothing.

**E.** This kindly caution... There are conditions to our receiving justification and sanctification, and the righteousness of Christ. I think I know your meaning, Richard, but you leave a wrong impression upon many minds. While good works will not save even one soul, yet it is impossible for even one soul to be saved without good works.

Let me summarize like this; be careful to give balance to your writings.

Blessings my friend as you seek to uplift the good news of Christ, His life, His death and His resurrection.

P. D., Protestant pastor  
Oregon, USA

*Editor's response:*

*C, D, E. We agree that there is a **condition** for receiving justification. The condition is faith alone! We feel that sometimes it is important to make one point clear before going on to the next. If we are clear on the gospel of our salvation then we can deal with fruitful living, sanctification, and good works.. This we plan to do in future issues. Thank you for your concern. – RAM*

That the gospel is the great redeeming work of Christ containing the righteous life, vicarious death, and victorious resurrection is significant. Each time this gospel is preached the forgiveness of sins and justification by faith is proclaimed.

...in the last missionary visit we made... a heated debate arose concerning the contents of the gospel. Brother L... mentioned "four saving acts: the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord Jesus." Then a brother interrupted him saying, "Brother, really aren't there **five** redeeming acts of our Lord, namely: the incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and glorification of Christ?"

There were two positions: the position that said there are four [redeeming acts] and the position that said there are five.

In later conversations some came to say that the Bible has only **one** redeeming act, and that this is the gospel. They quoted Romans 3: "...all are justified by God's free grace, through his **act** of liberation in the person of Christ Jesus." [NEB (as in the Spanish)]

We await with patience (and anxiously) the publishing of a new issue of *Pregonero de Justicia* (Spanish Present Truth).

O. O., Seminary student  
Lima, PERU



# Federal Headship

Arthur W. Pink <sup>1</sup>

It is of vital importance for a right understanding of much in God's Word to observe the relation which Adam sustained to his posterity. Adam was not only the common parent of mankind, but he was also their federal head and representative. The whole human race was placed on probation or trial in Eden. Adam acted not for himself alone, but he transacted for all who were to spring from him. Unless this basic fact be definitely apprehended, much that ought to be relatively clear to us will be shrouded in impenetrable mystery. Yea, we go further, and affirm that, until the federal headship of Adam and God's covenant with him in that office be actually perceived, we are without the key to God's dealings with the human race, we are unable to discern man's relation to the divine law, and we appreciate not the fundamental principles upon which the atonement of Christ proceeded.

"Federal headship" is a term which has almost entirely disappeared from current religious literature – so much the worse

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1. Dr. Arthur W. Pink was born in England and became a Baptist pastor in the United States in the twentieth century. He is know for his many books on Bible subjects. This article with the two that follow were taken from his book *The Divine Covenants* first published in 1973 and later republished by Baker Book House (Grand Rapids, Michigan) in 1983 and currently available on the internet at <[www.PBMinistries.org](http://www.PBMinistries.org)>.



for our moderns. It is true that the expression itself does not verbally occur in Scripture; yet like the words Trinity and the divine incarnation, it is a necessity in theological parlance and doctrinal exposition. The principle or fact which is embodied in the term "federal headship" is that of representation. There [have] been but two federal heads: Adam and Christ, with each of whom God entered into a covenant. Each of them acted on behalf of others, each legally represented as definite people, so much so that all whom they represented were regarded by God as being in them. Adam represented the whole human race; Christ represented all those whom the Father had, in His eternal counsels, given to Him.

When Adam stood in Eden as a responsible being before God, he stood there as a federal head, as the legal representative of all his posterity. Hence, when Adam sinned, all for whom he was standing are accounted as having sinned; when he fell, all whom he represented fell; when he died, they died. So too was it with Christ. When He came to this earth, He, too, stood in a federal relationship to His own people; and when He became obedient unto death, all for whom He was acting were accounted righteous; when He rose again from the dead, all whom He represented rose with Him; when He ascended on high, they were regarded as ascending with Him. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. 15:22).

The relationship of our race to Adam or Christ divides men into two classes, each receiving nature and destiny from its respective head. All the individuals who comprise these two classes are so identified with their heads that it has justly been said, **“There have been but two men in the world, and two facts in history.”** These two men are Adam and Christ; the two facts are the disobedience of the former, by which many were made sinners, and the obedience of the latter, by which many were made righteous. By the former came ruin, by the latter came redemption; and neither ruin nor redemption can be Scripturally apprehended except as they are seen to be accomplished by those representatives, and except we understand the relationships expressed by being “in Adam” and “in Christ.”

Let [it] be expressly and emphatically affirmed that what we are here treating of is purely a matter of divine revelation. Nowhere but in Holy Scripture do we know anything about Adam, or of our relation to him. If it be asked how the federal constitution of the race can be reconciled with the dictates of human reason, the first answer must be, it is not for us to reconcile them. The initial inquiry is not whether federal headship be reasonable or just, but, is it a fact revealed in the Word of God? If it is, then reason must bow to it and faith humbly receive it. To the child of God the question of its justice is easily settled: we know it to be just, because it is a part of the ways of the infinitely holy and righteous God.

Now the fact that Adam was the federal head of the human race, that he did act and transact in a representative capacity, and that the judicial consequences of his actings were imputed to all those for whom he stood, is clearly revealed in God’s Word. In Romans 5 we read: “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, in whom all sinned” (v. 12); “through the offence of one many be dead” (v. 15); “the judgment was by one to condemnation” (v. 16); “by one man’s offence death reigned” (v. 17); “by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation” (v. 18); “by one man’s offence many were made [legally constituted] sinners” (v. 19). The meaning of these declarations is far too plain for any unprejudiced mind to misunderstand. It pleased God to deal with the human race as represented in and by Adam.

Let us borrow a simple illustration. God did not deal with mankind as with a field of corn, where each stalk stands upon its own individual root; but He dealt with it as with a tree, all the branches of which have one common root and trunk. If you strike with an axe at the root of a tree, the whole tree falls – not only the trunk, but also the branches: all wither and die. So it was when Adam fell. God permitted Satan to lay the axe at the root of the tree, and when Adam fell, all his posterity fell with him. At one fatal stroke Adam was severed from communion with his maker, and as the result “death passed upon all men.”

Here, then, we learn what is the formal ground of man’s judicial condemnation before God. The popular idea of what renders man a sinner in the sight of heaven is altogether inadequate and false. The prevailing conception is that a sinner is one who commits and practices sin. It is true that this is the character of a sinner, but it certainly is not that which primarily constitutes him a sinner. The truth is that every member of our race enters this world a guilty sinner before he ever commits a single transgression. It is not only that he possesses a sinful nature, but he is directly “under condemnation.” We are legally constituted sinners



neither by what we are nor by what we are doing, but by the disobedience of our federal head, Adam. Adam acted not for himself alone, but for all who were to spring from him.

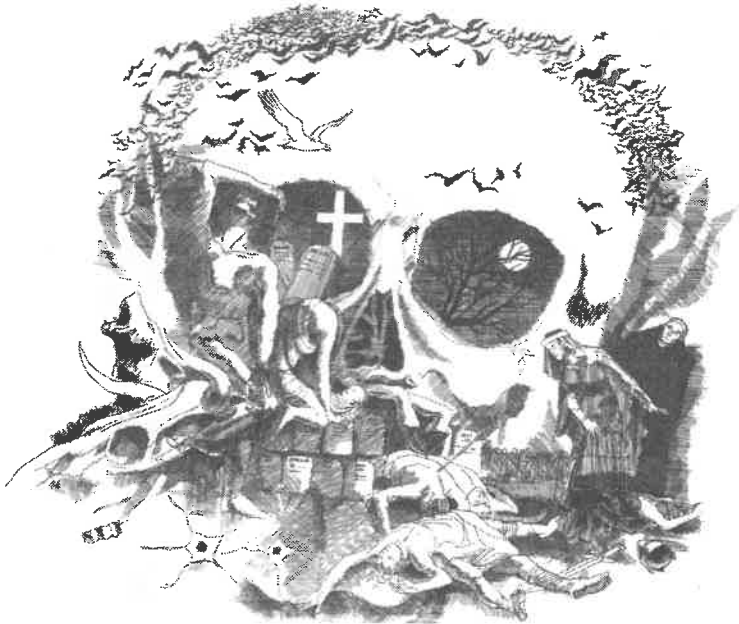
On this point the teaching of the apostle Paul is plain and unambiguous. The terms of Romans 5:12-19, as we have shown above, are too varied and distinct to admit of any misconception: that it is on account of their sin in Adam, men, in the first instance, are accounted guilty and treated as such, as well as partake of a depraved nature. The language of 1 Corinthians 15:22 is equally unintelligible except on the supposition that both Adam and Christ sustained a representative character, in virtue of which the one involved the race in guilt and ruin, and the other, by His obedience unto death, secured the justification and salvation of all who believe in Him. The actual condition of the human race, throughout its history, confirms the same: the apostle's doctrine supplies the only adequate explanation of the universal prevalence of sin.

**The human race is suffering now for the sin of Adam, or it is suffering for nothing at all. This earth is the scene of a**



grim and awful tragedy. In it we see misery and wretchedness, pain and poverty, decay and death, on every side. None escape. That "man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward" is an indisputable fact. But what is the explanation of it? Every effect must have a previous cause. If we are not being punished for Adam's sin, then, coming into this world, we are "children of wrath," alienated from God, corrupt and depraved, and on the broad road which leadeth to destruction, for nothing at all! Who would contend that this was better, more satisfactory, than the Scriptural explanation of our ruin?

But it will be said, It was unjust to make Adam our federal head. How so? Is not the principle of representation a fundamental one in human society? The father is the legal head of his children during their minority: what he does, binds the family. A business house is held responsible for the transactions of its agents. The heads of a state are vested with such authority that the treaties they make are binding upon the whole nation. This principle is so basic it cannot be set aside. Every popular election illustrates the fact that a constituency will act through a representative and be bound by his acts. Human affairs could not continue,



nor society exist without it. Why, then, be staggered at finding it inaugurated in Eden?

Consider the alternative. "The race must have either stood in a full grown man, with a full-orbed intellect, or stood as babies, each entering his probation in the twilight of self-consciousness, each deciding his destiny before his eyes were half-opened to what it all meant. How much better would that have been? How much more just? But could it not have been some other way? There was no other way. It was either the baby or it was the perfect, well-equipped, all-calculating man – the man who saw and comprehended everything. That man was Adam" (G. S. Bishop). Yes, Adam, fresh from the hands of his creator, with no sinful ancestry behind him, with no depraved nature within. A man made in the image and likeness of God, pronounced by Him "very good," in fellowship with heaven. Who could have been a more suitable representative for us?

This has been the principle on which and the method by which God has acted all through. The posterity of Canaan were cursed for the single transgression of their parent (Gen. 9). The Egyptians perished at the Red Sea as the result of Pharaoh's wickedness. When Israel became God's witness in the earth it was the same. The sins of the fathers were to be visited upon the children: in consequence of Achan's one sin the whole of his family were stoned to death. The high priest acted on behalf of the whole nation. Later, the king was held accountable for the conduct of his subjects. **One acting on behalf of others, the one responsible for the many, is a basic principle both of human and divine government.** We cannot get away from it; wherever we look, it stares us in the face.

Finally, let it be pointed out that the sinner's salvation is made to depend upon the same principle. Beware, my reader, of quarreling with the justice of this law of representation. This principle wrecked us, and this principle alone can rescue us. The disobedience of the first Adam was the judicial ground of our condemnation; the obedience of the last Adam is the legal ground on which God alone can justify the sinner. The substitution of Christ in the place of His people, the imputation of their sins to Him and of His righteousness to them, is the cardinal fact of the gospel. But the principle of being saved by what another has

done is only possible on the ground that we are lost through what another did. The two stand or fall together. If there had been no covenant of works there could have been no death in Adam, there could have been no life in Christ.

“By one man’s disobedience many were made sinners” (Rom. 5:19). Here is cause for humiliation which few think about. We are members of a cursed race, the fallen children of a fallen parent, and as such we enter this world “alienated from the life of God” (Eph. 4:18), with nothing in us to prompt unto holy living. Oh, that God may reveal to you, dear reader, your connection with the first Adam, that you may realize your deep need of clinging to the last Adam. The world may deride this doctrine of representation and imputation, but that only evidences it to be of God. If the gospel (the genuine gospel) were welcomed by all, that would prove it was of human manufacture; for only that is acceptable to fallen man which is invented by fallen man. That the wise of this world scoff at the truth of federal headship, when it is faithfully presented, only goes to manifest its divine origin.

“By the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation” (Rom. 5:18). In the day that Adam fell, the frown of God came upon all His children. The holy nature of God abhorred the apostate race. The curse of the broken law descended upon all Adam’s posterity. It is only thus we can account for the universality of depravity and suffering. The corruption which we inherit from our parents is a great evil, for it is the source of all our personal sins. For God to allow this transmission of depravity is to inflict a *punishment*. But how could God punish all, unless all were guilty? The fact that all do share in this common punishment proves that all sinned and fell in Adam. Our depravity and misery are not, as such, the appointment of the Creator, but are instead the retribution of the judge.

“By one man’s disobedience many were made sinners” (Rom. 5:19). The word “made” in that verse calls for a definition and explanation. It does not refer directly and primarily to the fact that we inherit from Adam a corrupt and sinful nature – that we learn from other Scriptures. The term “were made sinners” is a forensic one, and refers to our being constituted *guilty* in the sight of God. A parallel case is found in 2 Corinthians 5:21: “He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin.” Clearly those



words “made him [Christ] to be sin” cannot refer to any change which our Lord underwent in His nature or character. No, rather the blessed Savior so took His people’s place before God that He was treated and dealt with as guilty: their sins were not *imparted*, but *imputed* to Him.

Again, in Galatians 3:13 – we read that Christ was “made a curse for us”: as the substitute of God’s elect, He was judicially regarded as beneath the condemnation of the law. Our guilt was legally transferred to Christ: the sins we committed, He was regarded as responsible for; what we deserved, He endured. In like manner, Adam’s offspring were “made sinners” by their head’s disobedience: the legal consequences of their representative’s transgression were charged to their account. They were judicially constituted guilty, because the guilt of Adam’s sin was charged to them. Hence we enter this world not only with the heritage of a corrupt nature, but “under condemnation.” We are by nature “children of wrath” (Eph. 2:3), for “the wicked are estranged from the womb” (Ps. 58:3) – separated from God and exposed to His judicial displeasure.



# Humanity on Trial

In the preceding chapter we pointed out at some length that when Adam stood in Eden as a responsible being before his creator, he stood there as the federal head of our race, that he legally transacted on the behalf of all his posterity, that in the sight of the divine law we were all so absolutely identified with him as to be accounted "in Adam." Hence what he did, all are regarded as having done: when he sinned, we sinned; when he fell, we fell; when he died, we died. The language of Romans 5:12-19 and 1 Corinthians 15:22 is so plain and positive on this point as to leave no valid room for any uncertainty. Having viewed, then, the representative office or position which Adam occupied, we turn to consider the covenant which God made with him at that time. But before so doing, let us observe how admirably equipped Adam was to fill that eminent office and transact for all his race.

It is exceedingly difficult, if not altogether impossible in our present state, for us to form any adequate conception of the most excellent and glorious endowment of man in his first estate. Negatively, he was entirely free from sin and misery: Adam had no evil ancestry behind him, no corruption within him, nothing in his body to distress him. Positively, he was made in the image and likeness of God, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, endued with a wisdom and holiness to which Christians are as yet, in themselves, strangers. He was blest with unclouded communion with God, placed in the fairest of environments, given dominion over all creatures here below, and graciously provided with a suitable helpmate. Fair as the morning was that blissful heritage into which Adam was estated. Made "upright" (Eccl. 7:29) and endowed with full ability to serve, delight in, and glorify his creator.

Though pronounced by God Himself as "very good" (Gen. 1:31) on the day of his creation, Adam was, nevertheless, a creature, and as such subject unto the authority of the One who

had given him being. God governs all rational beings by law, as the rule of their obedience to Him. To that principle there is no exception, and in the very nature of things cannot be, for God must enforce His rights as Lord over all. Angels (Ps. 103:20), unfallen man, fallen men, redeemed men – all are subject to the moral government of God. Even the beloved Son, when He became incarnate, was “made under the law” (Gal. 4:4). Moreover, in the case of Adam his character was not yet confirmed, and therefore, like the angels, he must be placed on probation, subjected to trial, to see whether or no he would render allegiance to the Lord his maker.

Now the law which God gave to Adam, under which He placed him, was threefold: natural, moral, and positive. By the first we mean that subjection to his creator – acting for His honor and glory – was constituted the very law of his being. Being created in the image and likeness of God, it was his very nature to



delight himself in the Lord and reproduce (in a creaturely measure) God's righteousness and holiness. Just as the animals are endowed with a nature or instinct which prompts them to choose and do that which makes for their well-being, so man in his pristine glory was endued with a nature which prompted him to do that which is pleasing unto God and that which promoted his own highest interests – the remains of which appear in fallen man's rationality and conscience.

By the "moral" law which was given to Adam by God, we mean that he was placed under the requirements of the Ten Commandments, the summary of which is "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbor as thyself." Nothing less than that was due unto Adam's maker, and nothing short of it became him as an upright creature.

By "positive" law we mean that God also placed certain restrictions upon Adam which had never occurred to him from either the light of nature or from any moral considerations; instead, they were sovereignly appointed by God and were designed as a special test of Adam's subjection to the imperial will of his King. The term "positive law" is employed by theologians not as antithetical to "negative," but in contrast from those laws which are addressed to our moral nature: prayer is a "moral" duty: baptism is a "positive" ordinance.

This threefold law under which Adam was placed may be clearly discerned in the brief records of Genesis 1 and 2. The marriage between Adam and Eve illustrates the first: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh"



(Gen. 2:24). Any infraction of the marital relationship is a violation of the very law of nature. The institution and consecration of the Sabbath exemplifies the second: "And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because that in it he had rested from all his work" (2:3): a procedure that would be inexplicable except as furnishing the ground for a like procedure on the part of man, for otherwise the hallowing and benediction spoken of must have lacked both a proper subject and a definite aim. In every age man's observance of the holy Sabbath has been made the supreme test of his moral relation to the Lord. The command for Adam to care for the garden ("dress and keep it": Gen. 2:15) demonstrates the third aspect, the positive: even in the unfallen state man was not to be idle and shiftless.

From the above it is plainly evident that there was the distinct recognition of an outward revelation to Adam of those three great branches of duty which appertain to man in every possible condition of mortal existence, and which unitedly comprehend every obligation upon man in this life; namely, what he owes to God, what he owes to his neighbor, and what he owes to himself. Those three embrace everything. The sanctification of the Sabbath, the institution of marriage, and the command to dress and keep the garden were revealed as outward ordinances, covering the three classes of duties, each of supreme importance in its own sphere: the spiritual, the moral, and the natural. Those intrinsic elements of divine law are immutable: they preceded the covenant of works, and would have remained had the covenant been kept – as they have survived its breach.

But there was need for something of a still more specific kind to test man's adherence to the perfect rectitude incumbent upon him; for in Adam humanity was on trial, the whole race not only having been potentially created in him, but being federally represented by him. "The question, therefore, as to its proper decisiveness, must be made to turn on conformity to an ordinance at once reasonable in its nature and specific in its requirements – an ordinance which the simplest should understand and respecting which no uncertainty could exist whether it had been broken or not. Such in the highest degree was the appointment respecting the tree of knowledge of good and evil, forbidden of God to be eaten on pain of death – an appointment positive in its charac-

ter, in a certain sense arbitrary, yet withal perfectly natural" (P. Fairbairn, *The Revelation of Law in Scripture*).

Adam was now subjected to a simple and specific test as to whether the will of God was sacred in his eyes. Nothing less than perfect conformity of heart and unremitting obedience in act to the whole revealed will of God could be required of man. The command not to eat of the fruit of a certain tree was now made the decisive test of his general obedience. The prohibitory statute was a "positive" precept. It was not sinful per se to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but only so because God had forbidden it. It was, therefore, a more suitable test of faith and obedience than a "moral" statute would have been, submission being required for no other reason than the sovereign will of God. At the same time let it be clearly observed that, disobedience of that "positive" precept certainly involved defiance of the "moral" law, for it was a failure to love God with all the heart, it was contempt of divine authority, it was coveting that which God had forbidden.

On the basis of the threefold constitution under which God had placed Adam – amenable to natural, moral, and positive law; on the basis of his threefold responsibility – to perform the duty which he owed unto God, unto his neighbor, unto himself; and on the basis of the threefold equipment with which he had been endowed – created in the image of God, pronounced "very good," indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and thus fully furnished to discharge his responsibility, God entered into a solemn compact with him. Clothed in dignity, intelligence, and moral excellence, Adam was surrounded on every side by exquisite beauty and loveliness. The occupant of Eden was more a being of heaven than of earth: an embodiment of wisdom, purity, and uprightness. God Himself deigned to visit and cheer him with His presence and blessing. In body perfectly sound; in soul completely holy; in circumstances blissfully happy.

The ideal fitness of Adam to act as the head of his race, and the ideal circumstances under which the decisive test was to be made, must forever shut every fair and honest mouth against objecting to the arrangement God proposed to Adam, and the fearful consequences which his sad failure have brought down upon us. It has been well said, "Had we been present – had we and

all the human race been brought into existence at once – and had God proposed to us, that we should choose one of our number to be our representative that he might enter into covenant with him on our behalf – should we not, with one voice, have chosen our first parent for this responsible office? Should we not have said, ‘He is a perfect man and bears the image and likeness of God, – if any one is to stand for us let him be the man’; Now, – since the angels who stood for themselves, fell – why should we wish to stand for ourselves. And if it be reasonable that one stand for us – why should we complain, when God has chosen the same person for this office, that we would have chosen, had we been in existence, and capable of choosing ourselves?” (G. S. Bishop).

### **How then the fall?**

“But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen. 2:17). The contracting parties in this covenant were God and Adam. First, God as supreme Lord, prescribing what was equitable: God as goodness itself, promising communion with Himself – in which man’s happiness principally lies – while treading the path of obedience and doing that which was well-pleasing to his maker; but God also as justice itself, threatening death upon rebellion. Second, Adam considered both as man and as the head and representative of his posterity. As man, he was a rational and responsible being, endowed with sufficient powers to fulfill all righteousness, standing not as a feeble babe but a fully developed man – a fit and fully qualified subject for God to enter into covenant with him. As head of the race, he was now called upon to transact in the nature and strength with which the Creator had so richly furnished him.

Yet it is clear that the covenant of works proceeded on the assumption that man in his original condition – though “made up-right” – was capable of falling, just as the covenant of grace proceeds on the assumption that man, though fallen and depraved, is – through Christ – capable of being restored. “God made man male and female, with righteousness and true holiness, having the law of God in their hearts, and power to fulfil it; and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their will,

which was subject to change" (*Westminster Confession of Faith*). In the closing words of that quotation some light is cast upon that mysterious question, How could a sinless creature first sin? How could one made "upright" fall? How could one whom God Himself had pronounced "very good" give ear to the devil, apostatize, and drag down himself and his posterity to utter ruin?

### **Mutable**

While in our present state perhaps it is not possible for us to fully solve this profound problem, yet it is our conviction that we may perceive the direction in which the solution lies. In the first place, Adam was mutable or subject to change. Necessarily so, for mutability and creaturehood are correlative terms. There is only One "with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (Jam. 1:17). The essential attributes of God are incommunicable: for the Deity to bestow omniscience, omnipotence, or immutability on others would not be to bring into existence creatures, but would be raising up gods, equal with Himself. Therefore, while Adam was a perfect creature, he was but a creature, mutable and not immutable; and being mutable, he was subject to change either for the better or for the worse, and hence, liable to fall.

### **Fallible**

In the second place, Adam was constituted a responsible being, a moral agent, being endowed with a free will, and therefore he was capable of both obedience and disobedience. Moreover, though the first man was endowed with both natural and spiritual wisdom amply sufficient for all his needs, leaving him entirely without excuse if he made a false and foolish choice, nevertheless, he was but fallible, for infallibility pertains unto God alone, as Job 4:18 more than hints. Therefore, being fallible, Adam was capable of erring, though to do so was culpable to the highest degree. Mutability and fallibility are the conditions of existence of every creature; and while they are not blemishes, yet they are potential dangers, which can only be prevented from



working ruin by the creature constantly looking to the Creator for his upholding grace.

### **Dependant**

In the third place, as a responsible being, as a moral agent, as one who was endowed with free will, Adam had necessarily to be placed on probation, submitted to a real test of his fealty unto God, before he was confirmed, or given an abiding standing in his creature perfections. Because Adam was a creature, mutable and fallible, he was entirely dependent upon his creator; and therefore he must be put on trial to show whether or no he would assert his independency, which would be open revolt against his maker and the repudiation of his creaturehood. Every creature must necessarily come under the moral government of God, and for free agents that necessarily implies and involves two possible alternatives – subjection or insubordination. The absolute dominion of God over the creature and the complete dependence and subjection of the creature to God, holds good in every part of the universe and throughout all ages. The inherent poison in every error and evil is the rejection of God's dominion and of man's dependence upon his maker, or the assertion of his independency.

Being but mutable, fallible, and dependent, the noblest and highest creature of all is liable to fall from his fair estate, and can only be preserved therein by the sovereign power of his creator. Being endowed with free will, man was capable of both obedience and disobedience... God offered to man the opportunity of being confirmed as a holy and happy creature, secured on the condition of his own personal choice; so that his probation being successfully closed, he had been granted a firm standing before God...

God had endowed Adam, in his creation, with a perfect and universal rectitude (Eccl. 7:29), so that he was fully able to respond to all requirements of his maker. He had a full knowledge of God's will concerning his duty. There was no bias in him toward evil: having been created in the image and likeness of God, his affections were pure and holy (cf. Eph. 4:24). How simple and easy was the observance of the obligation! How appalling the consequences of its violation!...

# Adam, not Eve

In the previous chapters we have seen that at the beginning man was “made upright” (Eccl. 7:29), which language necessarily implies a law to which he was conformed in his creation. When anything is made regular or according to rule, the rule itself is obviously presupposed. The law of Adam’s being was none other than the eternal and indispensable law of righteousness, the same which was afterwards summed up in the Ten Commandments. Man’s uprightness consisted in the universal rectitude of his character, his entire conformity to the nature of his maker. The very nature of man was then fully able to respond to the requirements of God’s revealed will, and his response thereto was the righteousness in which he stood.

...Thus created, and thus qualified, it pleased the Lord God to constitute Adam the federal head and legal representative of his race; and as occupying that character and office, God entered into a solemn covenant or agreement with him, promising a reward upon the fulfillment of certain conditions....

God, then, entered into a covenant with Adam, and all his posterity in him, to the effect that if he obeyed the one command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he should receive as his reward an indefectibility of holiness and righteousness.... The compact which the Lord God entered into with Adam is appropriately termed “the covenant of works” not only to distinguish it from the covenant of grace, but also because under it life was promised on condition of perfect obedience, which obedience was to be performed by man in his own creature strength.....

The covenant of works provided no mediator, nor any other method of restoration to the purity and bliss which was lost.

There was no place given for repentance. All was irrevocably lost. Between the blessing of obedience and the curse of disobedience there was no middle ground. So far as the terms of the covenant of works was concerned, its inexorable sentence was: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die."

.....[But] Adam wickedly presumed to eat the fruit of the forbidden tree, and incurred the awful guilt of violating the covenant. In his sin there was a complication of many crimes: in Romans 5 it is called the "offence," "disobedience," "transgression." Adam was put to the test of whether the will of God was sacred in his eyes, and he fell by preferring his own will and way. He failed to love God with all his heart; he had contempt for His high authority; he disbelieved His holy veracity; he deliberately and presumptuously defied Him. Hence, at a later date, in the history of Israel, God said, "But they like Adam have transgressed the covenant, they have dealt treacherously against me" (Hos. 6:7, margin)...

It is to this divine declaration in Hosea 6:7 the apostle makes reference, when of Adam he declares that he was "the figure of him that was to come."... As the vicar of his race Adam disobeyed the Eden statute in their room and stead, precisely as Christ, the "last Adam" (1 Cor. 15:45), obeyed the moral law as the representative of His people in their room and stead. "By one man sin entered into the world" (Rom. 5:12). This is a remarkable statement calling for the closest attention. Eve sinned too; she sinned before Adam did; then why are we not told that "by one woman sin entered into the world"? – the more so seeing that she is, equally with Adam, a root of propagation.

Only one answer is possible to the above question: because Adam was the one public person or federal head that represented us, and not she. Adam was the legal representative of Eve as well as of his posterity, for she was taken out of him. Remarkably is this confirmed by the historical record of Genesis 3: upon Eve's eating of the forbidden fruit no change was evidenced; but as soon as Adam partook, "the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked" (Gen. 3:7). This means that they were instantly conscious of the loss of innocence, and were ashamed of their woeful condition. The eyes of

a convicted conscience were opened, and they perceived their sin and its awful consequences: the sense of their bodily nakedness only adumbrating their spiritual loss.

Not only was it by Adam (rather than by Eve) that sin entered into the world, “the judgment was by one [offence] to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification” (Rom. 5:16). The fact that Eve is entirely omitted from Romans 5:12-19 shows that it is the guilt of our federal head being imputed to us which is there in view, and not the depravity of nature which is imparted; for corruption has been directly derived through her as much as from Adam. The fact that it was by Adam’s one offense that condemnation has come upon all his posterity, shows that his subsequent sins are not imputed to us; for by his original transgression he lost the high honor and privilege conferred upon him: in the covenant being broken, he ceased to be a public person, the federal head of the race.



Man's defection from his primordial state was purely voluntary and from the unconstrained choice of his own mutable and self-determining will. Adam was "without excuse." By eating of the forbidden fruit, he broke, first, the law of his very being, violating his own nature, which bound him unto loving allegiance to his maker: self now took the place of God. Second, he flouted the law of God, which requires perfect and unremitting obedience to the moral Governor of the world: self had now usurped the throne of God in his heart. Third, in trampling upon the positive ordinance under which he was placed, he broke the covenant, preferring to take his stand alongside of his fallen wife.

"Every man at his best estate is altogether vanity" (Ps. 39:5). Thus was Adam. In full-grown manhood, with every faculty perfect, amid ideal surroundings, he rejected the good and chose the evil. He was not deceived: Scripture declares he was not (1 Tim. 2:14). He knew well what he was doing. "Deliberately he wrecked himself and us. Deliberately he jumped the precipice. Deliberately he murdered un-numbered generations. Like many another who has loved 'not wisely but too well,' he would not lose his Eve. He chose her rather than God. He determined he would have her if he went to Hell with her" (G. S. Bishop). Direful were the consequences: the death sentence fell upon Adam the day in which he sinned, though for the sake of his posterity the full execution of it was delayed.

As Romans 5:12 declares, "Wherefore as by one man [the first man, the father of our race] sin [guilt, criminality, condemnation] entered [as a solemn accuser in the witness stand] into the world [not into "the universe," for that had previously been defiled by the rebellion of Satan and his angels; but the world of fallen humanity], and death [as a judicial infliction] by sin [the original offense], and so death [as the divine punishment] passed [as the penal sentence from the judge of all the earth], upon all men, [none, not even infants, being exempted], in whom [the correct rendering – see margin] all have sinned" – that is, sinned in the "one man," the federal head of the race, the legal representative of the "all men"; note, not all now "sin," nor all are inherently "sinful" (though sadly true), but "in whom all have sinned" in Eden....



If it was unjust for God to impute to us Adam's guilt, it must equally have been so to impart to us his depravity; but seeing God has righteously done the latter, we must vindicate Him for doing the former.

The very fact that we go on breaking the covenant of works and disobeying the law of God, shows our oneness with Adam under that covenant. Let that fact be duly weighed by those who are inclined to be captious. Our complicity with Adam in his rebellion is evidenced every time we sin against God. Instead of challenging the justice which has charged to our account the guilt of the first human transgression, let us seek grace to repudiate Adam's example, standing out in opposition to his insubordination by gladly taking upon us the easy yoke of God's commandments. Finally, let it again be pointed out that if we were ruined by another, Christians are redeemed by Another. By the principle of representation we were lost, and by the same principle of representation – Christ transacting for us as our surety and sponsor – we are saved.



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# Which Bark Are You On?

Two barks the seas of life do ply  
the one is yours until you die  
unless you grasp the other ark,  
the only one you may embark.

No safety lies upon your ship.  
"Adam" upon its bow is writ.

The other bark bears Jesus' name  
and it alone has lasting fame.

So take the cable thrown to you  
and board the ship that's going through.

In that fair bark the harbor's sure  
the other only death can tour.

In Christ your journey is complete  
for he met death and hell did cheat.

Eternal life he won for all.  
So leave poor Adam and his fall.

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