



*9 And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? 10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. (Genesis 3:9-10)*

The immediate penalty and fruit of sin is shame and fear. Nakedness represents the complete exposure of our sins before the eyes of the Lord. Nothing is hidden from His purview. Sin results, not from free will, but rather from a will that is in bondage to mammon and the devil. The only will that is free is that will which accords with the will of God. Just because the chain about our necks is twenty feet long does not mean that we are free. Certainly, we can take seven steps on our own volition ere the chain restrains us, but we are yet prisoners of the chain. That is what free will without God is all about. The will of man that does not comport with the will of God is under the absolute bondage of the will of the world and of the devil. Man can neither do, nor even imagine, a good thing apart from the Holy Will of God.

We are utterly naked before God without a covering for our sins. Suppose a man, without that covering, believes he can, by his will, do sufficient good for salvation. Can he? Imperatively, NO, he cannot! *20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. 21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. (Romans 3:20-24)* If no man can be righteous under the claims of the law, even if he wills to do so, proves that man's will is not free until he has received that imputed righteousness and covering offered by our Lord Redeemer.

No respectable person would appear naked in public. It would be a tremendous embarrassment! Adam had no idea what nakedness truly was until he had sinned before God and came under a conviction of sin resulting from disobedience. Suddenly, he had a knowledge of the sinfulness of, not only nakedness, but every other offense against the Sovereignty of God. Where would Adam, or any other man, obtain a covering for his nakedness if not from God. We own nothing on our own right. *7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.* (Gen 3:6-7) All things are made, and owned, by God. I am reminded of a story that mentions a meeting between God and the Devil. Prompted by his arrogance and pride, the Devil said, "God, I would like to inform you that I can do anything that you can do." God, half-smiling, says, "Really? Can you make a man?" "I sure can," boasted the Devil. "Fine," answers God, "You go first, Devil!" So the Devil reaches down and picks up a handful of dirt from which to make his man, but God exclaims, "No, no! Mr. Devil, you must get your own dirt!" Fig leaves cannot cover our sins because those, too, belong to God.

The great European reformer Martin Luther had something to say regarding the illusion of free will without Christ:

*"For if man has lost his freedom, and is forced to serve sin, and cannot will good, what conclusion can more justly be drawn concerning him, than that he sins and wills evil necessarily?" Bondage of the Will pg. 149 and "the commandments are not given inappropriately or pointlessly; but in order that through them the proud, blind man may learn the plague of his impotence, should he try to do as he is commanded." Ibid, pg. 160.*

Sin prevents us from attending to the privileges of worship. It appears from the text of Genesis 3 God communed with the couple of Eden during the coolness of the day; *they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.* (Gen 3:8) Sin places a gulf between man and His Maker. God was in the place prescribed for communion, but Adam was not due to his sins. He was rather hiding in the bushes and trees due to his shame and fear of being found in his sins. Thousands, and millions, in America today have likewise erected a wall of separation in worship between God and themselves – often and shamefully in the very sanctuary of backslidden churches themselves. Now his fear and shame has driven him away from the presence of God – just as it does in our day. God never moves – it is the sinner that moves away.

God called upon Adam, knowing beforehand all that had caused him to hide: *And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?* (Gen 3:9) When caught red-handed in our sins, a confession may be forced upon us, but we yet attempt to wiggle out from under the condemnation of guilt by equivocation and attempts to shift the blame from ourselves. God asks, *Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat. And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.* (Gen 3:11-12) Notice how Adam attempts to shift blame to anyone other than himself – not only does he blame Eve, but he blames God Himself for giving him such a woman! Such denial of sin begins at birth. The baby, with chocolate smeared from cheek to cheek, denies that he has stolen the cookies. There are no guilty convicts in prison – to hear their stories, they are all innocent of any evil or criminality. We are all naked without the proper covering that God provides to cover our sins – the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us review, for a moment, how that covering was purchased for us by our Lord. The circumstances found Adam and Eve naked before God in the Garden. If man could live, God could not allow such nakedness (uncovered sin) to continue. There had to be an intermediate and temporary covering for that nakedness while the Great Tailor

prepared a sufficient covering for all sin. Remember that all of Creation was made by the strong love of God for all that He created. *20 And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. 21 And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good. 22 And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. 23 And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.* (Gen 1:20-23) You already know from your Bible study that God is the Author of all life. God created these creatures with a deep and abiding love for them. But now God is faced with a choice that He had made long before He had created man – He must take the innocent life of one of his beloved creatures in order to cover the senseless nakedness of Adam and Eve. So God killed an innocent animal, deprived it of its own covering, and gave this as a covering to Adam and Eve. *21 Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.* (Gen 3:21)

I can assure you taking the life of any of His creatures is not a thing which God takes lightly, but the taking of the beautiful robes that covered an innocent animal must have broken the Heart of Divine Love. In the taking of that innocent life, God recognized that a greater sacrifice would be necessary if a permanent solution were to be provided to redeem men from their sins – that of His beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. *17 For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. 18 Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood. 19 For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, 20 Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. 21 Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. 22 And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. 23 It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: 25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; 26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: 28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.* (Hebrews 9:16-28)

Just as the Prodigal Son found, with the gift of the finest robe of his father, a covering for the filth of the pig sty; so may you and I have a covering for our sin and nakedness by that pure, white Robe of Righteousness purchased for us by our Lord at Calvary.

Are you still running about disgustingly naked? If so, seek the covering that was purchased for you. This is the only means by which you can be freed from the Bondage of the Will to Satan, and enjoy the privilege of that Perfect Law of Liberty made available in Christ. *omnipotence and foreknowledge of God, I repeat, utterly destroy the doctrine of 'free-will' ...doubtless it gives the greatest possible offense to common sense or natural reason, that God, Who is proclaimed as being full of mercy and goodness, and so on, should of His own mere will abandon, harden and damn men, as though He delighted in the sins and great eternal torments of such poor wretches. it seems an iniquitous, cruel, intolerable thought to think of God; and it is this that has been such a stumbling block to so many great men down through the ages. And who would not stumble at it? I have stumbled at it myself more than once, down to the deepest pit of despair, so that I wished I had never been made a man. (That was before I knew how health-giving that despair was, and how close to grace.)* Luther BW pg. 217