

The Two Adams

1 Corinthians 15: 45-50.

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The thought on my heart is to speak a little as to the two Adams, as here brought before us.

There is a wonderful contrast presented in scripture between the two Adams — the Adam of the garden of Eden, and the last Adam, who is a life-giving Spirit.

The contrast between these two is not merely a matter for the mind of man to be interested in, or to occupy itself with. The fact of the two beings before us is the wonderful way of God in setting forth His own glory. It was just this; He took occasion of the failure, misconduct, and ruin of Adam and Eve in Eden, to bring forth the exceeding riches and the magnificence of His own character of truthfulness and large-hearted grace, both of which Satan had denied in speaking to Eve, when he told her that God did not mean what He said, that He was niggardly and narrow-minded and that He wished to keep from her something that would be of use to her and Adam — the knowledge of good and evil. God's answer to that came out when sin had been brought in, and the whole human family in our first parents had been utterly lost and ruined. God's truth, and the large-heartedness of His grace and mercy, came out, and He said, in the presence of Adam and Eve, to Satan, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head."

Now, one of the things that strike me in these last days is, how little the minds generally of religious persons are really cleared entirely from the first Adam, and recognize everything in connection with the first Adam to be dead loss, and if they have got anything whatever, that they have it in the last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let me briefly pass down the account given in the end of Romans 5: 12: "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." The thing that distinguished Adam was that sin entered into the world by him. Well, the heart might say, I grant you that, but that does not prove the complete ruin of the whole race. Does it not? Why death passed upon all men, for that sin have sinned. Death passed upon all upon the ground of their being descendants of the first man who had sinned. When they begat a son, he was begotten with their own likeness — and character; and in Genesis that character is strongly marked in the murder of Abel, for Cain withstood God, and would not, even in type, recognize the sacrifice as appointed by God.

Verse 15 speaks also of that one, "through the offence of one many be dead." In verse 16, again, sin and "the judgment was by one to condemnation." In verse 17, "By one man's offence death reigned by one." Verse 18, "By the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation." Verse 19, "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners." When God gave the perfect description of what man ought to be — to love God with all his heart, and all his soul, and with all his mind — the effect was this, it caused the offence to abound. And on which of these verses can anybody build for any comfort? God has said, "Wrath is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men;" not merely governmental wrath, but God in heaven judging righteous judgment. That is the picture God gives of the father and mother from whom the whole race descend, and everyone has a likeness to his father and mother. Where is there a single stone then for his foot to rest upon? Ah! but look at the other side, not only the contrast, striking as it is, but it is a contrast brought in, taking occasion by the very ruin, so that there is not one single thing in the Lord Jesus Christ, not one, of

which I could say with intelligence, "I hope that will stand me in stead," without owning the entire ruin of all connected with the first Adam.

Everything is in ruin and under judgment, and God well understood what He had pledged Himself to, when He said, "the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." He well understood the condition to which our first parents were sunk. There was not a thing that met His mind in either of them, not a power they could work forth in any way for blessing to themselves. They were not only then and there in a predicament, but there was no power in them. Whatever was to be done, it was the seed of the woman alone could do it. The serpent had power, and unless God could find some one who could come in to put his foot on the head of that serpent, all were lost, lost, lost, for eternity; every single individual would have been lost. But God could do it, and God would do it, and speaks of Him who was His champion to put down every mark of evil Satan had brought into the nether heavens and nether earth, and to bring in a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

See what is said of this same Adam in this same series — Romans 5: 15: "If through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many." We have thus the antagonism of God in His love against the ruined state of the creature, and not a single thing but God and Christ — not one. It is all the gift of God through Christ. All that He finds in the sinner is death, and bondage, and corruption — nothing else whatever. He goes on again (verse 16), "The free gift is of many offences unto justification." What did He do as an answer to those offences? He brings justification. To whom does He bring it? To man, whose mouth is stopped, and who has not one word to say for himself. "They which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one Jesus Christ." Verse 18, "By the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life:" Lastly, verse 21, "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

Then, again, beloved friends, if I have got connected with the last Adam, I have in Him that which just tells me how God has taken occasion of my ruin individually to set forth His Almighty power, and the riches of His grace in Christ, and nothing else whatever. My eyes are brought then to Christ, and all I look at in myself is utter ruin; but there is a Saviour. I am never turning to myself, but I am turning to Him whom God has thrust in against the will of man — no one can deny it is against the will of man. Christ has set forth the virtues of His salvation, and when Satan found Him in the world to do that work, the hatred of man came out against Him, and man came to be a destroyer. I take these two persons, and one is here, the other there. Now on whom is my back turned, and to which is my face turned? Have I my back turned clean against Adam, and the whole family of which I was a member? There is nothing but ruin there, it is no use turning to it, it is ruin from first to last, and I will set my face Christward and Godward. I cannot look this way and that way at the same time.

It is good to know the contrast as to what I was when found by Christ. Mine was not a living soul when Christ picked it up; it was a living soul when made by God, not when Christ picked it up. As to the one to whom I look for blessing, which is it? Have you been thoroughly cleaned out of everything that grew on the stock of the Adam and Eve family?

Now let me call attention to the use God makes of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. I think here again, beloved friends, if I may express it in simplicity of heart before you — I think there is great shortcoming in the present day in presenting God's thoughts to those whose consciences are in any measure awake, and a want in many who, I do not doubt, are the Lord's, of setting to their seal the work of the Lord towards poor sinners.

I would just like to remark as to the difference on the great day of atonement between the atonement and the Azazel, or scape-goat. The blood carried in was for God; it was proclaiming that to be the mercy-seat. Through the rent veil is the way the believer draws nigh, and when inside he finds on the throne the Lamb. The scape-goat had the sins confessed over him, and took the sins away to a land not inhabited. That is the part I want to look at in detail. First, as to clearing the ground on the question of sin, God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; and, if I am to have confidence in the thought of meeting Him, I must have known that which will enable me to meet Him who knows everything connected with my ruin.

In connection with sin, I think there are three things very important to separate the one from the other. What is sin in principle? What are sins as distinguished from sin? and what is guilt? These are the three things I want to call attention to before passing on. When sin is brought in in Eden, it is very simple indeed. God had given everything freely to Adam, to remain his as long as he marked his dependence upon God by not touching a certain tree. What came out with Eve was, she thought she could better herself, and she took the place of independence. Adam did it in a more solemn and deliberate way after. Self-willed independence was the secret of sin. God had pledged Himself to give Adam everything. But they preferred catering for themselves to being dependent on God. If I take self-willed independence as a definition of sin, do I not find in every one self-willed independence of God? Is it not born with us? Is not self-will what we see even in a babe? and as a child grows up, we hear, "I like" and "I don't like;" and as men get into the world, there is a seeking after their own. How many a one, terrified at God's word as to judgment to come, will lay to heart how he is to meet God, and toil and labour, entirely setting aside the work of Christ, and never taking any notice of it until he finds he cannot succeed that way! Three years I toiled and laboured after God awoke me, and I saw something of the beauty of Christ too, and never thought of asking God what His way was of dealing with sin. What came out? What did it all come to? That eighteen hundred and upwards of thirty years ago, God, without consulting me, without waiting for me to say whether I liked His way or disliked it, had given His Son from His bosom, and made a way for the sinner to draw near to God. Is there no conflict, no thoughts of our own that we superadded? Ah, to be sure there is. What are all these thoughts to accomplish a way of our own but just self-willed independence of our own human minds? Sins are will working out into action. When Cain was born, Eve said, I have gotten the man from the Lord, I have the child; but he was a murderer, not a Saviour. When he found that God had respect unto Abel's offering, and not to him, he set his heart to kill his brother.

What is the difference between that and guilt? Guilt is the state of one having set aside the laws of One who has power over him.

When would a creature have come to an end of the experience of the impossibility of God and the sinner meeting together? When their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched. How could I grasp the largeness of God's mind against sin — the creature — worm, if you please — turning His back on God, and saying, No, I will cater for myself, I will be independent? How could I measure what God's penalty would be — His hatred of that before the whole universe? Where are these three things met? God shows in Romans 6 that He had His thought's about the humiliation side — the experience of the Son of His love down here on earth. Mark these two verses. (3 and 17), "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" "God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you." That is, God proposed the doctrine, set it forth, that the only hiding-place to be found, for any one belonging to the family of the first Adam, was in the last Adam, in the depth of His humiliation. To what extent does He go? These three words, "Crucified together with him, dead together with him, buried together

with him," tell the extent of it. There is a refuge, and a safe one, for one who knows that he is ruined in himself, belonging to a ruined race, and having a ruined head to the family in Adam and Eve.

The three things which come in — I know who the Nazarene was and is, and I know that He was set forth evidently crucified, put to open shame by man, and in the hour when everything told to the grief and sorrow of His heart, God added an element the creature never could have added, and He cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Psalm 22 is wonderful in connection with that cry of the Lord, because, immediately after expressing a sense of forsakenness, He goes on to vindicate God for having done it. No creature has ever been forsaken for sin. He was forsaken when He took the cup from the hand of His Father, and was put to open shame before heaven and earth, hanging on the cross.

Was there any self-willed independence in Him? Never, never; He was the only one who could carry out the mind of His Father perfectly. Ah, I know the secret; my conscience understands it. If there were not a second man on earth that would say, He was put to open shame for me, I say I have it all to myself, and I bear the whole burden as the one whose self-willed independence brought it on. He bore the penalty, the judgment came on Him. Seeing this, a power is brought in on the soul which gives a death-blow to independency.

If you do so and so, I will do so and so. God is thought to be very hard. We cannot satisfy even our own minds — it is impossible. When the soul knows God made Him to be sin for us, and that He bore the penalty, what a simple thing to say, Is that the God I have been so self-willed against? Am I to go on longer in my own independency against the God who gave His Son from His bosom for me? Shall I go on so? Shall this principle not be hated and judged by me? I see the love of God in having put His Son to shame — the One in whom the penalty was borne; then I loathe this self-will, I learn to watch against it, in anywise, and watch against attributing any blessing whatever save to Him that hung upon the cross.

What had I to do with His hanging there? Nothing but my sins: as to its virtues, nothing. Men may find the nails, the Romans may have found the spear, that may be man's part; but what is God's part in the cross? "He made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

When God looks at the Son of His love in connection with the sinner — the Son crucified to be a hiding-place for poor sinners — what are God's thoughts? Ah! I have revealed that; you are blessed in knowing how I could reveal it, to get honour to Myself and to My Son, the only One who could look sin in the face, and take the judgment — you a creature of yesterday! then it is the death-blow comes to self-will. I *want* to begin with God, I *wish* to begin with God. When we get to the blessed Lord in Psalm 40, it is not only that He in that way charged Himself with the sin that rested on the human race, and could do it, but He speaks of sins more in number than the hairs of His head.

How it will shine forth when the Lord, according to Zechariah, comes in, all their sins and iniquities gone, and Israel shall say, "This is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us." The Lord claimed them all, and makes the hearts of Israel willing to abase themselves before God.

If I have no good thing to give Him, I will give Him my bad things; my sins, my self-will, my guilt, I will give to God and to Christ. I have got a heavy burden of ruin, and I will let the Lord be heartily welcome to it. You never get that till you get grace and mercy as the ground of your standing. I give all my self-will to Christ. I have done nothing but sin; I will give all my sins to Him. Yes, He is the only one who has borne the judgment, He is the one who *has* borne it, and He is the one who is the joy of God's heart as the Saviour of lost ones.

Do you know Him as your Saviour? not only your Saviour from the wrath to come, and from Satan and the world, but from your *own self*? Many a one wants to have that driven home. What characterized the Lord when here? All that Satan could do, he could get nothing out of the Lord. When Christ was here, He was always master of Himself. The Lord undertakes to save us from ourselves. When He presents us to the Father, we shall be in glorious bodies, delivered from humiliation, made like unto His own body in glory. Then we shall be perfectly delivered from everything not of Him. Can you say to God, I am a poor, simple, foolish thing, but I see that thou hast said, and written it down, that I am crucified together with Christ? Thou lookest on me, having faith in the love that gave Thy Son; thou lookest on me as crucified together with Him who was put to open shame.

A second thing comes out — dead together with Him. He gave His life a ransom for us, and the eternal life with which He quickens us is the eternal life which He had before the world was. There can be no mistake as to what that quickening is. Dead, buried; ah, do all believers know what it is to reckon themselves buried together with Christ? When I think of the grace of Christ, I say there was the end of myself. God put me away on the cross.

Now as to the power of this practically: if you have got any gospel at all, what is your gospel? Is, it the gospel of eternal life? If so, I expect you to be doers, not hearers only. You cannot have life, and not be a doer. God has met everything against me in Christ. What is the grand mark of that given to us here? "Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God." Do you reckon yourselves to be dead? Do you know what it is to be in communion with God? That He is a living person, whose glory we can have no idea about? The Lord Jesus Christ is the image of the *invisible* God; and do you and I know what it is to say of everything connected with the first Adam, Thou sayest of me that I am crucified together with Christ, dead together, buried together with Him? If thou sayest that I can reckon myself to be dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God, I believe. Yes, you say; but do not you see that I do not feel it? He never said that you would *feel* it? Abraham was given certain promises, and God took special care to let everything in nature get the sentence of God against it. You see how faith *versus* feeling was tried in Abraham. "A father of many nations have I made thee." I can quite suppose the people around him saying, Where are these nations? You have no child even, only Ishmael, who was not born in the house. Where are all these nations What did Abraham say? Just leave all alone. God has committed Himself by promise, and He is able to perform — leave it all alone.

He took the truth of God just as the thing in which he could rest, and would rest, and did rest. I do wish to press that side of the gospel. The heart having found in the humiliation of Christ that which enables it to look ruin in the face, and say, I am not afraid to see the place Adam got into, not afraid of the flesh or of the world. Why? Because there is a Saviour. "Know ye not that as many as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death." We are crucified together with Him; dead together with Him; buried together with Him. There is where the saint gets rest. God said it, God has written it. We have learnt just a little of the blessedness of the humiliation of Christ, if we have faith; but God only knows the fulness of it, and He will give us perfect blessing in His own time. G. V. W.