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THE  
RISE AND THE FALL;

OR, THE

ORIGIN OF MORAL EVIL.

IN THREE PARTS.

- PART I. THE SUGGESTIONS OF REASON.
- II. THE DISCLOSURES OF REVELATION.
- III. THE CONFIRMATIONS OF THEOLOGY.



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## PREFACE.

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IT is not intended in the following pages to directly answer the age-old and still vexed problem, “*Why* must and does evil exist under the government of a benevolent God?” With whatever of mystery that inquiry may be obscured, the two great *facts* remain unquestioned, — God is benevolent, and yet evil exists. Perplexing, then, as our reason may imagine the explanation to be, the two cannot be incompatible; yet how is it that after so many centuries of discussion there is as yet no universally accepted solution? Can it be that the *premises*, upon which the thousand theories proceed, need reëxamination? No harm can be done, at least, by such review, if it is conducted in a proper spirit; and it is such a discussion that we have here attempted.

The first inquiry that meets us is one of historical fact. *In what way*, and under what circumstances, was moral evil originated in, or introduced into, the world? And the only authentic informa-

tion which we possess upon this question is contained in that remarkable narrative, the first three chapters of Genesis. To this (having no higher authority) we must refer as an infallible record, and seek, through a critical examination, its real meaning and purport. Should the result of our studies seem to differ from the customary interpretation, it will be proper to test our view farther by scrutinizing it in the light of rational and theological principles. Should it prove consistent with and even confirmed by these, we shall be more likely to accept it as truly setting forth the real meaning of the story.

Accordingly, in these pages the train of reasoning which *precedes* the exposition of our view, for the purpose of suggesting in advance its probability, and also the brief and imperfect comparison of theological doctrines by which it is followed, are both to be regarded as of no higher importance than as attempted *corroborations* of the view itself, as deduced from the narrative in Genesis. However unsatisfactory, therefore, they may prove, in whole or in part, their imperfection should not prejudice the main argument, which is contained in Part II, and to which they are only subordinate.

October, 1857.

EIGHT years have passed since the above Preface was written with the expectation that the following pages would then be shortly published, and they have not yet been given to the public. The delay has arisen from various causes, but principally from the author's unwillingness to put forth a work advancing views or suggestions which more mature reflection might make him desirous to withdraw. Having come, however, to find himself strengthened by subsequent thought, in the views herein set forth, and to see the course of Biblical criticism and of theological discussion (both of which have greatly improved in character during the last ten years) more and more tending to their support and confirmation, he ventures to believe that their presentation now will not be destitute of interest and value. The book is printed without material change: a very few paragraphs and two or three references to authorities met with since the original writing, are all that have been added. This will explain the absence of all reference to many recent and valuable works which might have been cited or quoted with advantage, had the book been rewritten.

*January, 1866.*



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# THE RISE AND THE FALL;

OR,

THE ORIGIN OF MORAL EVIL.

---

## PART I.

THE SUGGESTIONS OF REASON.

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### CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

It is no wonder that in all ages the presence of Moral Evil in the world has confounded the minds of men. When they looked forth upon the material universe, whether with the searching ken of the philosopher, or the superficial glance of the ignorant, they beheld its grandest and its minutest phenomena alike obedient to general, defined, and immutable laws. In systems and in atoms, from Nature's farthest verge to the depths of her most secret cells, was manifested the truth, irresistible by the most stupid or the most perverse, of a single Creator, and an all-pervading and wondrous unity of design and government. Recognizing with reverent awe in this sublime harmony of creation the

presence of that Eternal Mind, which, sole and almighty, in the depths of his benevolent wisdom, fashioned and controls it, they have turned to the contemplation of his moral kingdom, to view there a spectacle,—how different! Instead of an adjusted plan, whose beneficence and perfection should betoken God's goodness and love, even as the voice of Physical Nature proclaims his wisdom and power, there seems to be disclosed only a chaos of chance, of disorder, of injustice, and of woe; a sight, indeed, in appearance so unworthy of a good, or even an intelligent ruler, that its observers have fallen back, bewildered and alarmed, to the physical creation, to vindicate their belief in even that ruler's existence.

To reduce this mingled mass of contradictions to a system, and to reveal the harmonious principles which the mind instinctively feels must be hidden beneath it, just as all apparent confusions in the material universe are constantly unfolding themselves into order, are the true aims of moral philosophy, and have worthily engaged many of the noblest intellects of all time. Yet strangely diverse has been the success of ethical from that of physical investigation; for, while the researches of the latter have discovered only light and beauty and uniformity of plan, in the former, the more extended the labors, the more various have become the theories, and the deeper the confusion. Even the revelations from the Deity himself, which declare the main principles and general outline of his moral

government, have not dispelled the difficulties which surround it, nor shown in clear though distant vision, the range of its eternal truths, in their bright, connected chain, towering above the mists of sophistry and prejudice. Still, the admitted facts are unreconciled with each other; still, the essential facts themselves are differently understood or positively denied; for still, the origin of SIN, the disturbing element, and the mode, effects, and purpose of its introduction, remain the topics both of fundamental importance, and of irreconcilable diversity.

May it not be that in these inquiries the same error has prevailed which for so many generations retarded the advance of physical science and philosophy, — the resort to *speculation* rather than *fact*, as the basis of theory? May not the philosophy of Moral Evil be elucidated in some degree by a more careful examination of the circumstances connected with its origin, as these are revealed in the only authentic relation of them, the inspired narrative in Genesis? It is true that this story, under an exposition established by venerable authority and the general acquiescence, has been almost excluded from the domain of ethics, and abandoned to the theologians, — as if here, at least, Reason and Revelation had but doubtful accordance. Even so Science and Genesis were supposed to be antagonistic, until traditionary interpretation ceased to becloud the Mosaic cosmogony. Then, that remarkable narrative of the Creation, so long

scoffed at as unscientific and absurd, was seen to be radiant with the light and truth of Him who is the great Author both of Nature and of Inspiration, and whose word is ever consistent with his works. We are not without hope that, by a like means, a similar mutual support and illustration may be discovered between the established principles of Moral and Mental Philosophy and the Scripture account of "the Origin of Evil."

It is with such a view that we propose to examine, in some of the few pages that follow, that portion of Genesis in which are related the *facts* attending the origin of Moral Evil in our world. Our argument rests chiefly in the construction of the historical record; but since it is plain that the existence of *sin* must depend upon the existence of the moral agency or capabilities of man, our brief investigation into the manner of its birth may be properly introduced by tracing the sources, office, and effects of the *moral* element in the mental economy. We will look for its sources, by inquiring what other mental qualities or powers demand it as a desirable and even an essential attendant, — thus discovering the necessities of man's nature from which it springs; its office, by remarking the manner in which it supplies these necessities, through the salutary influence which it is designed to exert, and does exert, upon the whole mind and character; and its effects, by showing that while it is the chief means of preserving the entire physical and

mental being of man from lapsing into speedy and inevitable ruin, it also expands and ennobles it, alone enabling it to rise to the glorious destiny of its highest exaltation.

These preliminary discussions will, of course, treat of the moral faculty simply as a part of the *natural constitution* of the mind, and will have no regard to man's connection with the Divine Government, or to his future moral accountability. Our purpose is simply to show that Conscience is a natural and necessary part of the creature Man, without which his being would be incomplete, and the analogies of nature, in the laws of animal being, violated. We shall remain, therefore, within the province of Mental Philosophy, and repose therein upon principles universally admitted or thoroughly established.

## CHAPTER II.

## OF THE SOURCES OF THE MORAL FACULTY.

IN seeking the sources of the moral faculty, our plan leads us to notice the identity of *Mind*, and the uniformity of its laws in all creatures, so far as it is developed in them respectively. Our attention will be directed more especially to those departments of it in which originates *conduct*, and which, therefore, occasion the necessity for the moral faculty (or conscience), by giving rise to the thoughts and acts of which this has jurisdiction.

There has been little variance among mental philosophers in their general analyses of the mind, and probably its division into the three departments of the *Sensibilities*, the *Intellect*, and the *Will*, as it is the most usual, will be seriously objected to by none. Of these, the *Sensibilities*, which include the appetites, desires, and affections, lie at the basis of the mind, and are the springs of its every movement. There can, in fact, be no mental operation which does not originate in the *Sensibilities*; for there must be a *desire* to act before action can be put forth. Some appetite or desire is awakened, prompting to a particular course of conduct: the

Intellect considers upon the effect of such suggested conduct, and the Will determines for or against its pursuit. Such is the history of every conceivable human act or thought, whether for good or for evil.

Nor is it the history of every *human* act merely, but of every act of every other creature as well. At this day, doubtless, the analysis we have referred to will generally be agreed to be as applicable to the psychology of brutes as of men. Such an organization of mind, indeed, seems from the nature of things unavoidable, and these three departments or agencies, inseparable from any mental constitution, however imperfectly developed. We do not mean that they should be displayed in all creatures in similar *proportions*, for it is in great measure the dissimilarity of their relative development that constitutes the mental diversities of races and of individuals. Thus, in the brute creation the Sensibilities, or lowest department of the mind, predominate. The Intellect and Will, though manifest, are feeble in their operations. Brutes reason little, and are not capable of forming settled mental purposes. With Man, on the other hand, though his Sensibilities are far more powerful than those of the creatures below him, yet the Intellect (the next higher department of the mind) is expanded in a vastly greater ratio, and is in him the characteristic mental feature. His Will, also, is greatly developed and strengthened beyond that of the inferior creatures,

but not in the same degree as the intellectual powers. Few of the race have that firmness of purpose in any endeavor or course of action, that they are constantly through life superior to every enticement from its pursuit. What we call human greatness, or a mental elevation above the average scale of humanity, is generally marked by an extraordinary power of Will. We may suppose, therefore, that in another and higher stage of being, here will be the principal change that the soul will undergo. It will rise to the full development of the Will, (the last and highest department of the mind,) and through the ages of eternity will know no temptation or allurements strong enough to beguile its affections, for an instant, from the conduct which it loves, or its gaze and efforts from the destiny to which it aspires.

We may assert, therefore, as a general truth, so far at least as our observation can extend, that, in the natural history of mind, Nature observes her usual analogies, and that its development in the different races of creatures maintains a correspondence with the progressive steps of their physical organization. Consciousness, instinct, reason, all are *mind*, either in the germ, the bud, or expanded growth; and though some would believe that the difference is both radical, and almost boundless, between the human and brute intelligences, yet, when we follow down the scale of human intellect through the various classes and races of men to its lowest limit,



such imaginings are dissipated. We only find, as between man and the brutes, just as in their physical structures, a wide distinction in perfection of organization and degree of capability, but none that is apparent, in their nature or general principles of psychological constitution.

Descending now from the general identity of mind in all creatures, to that particular department, in which, as we have seen, originates conduct, we discover, as might be expected, that in this, the lowest department of mind, this similarity between man and the brutes is most marked. A careful examination into the habits of animals reveals the truth, now generally admitted, that there is probably not one of the sensibilities, not one of the "springs of action" to any conceivable human act, which is not also implanted, in some degree, in the minds of the brutes. These springs of action, indeed,—these emotions, desires, and affections, (including the bodily appetites,) are a necessary part of the animal nature of the creature, inseparable from its constitution, and essential to its mental being. They have been divided into two classes,—the benevolent and malevolent affections. Of these, (though writers differ somewhat in their enumeration of the simple affections,) among the former class have been placed love, friendship, patriotism, gratitude, pity, &c. Among the latter class, hatred, jealousy, envy, resentment. Probably these lists might be reduced in number by a closer analysis; but this is imma-

terial to our present argument. Even taking the enumerations we have given, we think it would be easy to show, by multiplied instances if necessary, that whatever appetites, sensibilities, or emotions are implanted in man, will be found also in the mental economy of the brutes, performing their more humble, yet similar, appropriate, and necessary functions.

The distinction has been made, indeed, as between the lower animals and man, that these natural propensities are possessed by them for the sole purpose, and only to the degree, necessary for self-preservation. Such a view, however, is not sanctioned by even our daily observation. On the contrary, they are constantly seen exhibiting themselves in the brutes, in manifestations closely resembling the qualities and actions of men. We refer not now to the peculiar *instincts* of species, such as the ferocity of the tiger, the cunning of the fox, &c. ; but to those features of mind or disposition which mark individual character. We behold such in the brutes, displayed in their mutual friendly intercourse, or their outbreaks of enmity, variously developing in them from the moment of birth, as individual peculiarities, and even perpetuated, as family traits, by hereditary transmission. So we speak of "the virtues" and "the vices" of animals, with a meaning not very different from that of the same language when applied to men. Nay, we often seem to discover in them a sort of dim foreshadowing of the

moral sense, in an apparent vague perception on their part, of the praiseworthiness, or blameworthiness of certain actions. Of such impressions, however, if such in fact exist, we can only say that it is doubtful whether they are instinctive, and is certain that they are not of a kind to entail moral responsibility, and that they cannot be abstracted from particular acts into general ideas of duty. Hence, though they may *suggest* and foreshadow the human conscience, they come far short of it in nature and essential characteristics. They are analogous, indeed, it would seem, to those rudimentary organs which philosophers tell us are sometimes found in lower animals, useless in them except as representative of serviceable members in higher organizations.<sup>1</sup> As such, they are an interesting object of notice in tracing the similarity between human and brute emotions.

But though it is thus true that the springs of action (the sensibilities) are in all creatures *similar*, and produce similar manifestations, it would of course be the case that in *degree of development*

<sup>1</sup> Man, in short, is preëminently what a theologian would term the ante-typical existence,—the being in whom the types meet and are fulfilled. And not only do typical forms and numbers of the exemplified character meet in Man, but there are not a few parts of his framework which, in the inferior animal, exist as mere symbols of as little importance as dugs in the male animal, though they acquire significancy and use in him. Such, for instance, are the many-jointed but moveless and unnecessary bones, of which the stiff, inflexible *fin* of the dugong and fore-paw of the mole consist, and which exist in his arm as essential portions, none of which could be wanted, of a flexible instrument. — Hugh Miller, *Testimony of the Rocks*, p. 231.

they would vary with the different grades of mental organization. The higher the nature and intelligence of the creature, and the more expanded and diversified its faculties and relations, by so much the more powerful would be its emotions, and the more varied and complex their combinations, as well as the actions in which they would result. Herein lies the difference between man and the brutes in respect to the sensibilities, and their manifestations in conduct, except so far as these differ in the *moral* characteristic. Man, with a similar animal nature, has a thousand-fold more capabilities for passion, and a thousand times more forms of its expression. Accordingly, as a mere animal, had he no moral nature whatever, whatever of good or evil could come from his sensibilities would be exhibited in vastly greater force, and with vastly greater extent and variety of good or evil effects. Acting out his mere animal nature, therefore, without restraint, Man is a much more dangerous creature, both to himself and to the Universe, than any other ; and this, not from any peculiarity of plan in his mental constitution, but because his superior development creates an increased capacity for passion, and a more tremendous scope and power in its exercise.

The application of these remarks becomes obvious when we pass to consider the range of the Sensibilities in the different animal races, with the similar forms of action and conduct which they

develop in all. As we have suggested, the danger from these "springs of action" arises from their active and expansive nature. Implanted for necessary and benevolent purposes, they are, in their normal and balanced action, not only essential to the existence of the creature, but conducive to its happiness. Yet, as in the material universe we behold the same forces at one time gently wafting fragrance to the flower, and moistening with dew its delicate petals, and at another, rising into fearful agencies of evil to sweep the earth with ruin and terror; so the kindly and healthful appetites, at times advancing with unregulated energy, expand into raging passions, and draw havoc and destruction in their train. Nor are these tendencies and results peculiar to *human* sensibilities. Thus it has ever been since sentient beings were first created. The records of Earth's historic tablets teach us, that, thousands of ages before man waked into existence, nature had armed insects and reptiles with weapons of warfare and torture, which they wielded against each other in the deadly encounters of passion. Epoch on epoch came and went while the slow-forming world was preparing for its human tenants, which saw its seas daily lashed with mortal conflicts, and heard amid its primeval forests the fearful cries of rage, of suffering, and of violent death. So from those distant periods down to the present hour, passion, with the thousand miseries it occasions, has marked the history of all creatures,

human and brute alike, in proportion to their respective capacities and opportunities for its exercise. Hence it appears that man is not alone in the distress, ruin, and death which he suffers from natural appetites, and which we frequently, and in one sense properly, speak of as the effects of *sin*. The same evils prevailed long before *sin* became an inmate of creation, and still prevail among the animals which never sinned, and upon which no curse was ever denounced. Man's experience in these respects, therefore, is the same with that of all sentient beings, and in entire accordance with the laws of life, established with its first awakening in the universe.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In Hugh Miller's *Testimony of the Rocks* occurs the following passage (page 102):—

“This early exhibition of tooth, and spine, and sting,—of weapons constructed alike to cut and to pierce,—to unite two of the most indispensable requisites of the modern armorer—a keen edge to a stiff back—nay, stranger still, the examples furnished in this primeval time of weapons formed not only to kill but also to torture,—must be altogether at variance with the preconceived opinions of those who hold, that, until man appeared in creation and darkened its sympathetic face with the stain of moral guilt, the reign of violence and outrage did not begin, and that there was no death among the inferior creatures, and no suffering. But preconceived opinion, whether it hold fast with Lactantius and the old Schoolmen to the belief that there can be no antipodes, or assert with Caccini and Bellarmine that our globe hangs lazily in the midst of the heavens, while the sun moves round it, must yield ultimately to scientific truth. And it is a truth as certain as the existence of a southern hemisphere, or the motion of the earth around both its own axis and the great solar centre, that, untold ages ere man had sinned and suffered, the animal creation exhibited exactly its present state of war: that the strong, armed with formidable weapons, exquisitely constructed to kill, preyed upon the weak;

The only difference, then, between man and the brutes, in regard to these phenomena of the passions, lies in the circumstance that in him their allowance is invested with a *moral* character, which in them it does not possess. It is now generally agreed by moralists that it is the act of the *Will*, permitting the undue sway of passion, to which the moral quality attaches, and not to the passions themselves. We should carefully distinguish, therefore, between the passions with their evil consequences, (which are common to all creatures,) and the moral character, with which, in the human race, *their permitted supremacy* is associated. Disturbance, suffering, and death, their usual attendants, as we have seen, are not peculiar to man, nor ascribable to his moral relations. Strictly, therefore, these evils are not the consequences of *Sin*, if by sin we mean that feature connected with the propensities which is *peculiar to man*, to wit, the

and that the weak — sheathed, many of them, in defensive armor, equally admirable in its mechanism, and ever increasing and multiplying upon the earth far beyond the requirements of the mere maintenance of their races — were enabled to escape as species the assaults of the tyrant tribes, and to exist unthinned for unreckoned ages. It has been weakly and impiously urged — as if it were merely with the geologist that men had to settle this matter — that such an economy of warfare and suffering — of warring and of being warred upon — would be, in the words of the infant Goethe, unworthy of an all-powerful and all-benevolent Providence, and, in effect, a libel on his government and character. But that grave charge we leave the objectors to settle with the great Creator himself. Be it theirs, not ours, to

“Snatch from his hands the balance and the rod,  
Rejudge his justice, — be the god of God.”

*guilt* attending their permitted excess. They are the effect of passions, the yielding to whose sway is sinful, but not the effect of this *sinfulness*; of passions whose existence, operation, and results are independent of *moral* accountability; and which in man, as in the brutes, would be undistinguished from the rest of his animal nature, but for a new perception implanted in his breast, through which he recognizes them as entailing upon him a moral responsibility for their government.

Here, then, is where Conscience (this new perception) has its sources: since its functions relate exclusively to the right regulation and control of the human Sensibilities. We have established the fact, that in that department of the mind which thus gives occasion for its exercise, and over which, therefore, it in a manner presides, Man is organized substantially like other creatures, and under similar conditions of existence. We shall next inquire into the *office* which the conscience thus performs in the *natural* (not the *moral*) economy, and how far the analogies and necessities of being demand it, or some equivalent for it, as a part of the animal nature.



## CHAPTER III.

OF THE OFFICE OF THE MORAL FACULTY IN THE  
MENTAL ECONOMY.

HITHERTO we have considered the active powers of the mind,—the energies which give it movement and direction. We have seen that these are, in plan and operation, the same in all creatures ; that they are both necessary, and, in their legitimate use, promotive of happiness ; but that when in any being they transcend this limit, they become the baleful agents of misery and ruin. We shall now inquire after the forces, if any, which Nature has provided as offsets and safeguards against these liabilities to passionate excess, for the preservation of the creature ; what influences of a restraining tendency she may have furnished to check the rising excitements of the susceptibilities, and to control their ordinary movements within safe and natural bounds.

We assume at the outset the existence of such provisions ; for, from the phenomena which Nature displays in the material creation, we are led by the laws of her usual analogies to look for a system of forces and balances, of impulses and counteractions in the mental universe. In the motions of the spheres, in the changes and influences of the differ-

ent seasons, in the action of the elements, in the development and laws of animal and vegetable existences, — wherever, in fact, we behold life and movement in the physical domain, we see energies working under the control of counter-energies, — a system of forces and counter-forces, whose mutual regulation educes general harmony. Yet not here, more than in the field of mind, are the adjustments so perfectly preserved as to preclude all irregularities ; for often some element or force will break like a swelling passion through its surrounding barriers, and sweep creation with havoc, until its power is spent, or it is brought again under control. Where then, in the universe of mind, do we find these restraining forces for which we inquire ? What influences do we discover which operate as checks and brakes upon the onward driving propensities, serving to moderate and determine their otherwise headlong course ? The inquiry relates not to the being of *man* merely, but to that of all creatures in which these propensities subsist.

We should expect, in conformity with a general principle of Nature, that such checks in the different classes of being would be proportioned, in number and strength, to the degree of necessity which they might respectively require ; in other words, that they would be provided, in different creatures, in increased or diminished ratio, according to the power of their respective appetites, and the circumstances surrounding them, which are likely to draw

out those appetites in passionate excess. Thus the insect or the worm which feels probably little more than the mere consciousness of existence, and is, so far as we know, almost isolated from its fellows, as regards the interchange of sentiment, needs few influences to restrain passions which it can hardly be thought to possess. And even with the brutes of the higher grades, so few and simple, at best, are the emotions of which they are capable, so limited and vague are their relations to each other, and so few their opportunities, means, and topics of mutual communication, that their intercourse is reduced to the simplest character, little likely to elicit or foster the passions beyond their natural and proper growth. Add to these natural limitations, their temperate and equable habits and modes of life, their plain and natural diet, and the facility with which their few wants are satisfied, together with their various instincts, and the effect wrought by changes of the seasons upon their feelings and desires, and we can readily perceive that in these provisions, together with others of a general character, to which we shall hereafter advert, Nature has amply guarded against the perversion and overgrowth of the propensities, hedging them in as she has, by so many circumstances unfavorable to their expansion. Accordingly, we find that animals in their natural sphere of life, are generally more noble in their natures, and much more free from indulgence in the grosser passions, than when brought into an artificial condi-

tion of existence, and surrounded by unnatural incitements. Yet, even in their best estate, in their mutual intercourse, however simple it may be, clashings of interest, or promptings of opportunity occur to disturb the nicely poised balance of restraint, and to excite the energies of passion to vigorous and destructive activity.

Thus carefully, then, has Nature guarded the susceptibilities of the brutes, but what protections has she provided for man, who, as regards danger from his passions, stands in a vastly more exposed and perilous situation? For him, scarcely one of the natural barriers to which we have before referred exists. His active and enlarged faculties; his boundless capabilities of imagination and feeling; his extended, complex, and ever-varying social and political relations; his intimate associations and intercourse with his kind, with their various and controlling influences on his character, involving him in a constant struggle of emulation, rivalry, and antagonism; his quick and powerful appetites, unrestrained by any natural checks, but fanned and fed into ceaseless flame by artificial and irregular modes of life, by the thousand excitements and allurements by which he is surrounded, by the desires which they generate, and the proffered means of their gratification, all conspire to render almost impossible an equable or tranquil existence. They create the most imminent danger that he will succumb to unregulated passion, and the highest necessity for safeguards far

superior, both in number and in kind, to those of the creatures below him. How far Nature has responded to this necessity, will be best understood by enumerating the more important of the protections which she has provided.

First. One protecting influence is derived from the sensibilities themselves, in the counterpoise of the emotions against each other, so that the strength of one class of affections oftentimes counteracts the rising violence of another class. Thus anger could hardly grow inordinate against a being who was at the same time deeply loved, revered, or pitied; or whose favor was necessary to be acquired or retained for some ulterior end. These influences are common to both man and the brutes, (though affecting the latter, of course, to an inferior degree,) since the mutual intercourse of all creatures is based on their common sympathies, necessities, or interests. In human society, how often is cruelty, or greed, or lust, restrained in its inception by self-interest, or pride, or some other, perhaps more honorable, sentiment! How many severe and rugged natures, how many selfish and depraved hearts, invulnerable to all other influences, have been softened and reformed by the gentle power of companions or friends, loving and beloved! In these, as in other cases of opposing sensibilities, man's social relations, while they enhance the danger, also greatly strengthen the preventives of evil.

The sensibility, however, which merits special

notice, as perhaps the most important of these checks upon the appetites, is fear. In all creatures, whose passions crave undue gratification, the fear of consequent inconvenience or suffering of some sort, of retaliation or retribution from some quarter, operates as a powerful restraint. Even in the lower animals its effect is marked, but in Man, with whom experience and forecast have a distinguished influence upon conduct, it becomes an eminent bulwark of virtue. It is to this that human codes universally appeal, and it is through this, in great measure, that the Divine law enforces its authority. For, apart from the apprehension of punishment in a future state, experience shows that morality cannot be sacrificed to passion with impunity, even in this life; since diseases, pains, and suffering, in a thousand forms, follow inevitably and naturally the violation of Nature's laws. In this conspicuous and tremendous truth, we find the solution of the mystery attending the presence of physical suffering in the world of a benevolent God. The sensitive nerves of our bodies are formed that their exquisite powers of torture may keep us from violating the rules of health, thus to secure through the soundness of our systems, the mental and physical preservation of the race. Hence the physical woes, of which the world is full, whose wide-spread evils affect even remote posterities, — are designed to warn and deter mankind by an appeal to every natural affection and motive, from the fatal indulgence of the passions,

of which such evils are made the inevitable consequence. How many would there be, temperate, continent, or cleanly, were not the frightful fruits of opposite conduct confronting men on every side, in blighted intellects and defective bodies, in diseases and death, whose flying shafts find victims among the innocent as well as the guilty? Where would be the civilization, the progress, nay, the very existence of the race, were there no stronger incentives to purity, to industry, and to mental cultivation, than to filthiness, ignorance, and sloth? If existence, with health and advancement, be a blessing, and cannot be so without these conditions, then there can be no more real benevolence than that which seeks to prevent, by the penalty of physical suffering, the far greater evils of the debasement or extinction of the race. Nor does the fact, that the unoffending are often involved in the effects of guilt, offer any refutation of this principle. The execution of human laws is not stayed, because it will bring affliction and distress to others besides the criminal; and it is the consideration of this very truth, both in the human system and the divine, that keeps men back from crime, who might otherwise think to brave merely personal calamities, or elude them by self-destruction.

Secondly. A farther restraint upon the appetites is derived from the intellectual powers of man, in the suggestions of his reason. The mind, contemplating the passions in the light of experience, and

under the conviction of its own high nature and destiny, recognizes them, if not controlled, as not only dangerous to the individual and society, but as impediments in the way of man's advancement to his highest development and happiness. As the dictate of reason, therefore, he is interested to relinquish their present gratification for a higher good, and even to engage in many a painful struggle to attain to their discipline and conquest. Upon this principle were based some of the most prevalent systems of ancient philosophy, and even with the most imperfect reasoners, something of the same conviction has its influence. So, too, carrying the principle still farther, we not only endeavor to control ourselves, but, organizing Society in order to promote the general progress, we make laws to regulate those who will not exercise a due self-government; not only punishing crime, but excluding from our midst the sources of temptation to its commission. Thus reason, rightly employed, renders valuable counsel for the control of the passions; yet experience has shown that it exerts but an imperfect efficiency over mankind for virtue, since human tempers are in general too gross to be completely swayed by its refined and elevated teachings.

Indeed, we hardly need look abroad upon the actual moral condition of man, to see, were there no other guards over the human passions than those we have enumerated, how inadequate they would



prove in experience. Beneficial as they have been, and considerable as has been the evil they have prevented, how small is the relative degree of their control! How vast is the proportion of human folly and wickedness which would break over the better impulses of the heart, and the strongest appeals of reason and interest! Nay, how often is it that reason and self-love themselves, beguiled, blinded, and depraved, are enlisted by passion in its service, and do battle in its behalf! Surely, He who had so carefully guarded the half-formed appetites of the brutes, would not leave man without more adequate protection against their untrammelled energies.

Far indeed has been the Divine Author of man's being from overlooking this necessity. With special provision for it, he has implanted in the human mind a new and wonderful faculty, whose express purpose is the regulation of the mind's inferior principles; and this, the most important of its restraining forces, — lying in fact at the basis of all others and imparting to them their influence, — occupies the governing seat in the soul. It is "the conscience," or "the moral sense;" a faculty which we shall hereafter discuss from other points of view, but which we here refer to, simply as the great conserving element in man's mental organization. It is this, as before suggested, upon which repose, more or less immediately, (at least for their strongest bearings on human conduct,) those influ-

ences of control to which we have already adverted, — affection, fear, and reason. But its direct action on the mind is far more important and infallible than that through any subordinate agencies. Unlike these, it keeps constant and vigilant guard over the first movements of the appetites, — not waiting until they have so far attained mastery over the creature as to be planning some open and flagrant demonstration. While thus watching the germs of evil, it is yet not incapable of grappling with the more formidable forms of passion, but encounters them with a potent and unyielding resistance. Instinctive in its nature, and independent in its judgments, it acts with the rapidity of thought, and with the force of a divine mandate. Of all the mental faculties it matures the earliest, and though by a long course of opposition and neglect it may be perverted or stupefied, it is never entirely blinded or destroyed; but sooner or later it will start from the dust to exact against its betrayer a terrible vengeance. Thus the soul hears its admonitions and obeys them alike with reverence and with fear, — its still but solemn whisper, at once breathing the Divine affection, and suggesting the terrors which it reserves for disobedience in the agonies of remorse.

It may be thought that we have overstated the influence of conscience as a natural restraint on the passions, inasmuch as among races or classes destitute of moral training, its teachings are neither

so powerful nor so unerring as we have implied. Undoubtedly man has more capability than any other creature, by education or habit, to affect the development of his faculties, and of this among the rest ; and it cannot be denied that he may become so imbruted by barbarism or vice, as to be almost unconscious of any better nature within him. So particular tribes have their *reasoning* powers so blunted by disuse and degradation, that they seem little if any, superior to the brutes ; yet it is none the less true that the intellectual faculty is the distinguishing and exalted characteristic of man. And it would also be wrong to say, even of the most hardened votaries of vice, that they are quite beyond the *actual* influence of the moral sense. There are few human beings, however degraded or depraved, that do not recognize with the common approbation some acts to be emulated, as noble, generous, and just, and despise others as to be avoided, because they are base, atrocious, or vile. Thus such distinctions more or less affect their conduct : but it is not merely by its power within the individual breast that this faculty operates to repress the evil outgrowth of the passions. Its influence pervading society, gives rise to laws, however rude and imperfect, and creates that right public sentiment more powerful than laws, which men fear more than death itself, for who dare face the conscience of the World ? Even the moral sense of a single honored friend will often have

more strength than the strongest temptation; and men whose elevated position places them as if above the control of human influence, — nay, even communities and nations in their collective capacity, whose united passions might seem able to create a sustaining public sentiment in behalf of some evil course, — tremble and pause before the apprehended verdict of a distant posterity!

The conscience, then, the moral sense, is incomparably the strongest influence in the human mind to protect it from the excesses of appetite. If we doubt it, let us suppose for a moment that this faculty were obliterated, and the distinction between right and wrong abolished in every human breast. Where then would be reason and the kindly affections as effectual resistants to the passions? What would there then be to awaken against temptation the emotion of fear? How long would opposing laws continue to be enacted, or if enacted, observed? But the mind refuses to dwell on the supposition. The imagination shudders to contemplate the flood of horror and desolation which would then sweep over the earth and change its face to the semblance of Hell; before which, whatsoever is true, is lovely, or of good report, — everything which gives us pleasure to behold or joy to experience, — learning, art, civilization, even the race itself, would be swept through terror, anguish, and despair into inevitable extinction.

Thus it appears that when the Creator, having

organized the inanimate universe with its method of forces and counter-forces, and formed the lower orders of animals, grade after grade, under the like system of impulses and checks in their subjective and objective conditions of being, came to create man, he constituted him upon no new principles, but, both in his bodily structure and in his psychological system, in pursuance of this uniform and well-considered plan. Even his distinguishing characteristic, the moral faculty, is in strict conformity with its requirement of a regulating and balancing force in the mind. But as the whole physical and mental being of man is upon a vastly more noble and perfect scale than those of the animals which preceded him, so this new conserving force is of a nature far different from and superior to any ever before implanted, not performing that office merely, but affecting the soul with other and grander influences peculiar to humanity. These peculiar effects and influences of the moral faculty it devolves upon us now to consider.

## CHAPTER IV.

## OF THE ULTERIOR EFFECTS OF THE MORAL FACULTY.

APART from Man's moral history there is, as we have seen, nothing to indicate that he exists under different relations or laws of being from the races which preceded or surround him. Up to this point we have viewed him simply as an intellectual animal, — the latest formed in the historical series, and the highest in the ascending scale. We have regarded his moral faculty merely in its aspect of a natural curbing force on his passions, and as such in exact correspondence with similar provisions in other creatures. But when we come to consider the nature of that curbing force, the new relations and responsibilities in which it involves its owner, and the other ulterior consequences of its possession, we enter a field beyond the line of discoverable analogies, and exclusively pertaining to Man.

Of the *nature* of the moral faculty or conscience (of which, more hereafter) we need only say, in this place, that it is well defined by Webster to be that "faculty, power, or principle within us, which decides on the lawfulness or unlawfulness of our own actions or affections, and instantly approves or condemns them." We have already discussed the

identity of "the springs of action" in all creatures, and seen that the feelings and actions which they inspire have a common resemblance. Hence any pernicious indulgence of passion is *the same act* in a brute as in man, and is attended with the same evil natural results, — and yet, by a common and instinctive impulse, we view the act in the two cases in totally different lights. In the human animal we regard it as abhorrent, censurable, and degrading, while in the other, we contemplate it with no such emotions. The reason is familiar. The moral sense which the man is known to possess, invests the act in him with a character, which, without such a faculty in his breast, it could not have; and we intuitively feel that it is the possession or non-possession of the *moral sense* that makes the act in the perpetrator criminal or blameless. Thus, through the moral faculty, man comes to recognize the unregulated movement of appetite within himself, under a new and revolting aspect, and denominates it SIN.

Much obscurity, and confusion has arisen, we conceive, in moral and theological discussions, from a neglect to observe the distinction between the abstract and the concrete meanings of this word, — Sin. A full consideration of the foregoing principles leads us to conclude that SIN, strictly speaking, is neither the unduly indulged human desires or affections, nor even their undue indulgence, but the *criminality* or *guiltiness* attaching to such undue acts or course of conduct, or rather the criminal or guilty *principle*

which invests them. Thus if we can conceive of such undue indulgence under such special circumstances of ignorance or other exculpation, as divest it of its criminality, it ceases to be sin. We may, perhaps, find examples of this, in practices common in less enlightened ages, among even the holiest of men, — as polygamy among the Patriarchs, a practice of intolerable turpitude in a Christian age and country, but which, in those earlier days, did not partake of sin. So, too, we speak of men refraining from certain pleasurable acts through dread of the sin involved in them, and of all men as tainted with sin, though all be not at this moment engaged in its commission. This then is sin in the *abstract*, or that which gives its character to the actual deed. Sin in the *concrete* is the *act* thus criminally characterized; and is the voluntary undue indulgence by a moral agent of any of those natural affections or desires which are common to all created beings. The commission must be by a moral being, and must also be voluntary; because without both these conditions it could not be *criminal*, and hence could not be imbued with the character of *sin*.

It will be observed, too, that the undue expressions of emotions or affections in acts which become sins, are such as are or may be displayed by all creatures, and are sinful only when put forth by *morally accountable beings*.<sup>1</sup> Had there never been, and

<sup>1</sup> We here assume, what we have before suggested, that every sin is resolvable into the undue action of some natural and innocent propen-



could there never be, any such over-indulgence, except by moral beings, and so, none unattended with sin, the distinction might be of little moment ; but in view of the actual history of all created beings, an inquiry into the origin and effects of sin, finds it a wide and important distinction, and one that should be clearly recognized. *Sin*, says Webster, (though the definition is applicable only to sin as a *concrete* term,) “ is the voluntary departure of a moral agent from a known rule of rectitude ” ; but perhaps it might be more fully expressed to be “ the voluntary neglect of a moral agent to control any natural propensity within the limits prescribed by conscience,” or, in other words, “ the voluntary disregard by such being of the admonitions of his moral sense, prompting to the due regulation of any natural appetite.” Hence, it consists in the disobedience of the moral sense, and cannot be predicated of any indulgence of passion, however gross, extensive, or deliberate, where the moral sense is wanting, to interpose its light and remonstrances.

Now, while it is this *disobedience of conscience*

sity. This is not only sustainable on philosophical grounds, but is sanctioned by Scripture authority. Thus the Apostle James (i. 14, 15) says: “ When lust (*ἐπιθυμία*, which means any strong desire, generally used in the New Testament for innocent desire) hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin,” making sin to be the final *result* of a preëxisting, and, of course, innocent propensity or affection. (See Scott’s Commentaries on this passage.) As an illustration: the sin of doing evil that good may come, where the inspiring motive or desire might seem to be disinterested, consists in the indulgence of *pride*, in preferring our own ideas of policy to the plain teachings of conscience and Revelation.

which imparts a moral *character* to the commission of any act of passion, it is, nevertheless, the act itself, irrespective of its moral character, the passions themselves, thus predominating over rational self-control, which bring discord and suffering into the natural world. Such evils, it may therefore be said, are the result of passions which, as developed and expressed in action, are indeed sinful, but not of their sinfulness. While then it is in one sense true that *Sin* (*i. e.*, Man's voluntary over-indulgence of appetite) produces human misery and ruin, it is no less true that, just as the same evils did prevail as the fruits of the same passions before man was formed, and do still prevail among the inferior and sinless creatures, so they would doubtless have existed among men to a still greater degree than they do, had the turpitude of these passions continued unrevealed to the eye of a moral sense, and so, sin never have become an inmate of creation.

It will not be inferred that these remarks represent sin in any sense as a blessing, or even as the mitigation of other evils. On the contrary, it appears that *Sin itself*, even in the concrete, (man's *actual* voluntary self-subjection to appetite against the appeals of conscience,) involves the soul in a degradation and guilt, additional to, and infinitely more sad and fearful than the merely natural evils which result from inordinate passions. Sin, therefore, in its *commission*, so far from diminishing the

amount of evil and sorrow in the world, vastly enhances it; for it adds a new woe to the natural miseries that spring from the acts to which it appertains, and so, wherever it exists as a realized actuality, is a curse and only a curse to the universe. Yet the origination of Sin in its *commission*, as an *actual* thing is to be distinguished from its prior origination as a *possible* thing; or, to change the order of the terms, its first appearance as a mentally conceived *abstraction*, from its first appearance as an *accomplished fact*. And we shall perceive, with little reflection, that while the latter event, effected by Man, was a dreadful and sorrowful epoch in the history of the race, the former, prior in time, and effected by the Creator when he conferred the moral faculty, though momentous in its nature and effects, yet tended to the *benefit* and *elevation* of humanity.

First; we say it tended to the *benefit* of humanity, and in a previous chapter we have shown that it does, in fact, immensely promote such benefit as a curb upon unlawful appetite. Sin, terrible and hateful foe as it is to our happiness and welfare, is brought to our view and comprehension not as a hideous yet harmless phantom, powerless, therefore, for good as well as evil, but as a real and dangerous destroyer, in order, doubtless, that both by its deformity and the *reality* of our peril, it may deter us from self-ruin, and promote our advancement. Thus sin in the *abstract*, (by which we mean sin existing as an object of mental conception,) like threatened

diseases and death and other recognized punishments of passion, is designed and calculated to aid toward our permanent and highest well-being, and was doubtless for this end introduced as a possibility into the world.

In accordance with this benevolent purpose, we find the moral instinct, which, like a divinely lighted beacon, reveals sin only to warn from it, exerting its beneficent office in every human breast, even in those to which in their ignorance and darkness its nature and its objects are an unregarded or an unfathomable mystery. Though greatly assisted and enlightened by the revelation of man's relations and duties to his Creator, it is yet not dependent on this for its awakening; for it shines, dimly perhaps, but really, in minds which never heard of God, and never conceived a system or even an idea of duty. Every man recognizes not only in the world, but more or less clearly within himself, two great antagonistic elements or forces, in constant contention for the supremacy, — "the law of his members, warring against the law of his mind," till the agonized soul, not of the Christian apostle merely, but even of the uninstructed Pagan, exclaims in dismay, — "Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!"

— "Si possem sanior essem,  
Sed trahit invitum nova vis: aliudque cupido,  
Mens aliud suadet. Video meliora proboque,  
Deteriora sequor." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ovid.

Again, we say it tended to the *elevation* of humanity, for so far as man avails himself of his moral faculty for its intended purposes, and submits himself to its control, it exalts him in the scale of being. No less true is it, that when he neglects its use and yields to the cravings of lawless appetite, he *descends*, in consequence of its possession, to a level more degraded than if he had never been capable of moral distinctions. That he fails, however, so far as he does, to use it rightly, does not militate against the benevolence of its *design*, nor make it other than the most glorious of his attributes. That it is an elevating endowment, indeed, would seem to follow from the very fact that it awakens the mind to new perceptions and powers, and thus enlarges the scope of the human nature. But in addition to this, it opens to man, through these new perceptions and powers, the loftiest honors, and the purest delights of which he is capable. It places him upon the same high stand-point from which God himself views his moral creation, and there brings him into communion with his Maker, and into sympathy with his plans. It raises his soul to the contemplation of those infinite subjects, and to participation in those exalted joys, that throng around such divine revelations. It expands his mental vision, to take in a new Universe of Truth, and like the celestial inhabitants, to behold its great and radiant orbs, wheeling their everlasting circuits about the Right, and steadfastly obeying its immutable laws.

To no eyes but to those endued with moral perceptions, can these sublime harmonies be revealed; and his will be the highest joys, and the loftiest elevation of soul, who shall most clearly comprehend the order and method of these eternal Systems, even as He understands and rejoices in them, who presides over their perfect, yet often mysterious workings.

It appears, then, that "the introduction of Sin into the World" was a blessing or a curse, according as we refer to one event or another, by the expression. If we conceive of man as at the outset created, and for a time continuing, a noble intellectual being, indeed, but like all other earthly creatures, destitute of the faculty which distinguishes between right and wrong, then we imagine a world "without sin" in every sense of the term. It is obvious, that whatever might be under such circumstances, his course of life, whether he should preserve his normal purity and rational self-government, or become like the brutes, selfish, grovelling, and beastly, still like them, he must be innocent,—without sin, because without responsibility. As his obedience to any law of God, whether speaking within him by the voice of nature and reason, or uttered to him by direct revelation, would be without merit as holiness, so his disobedience of any such command would be without turpitude as sin. And so, neither holiness nor sin could be found in the world, either in actual or possible experience, nay, even in possible *conception*. We do not mean, of course,

that they would not exist as recognizable principles in the mind of God, and of other moral beings. We only mean that they would have no place in the lower world as actual or possible facts or influences, — just as gravity may be conceived of as an existing force in some other Universe, and absent from ours. Upon such a creature, let now the moral sense be suddenly conferred, and his mind opened at once to the recognition of right and wrong, both in the abstract, and as capable of being illustrated in his own thoughts and conduct. It is apparent that immediately a new force, influence, or principle, is brought into the world. *Sin*, as a possibility in experience, and hence a *reality*, to the extent of exciting apprehension, and of exerting influence, becomes an inmate of creation; and this, none the less truly, whether man avoid or not its actual commission, — just as gravity is an actual force, a reality, producing effect, (and what but a reality *can* produce effect?) as well upon the balloon which overcomes it, as upon the stone which it enchains. Hence, even though man should still hold himself pure and intact from sin's contamination, yet he begins to regard those natural outgoings of passion which, under the guidance of conscience, he resists and controls, as the innate tendencies of his nature to "corruption" and "depravity," and bemoans their terrible force. But though the applicability of these sad terms to his nature is thus consequent upon the reception of the moral faculty, that new gift has not

debased but exalted him in the scale of being and in the means of happiness. It is not until, in his weakness and folly, he suffers passion to override the appeals of duty, and falls into the actual *commission* of Sin, that degradation begins.<sup>1</sup> Then, and only then, enters the *curse* of Sin, and to a vast and woful curse, alas! has man allowed it to grow, notwithstanding the immense and blessed influence of the moral sense for its prevention and restraint.

It is this mournful result, perhaps, thus following the conferment of the moral faculty upon mankind, which has tended, more than anything else, to obscure the distinction between the first appearance of sin as a thing comprehended, and its first appearance as a thing committed. And, indeed, (if the distinction is fairly borne in mind to prevent confusion,) the unhappy *fact*, no less than a correct philosophy, will justify us in speaking of sin as being first introduced into the world by the bestowal of the moral sense; for as it could never have been manifested in man without that previous gift, so it was then that he began to feel and recognize its presence and power within him; and finally, its subsequent prevalence has been, though not by a logical necessity, yet by historical result, the consequence of such bestowal.

<sup>1</sup> See Payne's *Lectures on Original Sin*, p. 226.



## CHAPTER V.

## THAT THE MORAL FACULTY IS A DISTINCT AND INDEPENDENT FACULTY.

THE object of the foregoing chapters has been to show that the moral sense exists as a part of man's natural constitution, subserving a necessary and useful purpose in his animal economy, and that its presence within him is in strict conformity to Nature's laws and analogies ; also, that it is an elevating and beneficent endowment, preventing a vast amount of sorrow, suffering, and evil, which would otherwise prevail ; and finally, that while without it, man would not have possessed his present opportunities for the highest progress and happiness, neither would he, on the other hand, have been a being capable of sin, or in any way morally responsible. We are now prepared to enter on another inquiry, namely, — Does Philosophy offer any suggestion as to the *period* of Man's career when he was first invested with this noble, yet solemnly momentous gift ?

In response to this inquiry, probably the first impulse of every mind would prompt the answer which accords with the general idea, that doubtless the progenitor of the race received the moral faculty at his creation, as a part of his original constitution,

and so transmitted it to his descendants. Scripture, perhaps, would be appealed to in support of the theory. The teachings of Scripture, however, will be the subject of future examination. That they do not support such a doctrine, we think we shall be able to show. We are now seeking the intimations of Philosophy alone, and shall attempt to prove that if these do not (as indeed they cannot) *establish*, they at least do not *discountenance* the supposition that the moral faculty *may have been* conferred upon Man (that is, upon the first or representative man of the race) at a period subsequent to his creation, and after the reception of his other mental powers. If we recall in this connection the fact, that in every child, other mental faculties unfold, in a considerable degree, before we discover the conscience, (*i. e.*, the capability of distinguishing the *moral* difference between right and wrong,) although this faculty once awakened, *matures* more rapidly than the rest, we shall, perhaps, perceive in the outset an argument of analogy in favor of such a theory. We shall further support it by maintaining three propositions, viz. : —

1st. That the moral faculty is a distinct and independent faculty of the mind, not growing out of, nor necessarily associated with, its other powers ; but *separable*, and therefore capable of being conferred at a period subsequent to the rest, — just as we might suppose the faculty of sight imparted to a blind man, or of reason to an idiot.

2d. That this faculty was not required for man's use at the outset of his existence, and there is therefore nothing improbable or derogatory to his original nature in supposing him at first destitute of it.

3d. That reasons connected with the moral *responsibility* which became imposed on man through his reception of the moral sense, and the other momentous consequences which necessarily, or *in fact*, hung upon it, may lend strong ground for an inference that his Maker would prefer to impart this faculty to man, at a period subsequent to the reception and partial cultivation of his other mental powers.

Of these propositions, the first will, in this chapter, receive our attention.

The theory that the moral sense is a distinct and independent faculty of the human mind, and one not capable of being developed from its other powers, is one so generally accepted by moral philosophers, and so fully and ably established in many works, that it need hardly be discussed in these pages. That our argument, however, may be complete, we will endeavor to enforce it by a few suggestions.

1st. The moral sense, as we have before remarked, has but a partial resemblance to, or connection with, the other mental faculties in its development and operations. It matures more rapidly than any other, and with less cultivation, and as a general rule, it survives the decay of all the rest. We would not be understood as asserting that the conscience is

totally dissimilar from the rest of the mind in its phenomena, or entirely independent of its influences and laws. Yet it undoubtedly does act, to a certain degree, upon distinct principles, and in a manner diverse from the other faculties of the mind. It stands apart from them in the motives which it urges for conduct, and draws its arguments and its appeals from sources *exterior* to the man, as if it belonged not to himself, but were the ambassador and functionary of some external power. Hence it often, nay generally, finds itself in opposition to the other faculties of man's being, and though, like a minister resident at a foreign court, it is too often affected by the influences and bribes of those with whom it has to deal, yet there still remains enough of general fidelity to its mission to vindicate at least the independence of its origin.

2d. That the discernment exercised by the moral faculty, or the distinction it recognizes between right and wrong, can be reached by it alone, and is not attainable by the Reason, is another evidence of its distinctness of nature. This distinction is one so peculiar and so unlike any of the deductions of Intellect, that not even when clearly perceived and comprehended, can it be explained or illustrated by the Reason, or even be reasoned *about*, without making use of terms that imply a previous conception of it, and which are incapable of definition without such previous conception. The intellect, indeed, pronounces upon acts or thoughts simply as accord-

ant or inconsistent with reason. Single deviations it pronounces errors; habitual and systematic aberrations, insanity; but here the intellect stops, and the moral sense alone is put in requisition to affix to such errors or insanity the character of innocence or guilt. We can lay down no series of premise and inference, whereby this distinction between right and wrong, even with our present instinctive apprehension of it through the conscience, can, without its aid, be reached by the other intellectual powers. Still less can we conceive any by which it might have been by them alone originally *discovered*. That the unchecked sway of the passions in man must be a source of disorder to himself and the universe, and that true self-interest required their restraint, man might doubtless have perceived upon sober and just reflection. Yet even this conviction would require the teachings and the test of *experience*, as well as some previous cultivation and practice of the reasoning powers. Even when attained, he could only regard it as the result of speculative conjecture, or as the deduction of logic, which, if pursued further or with more acuteness, might have brought him to a different conclusion. How conflicting, imperfect, and unsatisfactory, would be merely intellectual searchings for moral truth, is strikingly illustrated in the benighted gropings in that direction of the ancient philosophers. Century after century, men of the brightest intellectual powers and cultivation, with all their zeal and interest to discover

new foundations for peculiar schools, and with the light of the natural moral sense besides, disputed and doubted whether between right and wrong there existed any genuine distinction or no. Socrates and Plato, indeed, seemed almost to walk in the light of a true moral and spiritual illumination, yet even these discerned their way but doubtfully; — while others, though with the benefit of their teachings, could scarcely agree that there existed between virtue and vice any more definite distinction than marks the difference between “the beautiful” and “the deformed.”

3d. That the moral sense is not the offspring of the intellect further appears, from the fact that its movements are *instinctive*, or, in other words, that it acts without the intervention of reason. Indeed, necessity requires that such *should* be its character, in order to answer its design as a conservative force over the passions. That it *is* instinctive, we gather from our own experience of its movements, and from our observation of it in children, at a period of their lives too early for it to be possibly suggested by the reasoning powers. Nor is this all. We see it often act with energy and influence *in opposition* to the efforts of Reason. It repudiates the conclusions of logic which would philosophize away the distinctions of right and wrong, and has saved many an honest soul from ruin by the sophistry which he could not refute. The reasoning of temptation may satisfy the intellect, yet there is an internal, an *in-*

*instinctive* conviction, which rejects and defies its results. That as a conservative power it needs to be instinctive, is plain, when we consider the nature of the forces with which it has to do. An intellectual process, however conclusive, would be useless to the soul as a defence against the electric and shifting attacks of passion. While bringing out its slow machinery of premise and inference, the victory over it would be won. The instinctive and active appetites must be combated not only, they must be unremittingly *watched* by a sentinel of equally instinctive vigilance,—one that will start at their slightest movement, and thunder its warning voice in the ear of the soul with the commanding tone of Divine authority.

4th. Another essential difference is thus suggested between the conscience and the judgment, in that it speaks, not as from its own convictions, however conclusive, but as an echo of the awful voice of Deity itself, *commanding* obedience, enforcing it thus with the whole weight of his law, and with all its tremendous sanctions. Without this idea of *obligation*, there might be such terms as “expedient” and “inexpedient,” but none like “ought” and “duty,” “right” and “wrong.” Even the direct command of God, enforced by a threatened penalty, could not suggest this “duty” of obedience, unless addressed to a moral conception.<sup>1</sup> Man might submit from fear, from love,

<sup>1</sup> See McCosh *On Divine Government*, p. 300, &c., &c.

from discipline, from disinterested desire for the general good, or from all combined; but there is nothing in these that resembles that controlling principle of action which prescribes a line of conduct because it is *right*, regardless of consequences, and though neither God nor man should ever know or be affected by an opposite course. Still less is there anything in them which could refer back the commands and laws of God himself to an abstract standard implanted in the human breast, by which these laws, and even their Maker's character, might be judged. Such a standard there exists, not presumptuously established by man's device, but fixed within him by God himself, and by Him appealed to when he reasons with his creatures, — "Hear, O Israel; Are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal?"

These moral ideas then, clearly as the mind now receives them, are attainable through the moral sense alone; and the perceptions thus acquired are as distinct from those of the intellect as are the discernments of physical sight, without which we could have no realizing conception of natural forms, however accurately we might be able to describe them in the terms of geometry. And so, even as the intellectual faculties may subsist in the highest perfection without the bodily vision, is there equally no such intimate connection between them and the moral sense, that man must necessarily have received them together. The latter, distinct, sep-



arable, and subsequent in order of action to the other mental powers, depending, therefore, upon them for its movements, but not needful to them, *may have been*, so far as Philosophy can judge, conferred upon the first man, (even as it develops itself in each of his descendants,) *after* he became a reasoning creature.

## CHAPTER VI.

THAT MAN HAD NO OCCASION FOR THE MORAL FACULTY AT THE OUTSET OF HIS EXISTENCE.

IN maintaining the possibility that the moral faculty *may have been* conferred upon Man at a period subsequent to his creation, we now arrive at the second proposition in the preceding chapter, viz.: That this faculty was not required for man's use at the outset of his existence, and that there is therefore nothing intrinsically improbable or derogatory to his original nature in supposing that he was then, for a time, destitute of it.

We scarcely need premise that in this portion, as in the whole of our argument, we assume the early history of mankind to have been truly narrated in the Book of Genesis. We suppose Adam, whether the sole progenitor of the race or not, to have been in the outset its *representative*, and the founder of its whole subsequent moral condition and career. In speaking, then, of the primal or original state of *Man*, we refer, of course, to the primal or original state of Adam, as the representative of the race at that period. Let us, then, in support of our proposition, consider for a moment how far a moral sense

could have been requisite or even serviceable to Adam in the dawn of his existence.

Let us suppose him, in accordance with our view, created with a nature in no way differing from that of his descendants, except in the absence of that distinct, independent, and separable faculty, the moral sense, — a creature of noble intellectual faculties, suddenly awakened into life in the midst of scenes which, to his fresh and vigorous senses, must have been so strange, so exciting, and so beautiful, as to long absorb his whole being with astonishment and delight. The varied and transcendent charms of Nature, with her ever-changing aspect; the movements of the elements, the myriad differing forms of living creatures about him, expressing with their thousand acts and voices the joy of existence, and, most mysterious of all, — himself, with all his faculties, — these, and all the questions connected with them, were ever presenting to his active and inquiring mind new subjects of pleasing contemplation.

— “About me, round, I saw  
 Hill, dale, and shady woods, and sunny plains,  
 And liquid lapse of murmuring streams: by these,  
 Creatures that lived and moved and walked or flew:  
 Birds on the branches warbling, — all things smiled.  
 With fragrance and with joy, my heart o'erflowed.  
 Myself I then perused, and limb by limb  
 Surveyed; —  
 But who I was or where, or from what cause,  
 Knew not.

— “Thou Sun,” said I, “fair light,  
 And thou enlightened earth, so fresh and gay,  
 Ye hills and dales, ye rivers, woods, and plains,  
 And ye that live and move, fair creatures, tell,  
 Tell if ye saw, how came I thus, how here?”

Nor was he destitute of companionship, which might add to his enjoyment, as well as guide and instruct him in his investigations. Both before and after the creation of Eve, the society of his Maker attended him in his daily walks, instructing him how to dress and to keep the garden, bringing to him the inferior creatures, and informing him, doubtless, of their habits and dispositions, that he might give them appropriate names; and in other ways which we can now only imagine, paternally imparting to him necessary information with regard to the earth and its inhabitants, over which he was to have dominion;—teaching him the facts, the laws, and the phenomena of that great kingdom of Nature, whose ruler he had been constituted. Day after day, new discoveries and new delights crowded the hours in this intimate intercourse of creature with Creator, his growing powers expanding to an ever-wider and deeper range of thought and intelligence. In this early and tranquil period of isolation from all society but that of his God; approached by none of the allurements or excitements to passion, and with the cultivation of the nobler powers absorbing his soul, it is inconceivable that the protection of a moral sense should have been necessary to Man, (especially to the *first* and *only* man, and during the earlier portion of his existence,) in order to repress the inordinate growth of his baser passions. Infinitely, the greater part of men's follies and sins spring directly or indirectly out of their connection

with human society, its demands, its excitements, and its struggles. The wanderer on a desert island is almost inevitably weaned from vicious propensities to a virtuous life by the mere absence of temptation, and so much more must the first man, ignorant of the name, the nature, or the experience of evil, and resting constantly under the immediate guidance and supervision of his Creator, of necessity, and without the influence of a moral sense, have preserved the elevation, simplicity, and dignity of character with which he was created, — the perfection of purity and innocence. So far as his *bodily propensities*, or his natural sensibilities were concerned, there was certainly no call for an instinctive and powerful check upon the passions; since these were amply controlled by his Divine society, his reason, and the circumstances which surrounded him.

Equally premature would be the possession by man, at this period, of the moral sense, as a means of *mental growth and development*. The considerations which we have just advanced against its necessity for his *protection*, are equally applicable here. Coming into the world animate and inanimate, over which he had been constituted the ruler, — the fundamental injunction resting upon him “to subdue” nature, which he could do alone by the study of its phenomena, — his first necessity would be, as it still is of his posterity, to bend his mind to the contemplation of the natural facts and laws under which he was to live. The supervision of his Maker,

if not his reason and circumstances, would, as we have seen, amply suffice to keep him in the path of rectitude, (were there any *opportunity* to deviate,) and it is difficult to conceive how, with his ignorance of the future experiences of life, and of the questions which they alone could suggest, his intellect could in any case have wandered from the practical matters before it, into abstract speculations in moral philosophy. The true and natural development of his mind would be, as it is in the infant, not through the study of moral laws, but by the contemplation of nature, and by intercourse with superior intelligence. Whether moral injunctions or principles were, *in fact*, prescribed to him at this period, we shall have occasion to examine hereafter. At present, we are only aiming to show that they need not necessarily have been, as essential to his mental advancement.

It would seem, of course, to follow, if the moral faculty was neither necessary to primeval man for his safety and innocence, nor requisite or available for his intellectual growth or greatness, that the supposition of his not then possessing it involves no imputation on the dignity or purity of his original nature. He was still the noblest of earth's creatures; and in such an estate of mind and body,—his whole being under the control of his pure and just reason, the innocence of infancy combined with the mature powers of manhood,—as he walked among the reverent brutes in the superior grandeur of his

nature, not obscurely, nor in his aspect and relations alone did he reflect God's image. For, unstained by a single passion, ignorant of the name, and even of the nature of sin, his spiritual being was divinely spotless in its purity. Man, thus conceived, —

—“Erect and tall,  
 Godlike erect, with native honor clad,  
 In naked majesty seemed lord of all,  
 And worthy seemed; for, in his looks divine,  
 The image of his glorious Maker shone,—  
 Truth, wisdom,” innocence, “severe and pure.”

Without the moral sense, indeed, there could not be that highest form of holiness which grows out of the struggle with, and the victory over, the allurements of evil; but so far as mere sinlessness, and the normal quietude of every evil passion could impart beauty to his soul, he retained, unimpaired, the perfection with which he came from his Maker's hands; and exhibited that innocence which we now behold in those only whose tender minds, inexperienced in temptation and untainted by guilt, are as yet unconscious of moral distinctions. How justly to man, such as we have supposed him, might Hamlet's panegyric be applied: “What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason; how infinite in faculties! In form and moving, how express and admirable! In action, how like an angel; in apprehension, how like a God! The beauty of the world! the paragon of animals!”

Had man then continued to be limited to a sin-

gle individual or pair, and had his original position and circumstances remained his permanent condition, it might, perhaps, never have been requisite that he should possess the moral faculty. Amid the few perils to which he would thus have been liable, possibly his reason and the Divine society might have sufficed for his safety and progress. But it was not purposed to confine him to so narrow a circle of action, thought, and influence. Far wider relations and spheres of life were intended for the race, and for these his mental constitution was not yet adequately furnished. For, tranquil as he then seemed, within him and enwrapped in the spotless perfection of his nature, were the slumbering propensions; and these though necessary, and harmless as yet, would, as his Maker could well foresee, when perverted in future and different conditions of existence, and strengthened by repeated exercise, unless regulated by more efficient guards, overwhelm the restraining Reason, and drive the beautiful work into ruin. Nor was this all. His soul was intended for higher development and destinies than were attainable with its then merely intellectual capabilities. Man was not purposed to be a mere reasoning animal, however nobly constituted, nor to rest in mere *intercourse* with the superior intelligences. He had been created that he might rise into communion and sympathy with the inhabitants of heaven, yea, even with God himself, through the apprehension of moral truths, with all their elevating and inspiring



influences, and thus, from sharing the divine nature, be qualified to enjoy with God, and like him, through the ages of eternity, a life resembling his divine and spiritual existence. The imparting to him, therefore, of the moral faculty, before his primal state should be impaired, that it might serve to *protect* no less than to elevate his being; to check his appetites, yet not prevent that liberty of action essential to a free agent; to guard with increased security the rank into which he had been created, and to promote his advancement to still higher dignity and character, followed his endowment with vitality and a reasoning soul, not merely as a work of beneficence. It was precisely what might have been expected, in accordance with the principle of progressive action, invariably displayed by the Creator in his natural and moral systems.

It is true that the grant of the moral sense introduced the *possibility*, and as He must have foreseen, who knew all things from the beginning, the *certainty* of guilt, as well as holiness, thus exposing man to the misery resulting from wilful sin, no less than to the joy consequent on voluntary holiness. And thus the inquiry has arisen, — “Why did not God make this faculty of such a nature and power, that it would infallibly *deter* man from disregarding its admonitions?” In other words, — “Why was man made a free moral agent?” — a topic upon which our plan does not permit us to enter. We are not discussing what moral system God *might*,

or *should* have adopted, but the method and origin of that actually established. At present, therefore, we must assume (what we think susceptible of proof, and partially will appear in subsequent pages) that the plan adopted was the best and most benevolent, and that free moral agency was requisite for man's highest happiness and advancement.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Stewart's *Moral Philosophy*, Vol. II.

## CHAPTER VII.

THAT GOD MIGHT PREFER TO MAKE MAN'S MORAL AGENCY THE CONSEQUENCE OF HIS OWN ACT.

WE have inquired, in the last two chapters, whether Reason or Philosophy suggests any *improbability* that the moral faculty was conferred upon man at a period subsequent to his reception of the other mental powers. We have attempted to show that no such intrinsic improbability arises either from the nature and purposes of the moral faculty itself, or from any supposable necessity for such a faculty to man at the outset of his existence. Continuing the support of the same view, we now arrive at the third of our preceding propositions, namely, — That reasons connected with the deep *responsibilities* imposed by the moral faculty upon man, lend strong support to the supposition that his Maker would prefer to impart this faculty to him subsequently to the other mental powers, and to make its acquirement the result of man's own intelligent choice and voluntary action.

It is universally conceded, as the basis of every theory relating to the moral system of this world, that it originated in some great act of *choice* by the progenitor or representative of the race. What

was the nature, and what the effect of that choice on this representative and his posterity, have indeed been the subjects of endless discussion; and the ordinarily received doctrines on these points, it will be generally agreed, are invested with no small difficulty. But that the present moral system was ushered in by *some* voluntary act of the first man, affecting in *some way* not only himself, but all mankind after him, is recognized as not only taught by inspiration, but as consistent with reason and philosophy. Our object in these pages is to ascertain what that choice really was, and to show that instead of being what the common view represents it, — Man's deliberate descent from virtue to disobedience, sinfulness, and ruin, — it was simply his choice and reception of a moral sense, and the engrafting of the latter with its opportunities and responsibilities upon a nature previously *innocent* but ignorant of moral distinctions. In subsequent pages we shall investigate the proof which establishes the *facts*. Our present inquiry is whether such a theory is intrinsically objectionable.

That the act of choice thus admitted to have been made by man shortly after his creation, *might* have been his adoption of a moral nature, has been shown to be at least possible in demonstrating the separability of the moral faculty, and that man *might* have been created, and for a time left without it, without any real deficiency in his mental power and dignity. This being so, what even probable reason is there to

believe that it was developed in him simultaneously with his birth, especially when there seems to have been no opportunity for such development to be manifested? His other mental faculties were, indeed, created in him in a state of maturity,—ready for immediate use, because they were required to be used immediately in their full vigor and strength. So the lower animals exhibit complete, at birth, such faculties as their immediate necessities require, while the rest waken gradually into action. Had Adam had no immediate occasion for the employment of any of his intellectual powers, who shall say that they would have sprung at once from his brain in full panoply for service? Such has not been their mode of development in any instance that has occurred since our first progenitor. The infant, having no urgent need of their immediate use, is born with a mind, to all appearance blank; and waits a considerable period for its first intellectual conception,—still longer for the awakening of its *moral* capacity. The possession by Adam, to any degree, at the moment of his birth, of mental faculties active and perfect, was a miracle. Who shall say that, unlike other miracles, it was extended so far as to embrace more than necessity required?

But the inquiry relates not merely to the *time*, but also to the *manner* of attaining this moral sense. It is not only whether man might not have acquired it subsequently to his birth, but whether his Maker might not have chosen that he should come into its

possession by his own voluntary act, rather than implant it in his mind without his own consent or agency. An affirmative reply to this inquiry, we should premise, can be in no way *essential* to our argument. Should we hereafter succeed in establishing, by proof of the *fact*, that the Almighty *did* thus leave man to choose between a moral sense or not, it can be a matter of no consequence whether our reason would have suggested such a course, or can see any sufficient motive for it. At the same time, if there are any considerations why it seems a rational and natural mode of inducting man into his moral station and career, it is proper that these should be presented, to receive as much weight as they may deserve.

Let us ask in the first place, — Why should God *not* leave the matter to be effected by Man's own act? Certainly, there is nothing in the mere nature of such a supposition that renders it improbable; for if every man can have, as he doubtless does, the decision of his own eternal destinies as a moral being confided to his own hands, and especially if the first man could have, as every view supposes, the determination of the moral nature, character, and career of himself and the whole succeeding race, devolved upon him, — why may he not be conceived to have been allowed to be the voluntary instrument of acquiring for himself and for posterity the moral faculty itself? We say the voluntary *instrument* of its acquisition, for since the Creator must have fore-

seen from the beginning, that man would in fact become the moral being which he designed, it was only a question of *modes*, and not of results. Neither is the idea that he adopted the particular mode in question, rendered improbable by analogies ; for it is only to suppose that the Almighty pursued his ordinary method of accomplishing his purposed changes in the history of mankind, — the method of human agency. How otherwise has he transmitted his laws and revelations to the world? How otherwise did he effect that most awful of all human transactions, — the sacrifice and death of the Divine Redeemer? It is only on rare occasions, as when he would destroy the race by a deluge, that God is seen to employ his own direct interposition to accomplish his designs, and even then he makes use of human agency in the principal feature of the event. Admitting, then, that man *might* have received his moral sense as a separate endowment after his creation, there seems no reason to doubt, but on the contrary, good ground to expect, that it would come to him upon occasion of some act of his own, rather than without his own assent or coöperation. But there are other and stronger considerations which bear upon the subject.

We have seen that a conscience, though not requisite for man's use at the outset of his existence, was yet necessary to complete his nature, as a provision against the future dangers from passion in the coming circumstances of life. Now did the moral

sense affect his state and relations in no other way than would any mere natural instinct answering the same regulating ends in the animal economy, there might be no reason why it should not be implanted in him at the outset, or subsequently, like any other endowment of nature, without his own choice or agency. But such is not the sole method or measure of its influence. In the question of its possession or non-possession, is involved the momentous scheme of moral *accountability*, by which, upon his own faltering hands, is thrown the charge of his eternal interests. Nor can we assert that this change in his situation, tremendous as it is, is all that was involved in it, — since we can have no knowledge under what conditions he might have been permitted, as an intelligent but not a moral being, to inhabit the universe. Had we definite revelation on this point, it is possible that thereby the most conclusive reasons might appear, why man's adoption of moral agency should be his own act alone. But even if it be a question of moral accountability only, does not our knowledge of the Divine character render it probable that God would devolve upon man himself the responsibility of the change, rather than force him unconsenting from a state of innocence and peace, into one of such momentous struggles and perils? one too, as the Divine prescience must have foreseen, of his certain sinfulness and woe! If not, and it we are to believe that the transition was occasioned by the act of God alone,



how, in view of the certain foreknowledge just referred to, could it ever be insisted that the Almighty had no hand in the introduction, into the world, of sin and moral evil? For though it might be justly urged that man alone was guilty of the actual commission of sin, yet it would still be necessary to admit that it was the Creator's act which insured its entrance, and thrust man, an involuntary victim, into the range of its fatal allurements.

It was probably in view of such reflections as these, that one of our profoundest theologians<sup>1</sup> was accustomed to remark: "Only show me God's right to create a moral being, and the rest is clear!" There seems, indeed, but little real difference between the placing of a being in a state of moral agency, the results of which are certainly foreknown to be the triumph of sin within him, and the actual introduction of moral evil. If, then, God's justice and benevolence confessedly require us to believe that he left the latter to be effected by man, why may not equally strong reasons be believed to have existed for making man the responsible introducer of moral agency also? Why would not this, as well as the other, be a proper subject for human choice and action?

It may be inquired whether the same considerations do not apply to the question of creating each individual after Adam, a moral agent without his consent, and to the theory that Adam's act was

<sup>1</sup> The late Professor Stuart of Andover.

made to decide the condition of his posterity in this respect. To this we may reply, that if there is any such difficulty, it is one incident to every supposition that Adam was constituted the representative of the race for any purpose whatever. It is, therefore, a difficulty incident to every conceivable theory of the moral system, and unavoidable upon any interpretation of Scripture. The only question we are seeking to decide is, for *what* purpose was Adam thus placed in a representative relation? And our aim is to show that he thus represented his posterity in respect to the attainment of moral agency, — the acquisition of the moral faculty, and not in respect to a moral ruin, — the degradation of moral position or character. Of the two views, that which we sustain seems to us the more rational, at least in appearance, and less open to objection, as we shall hereafter take occasion to show with some particularity.

We do not admit, however, that there is, in fact, any difficulty in supposing Adam to have been thus made the representative of the race, — its moral head, — in any manner that does not require the entailment upon them of any moral responsibility for his personal act, and that affords a reasonable explanation of the mode in which they participate in its consequences. The theory just suggested as the one supported in these pages is, that through that representative act of Adam the race entered into a state of moral agency, affecting, of course, its

moral position, relations, and history, yet not identifying other members of it with him in any common accountability for his acts ; and it exhibits the effects of his act as merely those which passed upon his descendants by the hereditary transmission of natural faculties.

Having thus suggested the outlines of the view which we are endeavoring to sustain, we are now prepared to examine, in its light, that portion of Man's history, which will form the subject of the remaining pages. We have just considered the *possibility* of Man's being permitted, by his Maker, to determine his own moral relations, in the choice of acquiring or not the possession of a moral faculty and character. We now proceed to show that this very choice *was* fairly set before him soon after his creation ; that this truth is distinctly disclosed as a historical fact by Revelation, and that the third chapter of Genesis, commonly supposed to reveal a FALL of Man from a state of conscious holiness and consequent happiness to an opposite one of sinful corruption and consequent misery, is of an entirely different purport ; narrating, in fact, his PROGRESSION and ELEVATION from the condition of an innocent but not a moral being, to the rank of a moral agent, by his own free choice and action.



PART II.

THE DISCLOSURES OF REVELATION.

### NOTE.

THE account of Man's creation and history in the Garden of Eden, which is examined in the following pages, is contained in the first, second, and third chapters of Genesis. For convenience of reference the narrative is appended complete at the end of the volume.

## PART II.

### THE DISCLOSURES OF REVELATION.



#### CHAPTER I.

##### MAN'S CREATION AS A MORAL BEING NOT ASSERTED IN REVELATION.

IN an examination of the record in Genesis, for the purposes we have mentioned, it would be irrelevant to discuss the historical origin or literary character of the Document. Whether Moses was its author or merely its compiler ; from what source he procured his information or materials ; whether it is of single or of fragmentary origin, and whether intended as a literal or an allegorical relation, we need not stop to consider. However any of these questions may be answered, it will not affect its nature or authority as an inspired revelation, disclosing under some guise or other the origin of the human race, and the manner of its entrance into its present moral relations. Whether a myth, therefore, or a history, we are justified in scrutinizing closely its every statement and feature, in order that we may correctly apprehend its purport.

Our plan will lead us first to inquire what light

is afforded by the narrative, and by other portions of Scripture, upon the primitive character of man. We shall examine whether, as is commonly taught, they reveal that he was, at the outset of his existence, a *moral being*; whether he was created holy, (as implying a moral agency and a voluntary course of moral rectitude,) and so continued until he wilfully, criminally, and recklessly abandoned this high and happy state to plunge into sinfulness and misery; or whether, on the other hand, and as we shall attempt to show, they teach the following as the facts concerning him: — That he was created simply a noble and pure intellectual being, with a character stainless indeed, but in no sense holy, being like that of the brute, or the infant, unattended by a moral sense; that he afterward voluntarily acquired this moral sense by an act of some kind, represented in the story as a partaking of forbidden fruit; that this act, however, being committed prior to that acquisition, and hence, before he became a moral agent, was not in itself sinful, and did not *necessarily* render him so, but only *capable* of sinfulness, and of holiness, as well; that by this act, *in itself considered*, therefore, his original nature was in no way altered, except as it was enlarged, enlightened, and elevated, by the new faculty acquired; and that his condition was thus simply changed, together with that of his posterity in him, from the condition of moral irresponsibility, to that of free but accountable moral agency.



It is remarkable that the idea of man's original holiness has no other foundation whatever in the Scriptural account of his creation, than what may be inferred from the general and indefinite statement that he was "created in the image of God." Yet there is nothing in this expression, or in the context which is plainly explanatory of it, that intimates any other resemblance than that involved in physical and intellectual excellence, carrying with it preëminence and dominion over the lower creatures.

The passage is as follows : —

"And God said let us make man (ADAM) in our own image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man (ADAM) in his own image, in the image of God created he him: male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." (Genesis i. 26-28.)

Here the whole purport of the passage plainly is, that "the image of God" wherein man was made, consisted in his physical and mental preëminence merely, and this (as Professor Bush admits in his "Notes on Genesis") is, without doubt, its primary sense. The same figure is used in application to man, in other parts of Scripture, where it refers to his *present* nature and condition. Thus, (Genesis ix. 6,) — "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall

his blood be shed, for in the image of God made he man ;” which reason would have no force, were not the image still subsisting ; and again, St. James, speaking of the tongue, says : “ Therewith curse we men which are made after the similitude of God.” From these instances, it is evident that the description is applied in Scripture without reference to moral resemblance. Nor is this surprising ; for surely there are points of resemblance in man’s natural constitution, sufficient to justify the figure in reference to that alone. Let us quote the remarks of one sufficiently able, learned, and orthodox, to make his views weighty with authority : —<sup>1</sup>

“ Man is the great creature worker of the world, — its one created being that, taking up the work of the adorable Creator, carries it on to higher results and nobler developments, and finds a field for his persevering ingenuity and skill in every province in which his Maker had expatiated before him. He is evidently (to adopt and modify the remark of Oken) ‘ God manifest in the flesh.’ ” . . . . “ I must hold that we receive the true explanation of the man-like character of the Creator’s workings ere man was, in the remarkable text in which we are told that ‘ God made Man in his own image.’ ” . . . . “ As a geometrician, as an arithmetician, as a chemist, as an astronomer, in short, in all the departments of what are known as the strict sciences, man differs from his Maker, not in kind but in degree, — not as matter differs from mind, or darkness from light, but simply as a mere portion of space or time differs from all space and all time.” And he adds that not merely in mechanical capabilities, but as well in the musical and poetical faculty, “ we bear the stamp and impress of the Divine image.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hugh Miller, *Testimony of the Rocks*, p. 239.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 259.

If this is true of human nature as it is, with how much greater force might it be said of man in his normal state of intellectual perfection, that, without reference to a moral constitution, he was made in the image and likeness of God. In the passage of Genesis just quoted, it is remarkable that so general an epitome of man's qualities and prerogatives, and of his points of superiority over the antecedent creatures, should not contain a word in allusion to the all-important and *essential* distinction between him and them of a moral nature. Had that distinction existed, it would undoubtedly have been referred to, and hence it is going too far, especially when there is nothing in the force of the Hebrew itself to favor the interpretation, to infer a moral character in man, from the expression we have quoted.

Accordingly, few commentators will claim to deduce from the phrase in question (if it can be supposed to imply *anything* with regard to man's moral character) any more than the doctrine that he was created with a *pure* and *innocent* nature, untainted by depravity or sin. Such a character, as we have heretofore seen, would amply justify the application to him of the figurative description, — "image of God." We say the *figurative* description, for it cannot be supposed that such language is other than figurative, since it is impossible that man in any conceivable state could be literally "the image of God," (*i. e.*, his reproduction in miniature,) with all the attributes of Deity; and if he could not, then

the expression we are considering need not necessarily imply the possession of God's *moral* faculties, any more than of his omniscience, omnipresence, or other qualities of his being. Even with the *presence* of the moral sense, man would not be the real image of God ; for as Scott, in his commentaries, truly observes, — "Conscience, will, and understanding, do not compose God's image, since fallen angels have the same." Nor, as we have already seen, would the *absence* of this moral sense in the outset of man's existence, destroy the likeness, or imply any imperfection in his nature. In the situation in which he at first found himself, under the immediate care of his Creator, with nothing to call his passions into play, a conscience and moral sense were as useless to him as to the brutes. How often are we ourselves in circumstances where, absorbed in the interest of our situation, happy and self-forgetful, our moral faculties lie inactive, and without our being conscious of their existence ! It is no derogation, therefore, from man's high rank and dignity at the outset, to suppose him originally "destitute of faculties which he did not require,"<sup>1</sup> and the total absence of all allusion to such faculties in any part of the story of his creation, primitive state, and history, the very place where we should look for such information, is at least a strong presumptive argument that he did not then possess them.

As two or three passages, however, from other

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Butler.

portions of Scripture, are usually cited in support of the doctrine of man's primitive holiness, it is proper that we should notice them here. They are the following : —

“Behold, this have I found, saith the preacher, counting one by one to find out the account : which yet my soul seeketh, but I find not : one man among a thousand have I found ; but a woman among all those have I not found. Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man<sup>1</sup> upright ; but they have sought out many inventions.” (Ecclesiastes vii. 27–29.)

“That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts ; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind ; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness (*ὁσιώτητι της ἀληθείας, i. e., holiness of the truth*). (Ephesians iv. 22–24.)

“Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds ; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.” (Colossians iii. 9, 10.)

As regards the first of these passages, (that from Ecclesiastes,) it will hardly be claimed to assert anything more than man's native *innocence*, and that his natural uprightness in his *actual* rather than in his *primeval* state. For the Preacher expressly declares his conviction to be the result of his own observation and reason applied to his contemporaries, (verse 27,) “counting one by one to find out the account ;” or, as the margin gives it, “weighing one

<sup>1</sup> The word “man,” in this passage, is accompanied by the article, and should be taken generically, as “men,” or “mankind.” (Stuart.)

thing after another to find out the reason." Whatever value, therefore, may be attached to Solomon's observation of human nature, *as it is*, this passage affords no divine explanation respecting its *original* character.

Nor will the exhortations of Paul be found any more relevant to this discussion. They are merely appeals to his hearers to forsake their former worldly manner of life, for the new standard of holiness which Christ's example afforded. That he should refer to that example by the natural figure "image of God," is of no more importance in this argument than his use of the same expression in 1 Corinthians xi. 7, — "For a man, indeed, ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God : but the woman is the glory of the man." Indeed, the very phrase "*new man*," which Paul makes use of, indicates that he made no allusion to man's *original* nature, since to put on *that*, would be to assume an older man (or nature) than that which he was urging to forsake. We shall have occasion to show, hereafter, that upon our view of man's *successive* steps in moral growth, from moral ignorance up to moral perfection, these figures of the Apostle in illustration of the Christian nature, have a peculiar fitness and power, far beyond that which the common interpretation affords them.

It will appear strange to those who are new to this discussion, to be told that we have now exhausted the entire Scriptural authority for the important

doctrine of man's primitive holiness, righteousness, or rectitude, as a moral being. Its insufficiency to sustain such a doctrine must be obvious ; nor, indeed, does it even appear that the sacred writers we have quoted had ever conceived such an idea. Whatever may have been their individual belief, however, certain it is that, while their pens were guided by inspiration, they have not suggested it. All that can be gathered from them as authorities, is clearly the same general view which is expressed by the Psalmist in that sublime apostrophe to Deity, wherein referring to man, (like the writers we have already cited,) not in his original state, but as he actually exists, he exclaims, with mingled awe of the Creator and admiration of his work, —

“ What is man, that thou art mindful of him,  
And the Son of Man, that thou visitest him ?  
For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels ;  
Thou hast crowned him with glory and honor !  
Thou madest him to have dominion over the work of thy hands ;  
Thou hast put all things under his feet !  
All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field ;  
The fowl of the air, and the fish of the seas,  
And whatsoever passeth through the path of the seas ! ”

But it is not merely by omissions, and by silence, that the doctrine of man's original moral agency and holiness is disproved by the Scriptures. The narrative we are considering, when farther examined, will be found to supply frequent and powerful proofs against such a view, and to them we will now direct our attention.

## CHAPTER II.

INDIRECT EVIDENCE THAT MAN WAS NOT ORIGINALLY  
A MORAL BEING,—DRAWN FROM THE ACCOUNT OF  
HIS CREATION AND PRIMITIVE HISTORY.

LET us suppose, if we can, that this story of Adam and Eve had relation to two creatures of another sphere, or of a former and extinct race: creatures who disappeared after the expulsion from Paradise, and who left no posterity, — with whom we had no connection or relations, and of whom we had no account or knowledge beyond what is contained in the first two chapters of Genesis. The nature and faculties of such beings, though of no importance to us, except perhaps as a curious topic of speculation, would doubtless attract our interest; and among other inquiries, we should probably set ourselves to investigate whether they possessed, differently from the lower creatures, with the account of whose origin theirs is connected, a moral faculty and responsibilities.

In such an inquiry, following the sublime account of the Creation in its upward steps from race to race, when we come to man, what do we find to indicate any essential diversity in these respects from the creatures that preceded him? What is there to de-



note the imposition upon him of any new relations to the Creator and his laws? The partial examination which we have already given, has shown us that there is nothing; and a comparison of those portions of the narrative which relate the formation of the brutes, and those which recite the creation of Man, will confirm the conclusion. It will show what we have already noticed, that there was set no essential distinction between them, except in physical and intellectual excellence, and in difference of rank and dignity.

Prona que cum spectent animalia cetera terram,  
Os homini sublime dedit, cœlumque tueri  
Jussit, et erectos ad sidera tollere vultus.

The story represents both the birthday and the material source or origin of man and the brutes to have been the same; both being formed on the sixth day, and both being made "from the dust of the earth," (*i. e.*, from the same original elements of which the earth is composed,) a truth which every new discovery of Science beautifully confirms.

"And the Lord God formed man [of the] dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." "And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air," &c., &c. (Genesis ii. 7, 19.)

Even the circumstance which alone in these two cases seems to suggest a possible difference of constitution, the breathing into man, by his Maker, of

the breath of life, whereby he became "a living soul," does not appear to form a real distinction. In chapter i. 20, the Creator, in introducing the formation of the lower orders of animals, the tenants of the seas and air, calls them "the moving creature that hath life," — the expression translated "life" being (NEPESH HAVAH) a *living soul*; and precisely the same term which is applied to man in the passage we are considering, the only change being to the plural. It appears, too, that the creation of the brutes, and that of man, though distinct acts upon the same day, were so far blended as one transaction, that, although a special blessing had been pronounced on the fifth day upon the lower creatures then brought into being, no express benediction is given on the sixth to the brutes; but with that which is bestowed upon man are associated general expressions of the kindness and paternal care of the Creator, and general directions of life, applicable to all the races, of every grade, alike.

"And God blessed them, [the races of the fifth day,] saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth." "And God blessed them, [Man,] and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to everything that creepeth upon the

earth, wherein there is life, [a living soul,] I have given every green herb for meat." (Genesis i. 22, 28-30.)

This address of God to man, especially the first part of it, merits a particular notice. In it, as well as in the remarks with which man's creation was preceded, (and which we have already partially considered,) we find reference to a wide diversity between man and the other creatures in powers and privileges. We find in both, a proclamation of the design with which he was created, the mission he was to have, and the sphere he was to fill. We find, as we should expect, a code of instructions announced to him at the outset of his career, as the summary of his obligations and his rights, — of the general conditions and purposes of his existence. It includes all that is necessary or desirable to be enjoined upon a merely rational being. He is to multiply his race, to replenish and occupy the earth. He is, by the cultivation and exercise of his varied intellectual and physical powers, by civilization, learning, art, and science, to "subdue" the elements and the forces of Nature, with all the races of its creatures, turning them all into the servants of his wants, and using them as the means of his advancement. He is, in short, to occupy the position of lord of the natural world, with its inhabitants, and is, by the development of all his powers, to fit himself worthily to adorn that station. Is it not remarkable that, in this epitome of all the matters expected of him by his Maker, not a hint is given

of that important fact, which, had it existed, must have constituted the fundamental distinction between him and all other creatures, and the great pervading idea, in all directions to him from the Author of his being? Is it not remarkable that while, at such a time, his relations to the world, and the creatures about him, are so clearly and fully set forth, not a suggestion is dropped of any such relations to his God, as, had he been a moral being, must have been to him, unspeakably, the most important and interesting of all considerations? How is it that we find not a word from which we can infer the imposition upon him of any rule of moral duty, or even the existence of any moral capabilities?

Theologians, indeed, seem to have inferred, and some of them have asserted with a positiveness that implies the necessity of such a supposition to the common view of man's original moral nature, that, at his creation, "God revealed to him, in direct and definite terms, his whole duty, and disclosed to him the law by which his life was to be governed."<sup>1</sup> Doubtless, such a revelation was to have been expected had man been created a moral agent; and although the fact that no such revelation to man at this period has been revealed is not a conclusive proof against its having been made, it yet leaves such a declaration as the above unsupported by authority. The sole ground (if any) upon which

<sup>1</sup> Dwight's *Theology*, Vol. I. p. 396; Dr. Harris's *Man Primeval*, ch. 19, sect. 3, &c., &c.; Payne's *Lectures on Original Sin*, p. 21.

the assertion is based, is found in the fact that there was imposed upon man at a *subsequent period*, (after his removal into Eden,) a specific and particular injunction, which fact is thus narrated: —

“ And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there he put the man whom he had formed.” “ And the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden to dress it, and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 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.” (Genesis ii. 8, 15-17.)

We say that this fact offers the sole ground upon which the assertion of man's original moral nature is based, because, as we have seen, there is no other declaration or circumstance that can be referred to as affording the slightest evidence of his then possessing such an endowment. It may be, indeed, and is generally *conjectured*, that man possessed a moral nature upon his creation; but if that supposition is questioned, there is only this prohibition to cite in support of it. And, accordingly, it is appealed to for that purpose by many theologians; let us see with what reason.

That the prohibition did not in itself constitute any such revelation, will probably be admitted. We need not argue that this special mandate does not comprise, like the Ten Commandments, a code of moral obligation, “ disclosing to man his whole duty, and the rules by which his life was to be governed.” No such claim is set up in any quarter. On the

other hand, it is insisted that this mandate was, for the time being, and to a certain extent, a *substitute* for the moral law, as a rule of probation ; and, if so, it must have been in itself a something different from the moral law. The proposition is laid down by a leading writer, "that by a divine or sovereign appointment of some kind, man's thousand liabilities were reduced to one."<sup>1</sup> And by another, that while this mandate did not itself relate to any matter of general moral obligation, yet the moral law "was written in legible characters on man's heart. That natural sense of right and wrong, which exists even now in every human being, and must have existed in him in a state of perfection, *combined with subsequent divine revelations*, sufficiently instructed him concerning the will of God,"<sup>2</sup> &c., &c. And the doctrine is, that this special command respecting the forbidden fruit, though it did not instruct Adam in his moral duties or relations, yet *implied* that he was already, either by nature or revelation, acquainted with them.

So far as regards any prior moral instructions to Adam, by divine revelation, it is sufficient to say that not the slightest hint or intimation of any such revelations can be found in the narrative, and to assume them is, therefore, to say the least, unwarranted. This assumption, however, (as in the passage just quoted,) betrays a conscious weakness in

<sup>1</sup> Harris, *Man Primeval*.

<sup>2</sup> Payne's *Lectures on Original Sin*, p. 21.

respect to the claim in favor of Adam's moral knowledge. It evinces a doubt whether Adam, after all, had so much moral knowledge, that "special revelations" must not necessarily be imagined for him besides; but if such special revelations are necessary to be supposed, at what period of his existence was the first one? and why may we not believe this prohibition, with the consequences resulting from its violation, to have themselves conveyed the first? The writer, indeed, speaks of Adam's state of perfection as proving his moral knowledge. But by this supposed "state of perfection," he must mean, if anything, Adam's *moral* perfection, — thus assuming his conclusion to prove his premises. For if he means his physical and intellectual perfection, we have already shown that a moral nature is not necessarily implied by these. But apart from any admissions or inconsistencies of those who make the claims in question, how, we ask, can it be maintained that a special and definite mandate upon a particular point, not relating to moral subjects, necessarily implies a moral knowledge and responsibility in the being to whom it is addressed? Can no command be given except to a moral being? Do we not every day see commands, prohibitions, laws, issued to infants, and to animals incapable of moral reasoning? In the Scriptures themselves, we read that God "commanded" the fish which swallowed and released the prophet Jonah; Joshua "commanded" the sun and moon to stand still; Christ "com-

manded" the winds and the seas. Adam himself was to "have dominion," that is, to exercise command as his descendants do, over the inferior creatures, and to hold them responsible for obedience. In all these cases, no prior moral knowledge in the objects "commanded" is implied, and why, therefore, does a specific mandate, to man in his original condition, necessarily imply that that condition was one of moral knowledge and responsibility?

But if the mere fact of a command being issued does not imply this moral knowledge, is there anything in the form or circumstances of the prohibition itself which raises such implication? We have alluded to the fact that it was single, precise, and definite, in its terms. It forbade but one simple act. It was based upon the circumstances of a particular locality, and could have no application as a rule of conduct in any other place. The act forbidden, too, had intrinsically no moral character. The injunction restrained no particular appetite, (like a law of temperance,) for it was coupled with the permission "to freely eat" of the fruit of any and every other tree in the garden. It might as well have been, as is generally admitted, "the prohibition to any other act, — as the bathing in a particular river, for instance,"<sup>1</sup> or anything else equally indifferent. It was, therefore, no part of a moral law. It did not recall to man's attention any of his general moral duties, and consequently, unless

<sup>1</sup> Harris, *Man Primeval*, &c.



(which we have just disproved) the mere issuing of any command to man in itself implied his moral agency, there is nothing in it from which the inference of such agency can be drawn. Indeed, as we shall probably urge hereafter, it rather precludes than favors such a supposition; for it would be strange, indeed, that such a mandate should have been imposed upon a moral agent, as the sole test of his virtue, whether in an individual or a representative capacity.

It has been insisted, indeed, by some writers that, in Adam's peculiar circumstances, no other sort of command than such as we have described, namely, — one without relation to moral duty, *could* have been imposed as a test of obedience. It is said that, situated as he was, it was almost impossible for him to violate any of the Ten Commandments had they been revealed to him. That he could hardly have followed false gods, or worshipped idols, or profaned God's name, or broken the Sabbath, or dishonored father and mother, or committed murder, adultery, or theft, or borne false witness, or coveted another's goods, had such sins been suggested to him; and that thus, as there was no moral rule which could be made the test, a mandate indifferent in its character was adopted of necessity. But this theory will not bear examination. For if Adam's circumstances, at the *outset* of his existence, were such (and we have ourselves taken pains to show that they were) that there was little likelihood of his

being tempted to sin, yet these circumstances were but temporary. Many of them, indeed, necessarily continued only up to the time of Eve's creation, and were removed upon her making a *society* for him and with him. Others still subsisted for a longer period; but after Eve's creation, certainly, (upon the ordinary view of their being both moral beings,) there were moral duties reciprocally due between them, which both would be at times tempted to violate. But we do not need to rely upon this answer. Even before Eve's creation, had Adam (as a moral being) no duties to his Maker, to himself, or to the lower creatures which he could neglect or violate? Could he not be guilty of coldness, ingratitude, resentment toward God? Would he have been unable to commit the sin of profanity, or Sabbath-breaking? Was he incapable of neglecting his personal duties of self-improvement, temperance, and industry? Could he not be guilty of cruelty to the lower animals? Had he been a moral being, any of these possibilities would have suggested moral tests of his character, had such been wanted; and if (as is no doubt true) his earlier circumstances must have greatly diminished the temptations to violate such duties, still in time, even as a solitary being, he would have been subject to their influence. We do not find that the wanderer on a desert island is incapable of committing sin, or becomes invulnerable to every temptation. Indeed, in Adam's case there was one of the Ten Commandments specially suitable

as a moral test, to wit, the law against "doing any manner of work on the Sabbath day," — a law, the reason for which was then in full force, the six days' work of creation having then been just completed, on account of which "the Lord blessed the seventh day, and *sanctified* it." The day, then, at least in God's mind, was sacred *then*; and how is it that Adam was not enjoined to "keep it holy?" It will not answer to say that he might have been so enjoined in fact. Apart from the circumstance that there is no hint of such an injunction upon him, there is the remarkable absence of all evidence that the Sabbath day was ever observed by the patriarchs or the Jews down to the time of Moses, — an important truth in its bearing upon other parts of our view, as we shall show hereafter. Had Adam ever received the law of the Sabbath, it is impossible that his descendants for so long a period should have lost it.

We think, then, that the doctrine of man's original moral nature must be admitted to be destitute of all Scriptural authority. As before remarked, it rests upon conjecture alone, not only without support, but, as we hope to prove satisfactorily, *against* the teachings of revelation. In this chapter, we have confined ourselves to considering the evidence against it, which arises by implication from the narrative. In subsequent pages we shall offer proof against it, not only from the facts of the narrative, but from the doctrinal inconsistencies and confusions

into which it conducts its advocates. We think it will appear that simplicity, clearness, and truth can be attained only by believing that this special prohibition (particularly as we find no hint of any other) was in fact the *only* law of conduct to which man was, before the transgression, held subject or accountable.

## CHAPTER III.

DIRECT EVIDENCE TO THE SAME EFFECT DRAWN FROM  
THE SAME NARRATIVE. THE COMMAND.

WE have considered in the last chapter the *indirect* proofs which the sacred history furnishes that Man, in his original nature, was devoid of moral perceptions, but it is not wanting in more positive evidences.

And first, we shall notice a slight and apparently trivial fact which is stated, (chap. ii. 25,) and which sheds a light upon the subject not to be disregarded. It reads as follows: —

“ And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and they were not ashamed ;” [or, as the Chaldaic version gives it, — “ They knew not what shame was.” <sup>1</sup>]

It is somewhat singular that the narrator should have taken pains to note this state of moral insensibility in our first parents at this period, unless as a hint upon the very subject of our inquiry. It seems to us that it clearly does furnish a suggestion regarding it, for it reveals a then absence from man’s constitution of one of the earliest and most sensitive instincts of his moral nature. It is the brutes and

<sup>1</sup> *Comprehensive Commentary: Genesis.*

infants, and those savages who seem totally devoid of moral ideas only, that are unconscious of those instinctive promptings. In both children and savages, too, they invariably exhibit themselves upon the first awakening movements of the moral faculty; and in conformity with this analogy, we shall notice hereafter as a remarkable confirmation of our view, that the first emotion experienced by Adam and Eve after their disobedience, impelled them to their first succeeding act, — the adoption of a covering. At present, we only suggest that, with the theory of man's perfect and delicate moral sensibilities, involving correct conceptions of purity and impurity, this total indifference to, or ignorance of, the sentiment of modesty seems entirely inconsistent; and by it his subsequent instantaneous *change* in this respect, as an effect of his disobedience, is rendered equally unaccountable.

A more striking proof, however, and one that has been strangely overlooked by commentators, is afforded by *the name of that tree* which is the central feature in the narrative, and whose effects upon the partakers constitute its whole significance. The neglect which we have referred to in theological writers is, however, explainable. Upon the common doctrine of man's original moral nature, the command and disobedience which decided his destiny, needed not to have relation to any particular subject, or to have in themselves any peculiar significance. The whole story, according to it, is this.

Man was at first holy, or at least in his moral character, and as a moral agent, intelligently, consciously, and voluntarily perfect. In this state a specific test was made by his Maker of his firmness in obedience, by a special law of conduct. This law, upon the first temptation, man wilfully disobeyed, and by that disobedience became then and thenceforth, himself and his race, sinful and corrupted. In such a theory, it would be indifferent what were the precise nature of the mandate thus applied as a test, and which man wilfully disobeyed. It might have been one thing as well as another, or as Dr. Harris says in the passage we have already quoted (ch. 19, sec. iii. 12): "Respecting the probable reasons for the particular act prohibited, nothing need be said. That something else might have been forbidden, — the use of a particular stream, or the approach to a particular spot, and that the same truths might have been taught by such prohibition, is quite possible." Hence it is that the real character and purport of the command as indicated by the appellation of the tree to which it related, has been left in obscurity. But, in the light of the considerations we have reviewed, it becomes invested with extraordinary meaning, and fraught with luminous suggestion.

The tree whose fruit was forbidden to Adam was not (as the common view of it would seem to imply) "the tree of evil," nor yet was it "the tree of good and evil," but "the tree of the KNOWLEDGE of good and evil." In other words,

it was, as we shall see upon a critical examination of the phrase, "THE TREE OF THE APPREHENSION OF RIGHT AND WRONG." The expression is rendered in the Chaldaic version before referred to, (Targum of Onkelos,) "the tree of which they who eat are wise in discerning (or knowing) the difference between good and evil"<sup>1</sup> (*i. e.*, right and wrong). This, then, was the faculty which was alone wanting in man to render him "as gods" (ELOHIM, God); the faculty after which the serpent tempted him to aspire, in order that he might thus "become like God, knowing good and evil"; and which, when acquired by man, was thus declared by the Almighty himself to increase the resemblance between them, — "Behold, the man has become as one of us, to know good and evil." Let us examine, then, somewhat carefully the import of the phrase under consideration; and first, of the word "knowledge."

This word (Hebrew, YADAH; Septuagint, τοῦ γινῶσκειν; Latin, *cognoscendi, scientiæ*) has been taken by some commentators in the sense of "experience,"<sup>2</sup> (a meaning, however, hardly sanctioned by the Hebrew,) but a different sense is plainly understood by the writer of the Targum of Onkelos, whose version we have cited, and who is regarded as the highest authority. Whether or not

<sup>1</sup> Bush's *Notes on Genesis*, pp. 11, 58. Walton's *Polyglott Bible* translates the Chaldaic into "*Arbor cognoscendi boni et mali*," and the original into "*Arbor scientiæ boni et mali*."

<sup>2</sup> *Comprehensive Commentary; Bush on Genesis*, p. 56.



experimental acquaintance can be implied, at least, simple *intelligence*, or *cognition*, is an essential part of the idea it conveys. Accordingly, (to quote from Professor Bush,)<sup>1</sup> “the learned Vitringa, who seldom advances an opinion that is not entitled to great respect, argues, that to know good and evil in the language of the Scriptures, is to *understand the nature* of good and evil, of right and wrong, not to *experience* it.” “For, (he argues in substance,) if our first parents gained their first *experience* of good and evil by the fall, this implies that they were before unacquainted with *good*, and not only so, but that they experienced *good* from *that event*, whereas they in fact derived only evil;” and these objections, Professor Bush, without fully assenting to, admits himself unable to answer. It may be added that the “knowledge” referred to is shown not to be *experience*, by the fact that when actually obtained, by eating of the forbidden fruit, its effect was both *immediate* and *complete*, and is also described in the narrative by the expression, “their eyes were opened,” plainly denoting new and instantaneous *perceptions* of some sort; thus:—

“She took of the fruit thereof and did eat, and gave also to her husband with her, and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they *knew* that they were naked.” (Chap. iii. 6, 7.)

Here the verb “knew” in the original, is radically the same as “knowledge” in the phrase under

<sup>1</sup> Bush on *Genesis*, p. 56.

consideration, — “knowledge of good and evil.” It is obvious that it does not mean that they *experienced* that they were naked, for this was a condition long familiar to their consciousness. It evidently implies that they intellectually recognized, or perceived, certain considerations or ideas in connection with the fact of their nudity, which they had never before recognized. This interpretation is confirmed by finding the same word used (verse 4, chap. iii.), where the tempter says, “for God doth *know* that ye shall be as gods *knowing* good and evil.” Again; verse 6 expressly describes the effect of the tree as *to make one wise*, (L’HASKIL, *i. e.*, *to cause to understand*.) And in verse 22, (already quoted,) God says, “Behold the man *has become* as one of us, *to know* good and evil;” in which expression evidently the Divine knowledge to which man is said to have already attained, cannot be understood to be *experience*, — whether the “good and evil” thus “known” be supposed to be happiness and misery, or right and wrong. The knowledge which God has of “evil,” in whatever form, must be an intellectual comprehension, and not an experimental acquaintance.

Upon this point, in further support of our interpretation, we might cite many and able authorities. As a recent work,<sup>1</sup> however, has given a short exposition of the true meaning of the word here rendered “to know,” we will insert it here. The author says: —

<sup>1</sup> *Yaveh Christ*, p. 78.

“In respect to the use of the name *YAVEH*, or ‘Jehovah,’ by the Patriarchs, we find it upon every page of their history; and yet on turning to *Exod. vi. 3*, it is there stated by God himself that by his name *YAVEH*, He was not known to them. This apparent inconsistency has been a stumbling-block to many, and has even been seized upon by some who lay claim to superior scholarship, as an objection to the credibility of these records. . . . The objection disappears at once upon reference to the original. The verb [to know] there used, means ‘to comprehend,’ ‘to understand,’ and is very inaccurately and inadequately rendered by ‘to know.’ Literally it reads, ‘And by my name *YAVEH* was I not “comprehended,” or “understood” by them.’ It properly conveys the meaning ‘to see with the mind,’ ‘to understand by means of explanatory circumstances.’ As in the return of the dove to the Ark with an olive-leaf, then Noah ‘knew’ that the waters were abated. And in the sacrifice of Manoah, when the Angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar, and returned not, ‘then Manoah “knew” he was an Angel of the Lord.’ An instance by which the sense of this word may be tested, occurs in *Isaiah vi. 9*: ‘Seeing they shall see, and shall not *perceive*,’—that is, ‘understand,’ ‘comprehend.’ The word here correctly rendered ‘*perceive*,’ is precisely the one which, in the case under consideration, our translators have given as ‘know.’”

We think, therefore, that we may safely conclude that the sense of the word “knowledge,” in the title of the tree in question, is more precisely given by the term “apprehension,” and we accordingly proceed to examine the force of the remaining terms, “good and evil.”

These words in our version are evidently indefinite in their signification. They have been understood by some commentators in the sense of

“happiness and misery ;” and by others, still more indefinitely, as “all things,” “all things worth knowing.”<sup>1</sup> To the first of these interpretations it may be replied that the serpent would hardly have urged upon our first parents as a *temptation* to disobey God’s command, that they should thereby come to “apprehend” (still less “*experience*”) happiness and misery ; especially since (they being already in the enjoyment of happiness) in such an offer misery would be the only new knowledge promised them. To the second, we may say that if man’s having been formed in the image of God involved his possession of high intellectual powers, or even of those equal to what he at present possesses, then he was already equally or more capable of “knowing all things,” than he has been since partaking of the forbidden fruit, and the designation of the tree was therefore a misnomer. And to *both* renderings, the remark of God before quoted (chap. iii. 22), “Behold the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil,” presents a conclusive objection ; for it shows : 1st, that the full effect of the tree, in the “knowledge” it was to impart, had been attained immediately upon the partaking of its fruit ; and 2d, that this knowledge, so already attained, was neither that of “happiness and misery,” nor of “all things worth knowing.”

In fact, if we have established that the word “knowledge” is equivalent to “intellectual appre-

<sup>1</sup> Bush’s *Notes on Genesis*, p. 56 ; *Comprehensive Commentary*.

hension," then it will follow almost of course that "good and evil" in the same passage, must mean "right and wrong," since only a *moral* distinction of that kind could properly be a subject of intellectual apprehension; unless indeed it be claimed that the words are properly interpreted by the phrase, "the advisable, and unadvisable," a signification which will hardly be insisted on, as it impliedly denies to our first parents the original gift of reason.

An examination of the original will confirm our view that these words are to be understood in this passage in their *moral* signification.

The Hebrew words employed (טוֹב, good, and רָע, evil), particularly the former, are generic, and are properly rendered in our translation by the corresponding generic and indefinite words, "good" and "evil." The only question is, are they *here* to be understood in the sense of *natural* or *moral* qualities. The word טוֹב (rendered in the Septuagint, καλόν, and in the English translation, "good") also appears in the following connections: 1st, in chap. i. 31, where God, looking upon his work of Creation, saw that it was "good"; and 2d, in chap. iv. 7, where God, rebuking Cain for his sinful anger, says, "If thou *doest well* (Hebrew verb טָעַם, of which טוֹב is root), shall it not be accepted?" From the latter of these examples it is manifest that this word טוֹב *admits* of a moral sense in the passage we are considering. Whatever uncertainty regarding it may still exist, will be re-

moved by examining the sense of its correlative, RA (evil), in the same sentence, since it is plain that the same rule of interpretation must apply to both.

This word RA (rendered in the Septuagint *το πονηρὸν*, *wickedness*) is the same that is employed in chap. vi. 5: "And God saw that the wickedness (Hebrew, RA, Septuagint, *το πονηρὸν*) of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thought of his heart was only evil (RA) continually" (literally, "evil, evil, every day"). It may be observed that in these different passages of Genesis, the same sense is more certainly established for the same word, thus recurring in the original, by the contemporaneous origin of the different passages in which it occurs; an argument which the Hebrew scholar will best appreciate. It is for this reason that we do not make a more extended comparison of passages from various portions of Scripture, as we might do, tending to establish the same point. Thus, the same Hebrew words are used in Isaiah vii. 16: "Before the child shall know how to refuse the *evil* and choose the *good*," etc., in which phrase all commentators agree that they have a moral signification.<sup>1</sup>

So satisfactory, indeed, is the evidence with regard to the real force of these terms for "good and evil," that not only "the learned Vitringa," as we have seen, actually renders them by "right

<sup>1</sup> See Barnes on *Isaiah*; Rosenmüller, etc.

and wrong," but Gesenius<sup>1</sup> expressly defines RA in this place as "wickedness" (το κακόν). We shall doubtless be safe in accepting these authorities, at least in connection with the considerations we have reviewed, as conclusive upon the question of their moral import.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Thesaurus*, Robinson's Translation, ed. 1850.

<sup>2</sup> See also Herder's *Spirit of Hebrew Poetry*, Marsh's Translation, Vol. I. p. 132; Bunsen's *Bibel Werke*; Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, 1860, Article ADAM.

## CHAPTER IV.

EFFECT OF THE FOREGOING, AND OBJECTIONS TO IT  
CONSIDERED.

WE think it will be generally admitted that sufficient evidence has been adduced to prove our position, that by the phrase, "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil," is meant "the tree of the apprehension of right and wrong." Unless, therefore, this be a mere chance appellation, totally destitute of point or meaning, we must suppose it to imply that the object it designates was created in order to be the instrument of occasioning the impartation to man (supernaturally doubtless) of faculties and perceptions *before unknown*, and pertaining to the cognizance of moral distinctions. If we are to apply to it the plainest rules of interpretation, itself reveals the truth respecting man's nature both before and after he partook of the forbidden fruit, and is the key by which we are to unlock the whole narrative before us.

As we use this key in our progress, we shall see how readily it causes to yield and open the difficulties with which the common view has enclosed this simple story, with the effect to harass every thinking mind. Understanding man before his disobe-



dience as a being ignorant of the nature of right and wrong, the explanation of his otherwise unaccountable conduct becomes easy ; the admitted effects of that disobedience on himself and posterity intelligible ; and God's course toward all, of obvious benevolence and justice. Before entering, however, upon the details of the narrative relating to the act of disobedience and its consequences, it will be proper to notice some objections that may be offered at the outset, to the views we have urged, regarding the true purport of the narrative.

The first objection that naturally occurs, grows out of the obvious truth, that the attaining of a moral faculty by man would be a substantial *benefit* to him, and an *elevation* of his nature. Hence, it will be said, it could hardly be supposed that God would have imposed an injunction upon man peremptorily forbidding such attainment ; and especially, that he would have coupled such injunction with a threatened penalty for disobedience. We may also again and more fully allude to the inquiry already suggested : " Why, if man had no moral sense, — no knowledge of right and wrong, — was a law imposed upon him, with a punishment for its violation ? Is not this fact in itself inconsistent with the supposition ? "

To the latter objection we reply, in the first place, and to the same effect as heretofore : it does not follow that because man had no moral sense, he could not clearly comprehend the force of the im-

perative. An infant, or an animal, understands a command, and recognizes its connection with the rod held up to enforce it; but we do not thence infer in them any moral ideas or reasoning. Even, therefore, had the prohibition in question been one which might be classed among those of *moral duty*, there is no difficulty in supposing that man could have felt its binding force without comprehending the moral reasons that sustained it. The fact that it was not of that character, but had relation to a matter involving no moral principle or duty whatever, is an additional and a strong circumstance in meeting the objection; and the fact of the command, so far from being inconsistent with our view, seems inconsistent with any other; for, as before suggested, it seems hardly supposable that *such* a command would have been selected as the test of fidelity in a *moral* being.

But farther. The very form of the mandate seems to imply that it was addressed to the understanding, — the judgment, — and not to a moral faculty. There are strong reasons for regarding the last clause of it as a *prediction*, rather than a *threat*; and so interpreting the whole as a *warning*, in the form of a command. The passage reads literally, “Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, eat not of it, *because* (Hebrew, CHE) in the day thou eatest of it, dying thou shalt die.” The Hebrew word here more literally rendered “because,” imports simple *result*, without implying

any new causation to produce it. Accordingly, the Chaldee version reads (as translated in "Walton's Polyglott Bible"), "*quoniâ (since) in die quâ comederis ex ea, morte morieris.*" Nor is there any such sternness in the announcement of consequent death, as our English translation would seem to indicate. It is precisely the same form of expression which occurs in verse 16: "Of every tree in the garden, eating thou shalt eat;" and there interpreted in our version as a gracious permission, "thou *mayest* freely eat." It would appear, therefore, that in this injunction God were addressing man's *prudence*; as if, for want of a moral sense to which to appeal, He relied upon self-interest to deter him from disobedience, through the fear of certain consequences forewarned to ensue. These forewarned consequences need not necessarily have been the *natural* consequences of the forbidden fruit; they might be such consequences, not natural or necessary, which God yet saw best should attend the change in man's nature, occurring at the transgression. In either case they would be proper considerations to enter into an appeal to man's prudence, rather than his conscience; just as a parent might command his infant child — too young to comprehend moral appeals — not to play with fire, *lest* it should be burned (a natural consequence), or not to do so, *lest* it should be deprived of some plaything or other privilege (a special and punitive consequence).

The real truth with regard to mortality seems to have been that it was, even in man's original state, his natural condition; as it was and ever has been that of all other creatures, whether anterior to or contemporary with the human race. The story speaks of "the tree of life which was in the midst of the garden," and plainly intimates in verse 22 that man's immortality was dependent on *his partaking* of that tree. If this were so, it would seem that his subjection to mortality, here spoken of as to ensue upon the transgression, was to be brought about, not by any *change in his physical nature*, by or in consequence of the disobedience; but only by his removal from the opportunity of averting existing liability to death. He was not to be *made* mortal, but only to *continue* so, even as he was created. "Dying thou *shalt* die," seems to be the force of the prediction; *i. e.*, "shalt be *left* inevitably to die." And this supposition gathers additional force when we observe that the prescribed result is announced as to ensue *upon the day* in which man should partake of the forbidden fruit. Were "death" here spoken of in the ordinary sense, the announcement was not fulfilled; for man did not on the day of the disobedience actually die. But, if our construction is correct, it was literally carried out; for on that very day, mortality was fixed upon him as thenceforth his inevitable fate. And that not as a new condition apparently, but as the final confirmation of his old one.

“In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread until thou return (literally, until thy returning) unto the ground; for out of it thou wast taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” It seems hardly reasonable to suppose that the prescribed continuance of the condition in which Adam had been created, and which that fact and his then existing in it showed not to be incompatible with innocence and happiness, should be construed as a threat of punishment in case of his committing an offence.

It is worth remarking, in further support of the view we are taking, that Eve subsequently states the command in precisely the form in which we have above rendered it: “God hath said, ye shall not eat of it, *lest* ye die.” In this version of Eve’s, it is clear that she speaks of mortality as a forewarned consequence rather than a threatened punishment. She apparently supposes it also a *natural* consequence, for the serpent immediately replies to her by denying that such a consequence could be expected to ensue: “Ye shall not surely die: for God doth *know* that in the day ye eat of it (so far from its causing you to die, it will cause that) ye shall become as gods, knowing good and evil.” Certainly, had the effect of mortality been threatened as a penalty to be specially inflicted by the Almighty, such language could only have expressed to Eve a palpable absurdity; for in that case such effect would lie exclusively within God’s purposes,

and it would be ridiculous for a third party to dispute the announcement of his intention, and to assert that He "knew" a contrary result would be produced. We may add that this rendering is still further confirmed, upon examination of the sentence pronounced upon man after the disobedience, as we shall hereafter have occasion to show.

To the other inquiry, why an act so desirable should have been prohibited, we answer: that though the acquisition of a moral faculty was, in itself considered, an advantage to man, yet there has also ensued to him, as one result of its possession, a vast amount of *evil*, in the guilt and sin for which he has *since* made himself answerable, and which but for that acquisition could not have accrued. The Creator, foreseeing this sad result, and foreseeing therefore that the elevation of *nature* to be attained by man would be speedily followed by a fall in *position*, through his subsequent incurrance of moral guilt, with its attendant debasement and consequent misery, might well throw his influence against its attainment. It would be quite consistent, in such view, that God should authoritatively forbid the act that would effect it, upon the ground of the tremendous consequences involved. Such a command could do no injustice to man, because, not being a moral agent, his foreseen disobedience of it could not be an act of guilt. Neither could it interfere with the Divine plan that man should in fact become a moral agent, (for that this

was the Divine plan in his creation, who can doubt?) He who foresaw all things from the beginning, needed not to wait for the *event* to be sure of man's course, and to know that the act, though prohibited, would be done. Yet it removed all shadow of pretence, that the introduction of guilt and sin into the world was in any manner the act of God; it being what his influence had been expressly exerted to avert.

While, then, this authoritative prohibition takes away from man all opportunity to cavil, that sin, moral evil, or even moral agency, of which sin has become in our world the sad attendant, had been brought into it and imposed upon him by God's agency, however remote, or with his sanction, however indirect, — it does not follow, that the act which it forbade was of course inconsistent with God's designs. To suppose this, under any circumstances or upon any interpretation of the narrative, would be to hold that the Almighty had been disappointed and thwarted in his purposes in creating man. It would be the denial of his foreknowledge. It would be derogatory to his wisdom and power, and would be equally inconsistent with the common, or any other possible view, of the Transgression. Had it been so, God would certainly never have created the race, foreseeing, as he must have done, the actual result. Events constantly occur in his providence contrary to the Divine commands, yet directly fulfilling his designs. We need scarcely

allude to the death of our Saviour, which, as we are told in Acts ii. 23, was "through the determinate counsel of God," while yet he was "by *wicked* hands crucified and slain." So we read of Pharaoh, whose refusal to let the people go was in direct opposition to the "thus saith the Lord," and yet in full accordance with God's wishes and purposes. And again, that Christ "straitly charged" the healed persons "that they should tell no man," although he must have known that "so much the more they would proclaim it."

We have noticed these imagined objections in this place, in order that we might remove at the outset any prejudice against our view, by vindicating its consistency with reason and God's character. It will be observed, however, that the agreement of our view with *Revelation*, is all of our present concern, and all that we can fairly be called upon to make clear. Even, therefore, should teachings of the sacred narrative whose meaning shall be thus established, seem irreconcilable with general principles, or with the plans which we should be likely to contrive, it would not be incumbent on us to show them consistent. Such difficulty has not been considered fatal to the common view, admitted, and seemingly insuperable as it has been. Yet in the light in which we have presented the story, we apprehend no such conflict. We confidently appeal to, and rely on, these very features of consistency and simplicity, which are so



wanting to the common view, as among the most remarkable confirmations of the interpretation which we offer. Not merely in its general features, but even in its minutest details, it will be found harmonious with itself, with the honorable position of our first parents towards their posterity, and with the justice, benevolence, and wisdom of God. Let us now return from this digression to an examination of the narrative.

## CHAPTER V.

EXAMINATION OF THE NARRATIVE CONTINUED. THE  
DISOBEDIENCE.

PROCEEDING with the narrative, as we examine its account of the conduct of our first parents, in the various particulars connected with their *act of disobedience*, we shall find nothing to discredit, but much to support, the views we have presented. Everything which can tend to throw light upon the nature and circumstances of that great transaction, so unparalleled in its character, and so momentous in its results, must always be deeply interesting: especially since, in the light in which we have been accustomed to contemplate it, with reference to the conduct of our first parents, there is none related in history so utterly inexplicable, so diverse from every natural expectation, and from the ordinary conduct of men. Let us consider for a moment the manner in which the usual view presents them.

It shows us, then, two human beings endowed with every perfection of mind and body, in the full exercise of a sound judgment, as a part of a vigorous and active intellect; righteous from voluntary choice; knowing well, and viewing with loathing and fear, the degradation and misery of sin; and in the

enjoyment of every happiness from the bountiful hand of that Creator with whom they were not only living in daily and confiding intercourse, but to whom they saw and felt themselves united by every tie of reverence, gratitude, and affection. Immense, indeed, we should exclaim, must be the incitement which could tempt them to relinquish such blessings! Inconceivable the form and the power of the temptation that could draw them from their chosen duty! Yet we are told that these intelligent and holy beings, upon the very first suggestion, voluntarily forsook all this happiness and virtue; deliberately committed the single act upon which they knew their destiny hung; abandoned their beloved Creator, benefactor and friend, at once, upon the bare and unsupported assertion of an inferior "beast" and reptile, that He had lied to them, and was jealous of their advancement, — He, who was heaping blessings and honors upon them continually! That they perpetrated this, their first and thus momentous sin, upon reflection, in full view of its heinousness, and all its awful consequences, yet apparently with scarcely a rising hesitation, and without the smallest recorded struggle of awakening conscience! And upon what inducement? To obtain an experimental acquaintance with sin and sorrow and evil; for this, with their existing experience of "good," and intellectual apprehension of sin, (which moral beings must possess,) was all that was offered them! Is all this credible? Could we comprehend such reck-

less folly in even a *fallen* human being of the present day? Will "curiosity" explain it? Do men, then, show such insatiate curiosity to partake of known and deadly poison? Will "ambition" account for it? It is true that the woman partook, because she "saw it was a tree to be desired to make one wise"; but if the common view is right, the only "wisdom" it could impart, would be the wisdom that attends destruction; and is there indeed an ambition for misery and ruin? Nay, more! could a man ever, (at least, since this period of perfect and voluntary rectitude passed away,) without a single struggle, yea, without a terrible and long-protracted war with conscience, have committed as his first sin, that very one upon which he knew his earthly life, his eternal fate, and the destiny of his race were suspended? And can it be that perfectly holy beings would falsify the truth which even of "degenerate" humanity has for ages been recognized in the proverb, — "*Nemo repente fit turpissimus?*" Surely these objections are insuperable. Yet these are only a portion of the difficulties that invest the story, in regard to this first act of disobedience, under its ordinary interpretation. If any other view shall present as great, let it by all means be rejected!

Had Adam and Eve been moral beings, it is inconceivable but that at their first temptation the *sin* of disobedience should have constituted the first and strongest objection to it in their minds — the centre

and focus of their resistance. And had there, in fact, been a conflict of this kind within them, it would certainly have been at least *hinted* at by the inspired writer, in referring, as he has, to the emotions and deliberations under which the act was committed. Milton, though obviously embarrassed and hampered by the plain teachings of the text, is yet not so unmindful of human nature, and of probability, as to neglect this consideration of conscientious scruples, and accordingly represents Eve as attempting to reason down conscience by a very refined moral abstraction, —

“In plain, then, what forbids He, but to know?  
Forbids us good! forbids us to be wise!  
Such prohibitions bind not.”

And the same poet depicts Adam as dwelling more fully and at large upon the moral aspect of the contemplated deed. Yet we find no such suggestions alluded to in the Scripture account, nor anything of the manifold other accessories which the Poet's imagination has felt itself constrained to supply, in order to color its representations with the hues of probability.

On the contrary, the whole transaction as narrated in the sacred record, is marked with the simplicity, and evinces the innocence, of childhood: —

“Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the

fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened; and ye shall be as gods, (ELOHIM, God,) knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, (lit. to cause to understand,) she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat."—(Ch. iii. 1.)

Here we see Eve, in reply to the first approaches of the serpent, all unconscious of his designs, answering his inquiry with candor and truth. She repels his covert insinuation of unreasonableness in God's command, and states fully and fairly its import and alternative. As before remarked, she seems to state the latter as a natural consequence rather than a threat of punishment, (certainly the serpent so understands her,) which she had no motive to do, unless she supposed it to be thus presented. Nowhere is there the least indication of a disposition on her part to misrepresent or equivocate, but the reverse; and if, as some commentators try to imagine, discontent were already rising in her heart, she would have been more likely to have obscured the terms of the mandate, and to have colored the penalty with the strongest hues of a complaining spirit. The whole effect, indeed, of the command, as here recited by Eve, and apparently understood by her, is that of a benevolent warning, connected with a general and kind permission; she says:

“Serpent, you are wrong in your suggestion. We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; all are free to us. Of one only, which stands in the midst of the garden, God has warned and enjoined us not to eat of it, or touch it, lest we die.”

Whatever may have been the true import of Eve's reply, the serpent obviously perceives in her mind no objections of a moral nature against disobedience, for he responds, not in the usual style of the tempter, by persuading her that the sin would be venial, or that

“Such prohibitions bind not;”

but solely to the suggestion of the *consequences*, as the only argument, seemingly, which required to be met. And as we have before noticed, the serpent alludes to these consequences as something within God's *knowledge*, rather than his *intentions*; and therefore as an effect, rather than a punishment:—

“Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened; and ye shall be as ELOHIM, knowing good and evil.”

Such an assurance as this could have had little effect to deceive Eve, had mortality been understood by her to be a threatened *penalty* for the act prohibited, since in such case no assertion of a third and inferior party could discredit the threat, as no power of his could prevent its execution. It would seem, on the contrary, had she really been a moral and a holy being, that such an open and flagrant

insult upon her Parent and Friend, these base aspersions of his veracity and affection, and this calumnious imputation against him of a mean jealousy of his children, would have agitated her with indignation and horror, and driven her from the presence of the tempter. Such, at least, would be their natural effect upon a human mind not utterly debased, as humanity is at present constituted. Yet we find no intimation that they in the least disturbed her tranquillity, or awakened her suspicions; a fact inexplicable, except upon the supposition that she was incapable of appreciating their wickedness.

But apart from these objections to the common interpretation that are suggested by the serpent's reply, it seems impossible, under that interpretation, that it should have presented to Eve's mind any intelligible idea whatever that could have influenced her as a *temptation*, or *inducement*, to the sin of disobedience. Eve, it appears from the story, paused and reflected upon the considerations for and against the suggestions of the serpent. Indeed, it seems certain that the actual transgression occurred at a different time from that of this interview, and when, having consulted with her husband, she had brought him with her to the tree, — an idea accordingly which most commentators support. At all events, it was not until she “saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant [or “a desire”] to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to *make one wise*, that “she took of the fruit thereof,



and did eat." Upon the common view, it would seem difficult for her to have formed so favorable an opinion of the properties of the tree in its capacity for imparting "wisdom" (by which we must understand, of course, *desirable* knowledge). Reflecting upon the serpent's proposition, her deliberations could hardly have failed to run somewhat thus: "The serpent assures me that our eyes shall be opened, and we shall be like ELOHIM, 'knowing good and evil.' Does he mean by 'good and evil,' that which is moral, or that which is physical and material? Yet, of what importance can it be which he intends? for in either case, what new and desirable experience or knowledge could accrue to us? Every material, and all moral *good*, we already actually enjoy, and of course have the capacity to comprehend it also; and though we have never yet known any kind of *evil* as an experience, yet we have a sufficient intellectual appreciation and conception of its character, as in contrast with good, to see that it is something which our souls shrink from, and which it is desirable should be avoided. He offers us, then, no *new* knowledge, except that which we have no desire to possess; and shall I disobey my Creator for that? Besides, how could an acquaintance such as the serpent proposes, with good and evil, with evil as well as good, (whether the evil be material or moral,) increase our resemblance to ELOHIM? since we already 'know' them both, precisely as He does, not in our experience, but sufficiently in our

conceptions. Clear it is, that no new knowledge can be imparted by the tree, or if any, it must be such as would make us wretched, and diminish rather than promote our likeness to our Maker." So obvious a process of reasoning, certainly does not seem improbable in beings of the high endowments which are attributed to our first parents before the fall, while the conclusions to which it leads, are manifestly utterly inconsistent with the course of conduct which they adopted.

On the other hand, the view we are urging reconciles the story with itself, with probability, and with the instincts of human nature: for it presents in this reply of the serpent a real temptation to a partaking of the fruit; and fully accounts for Eve's slight hesitation, if any there was, since her want of a moral sense would oppose to it no conscientious repugnance. According to our view, she might be supposed to reason thus upon the proposition of the tempter: "The serpent is clearly right in saying that the tree will convey to us the apprehension of right and wrong, for that its very name, given by God himself, indicates. Surely, to possess this mysterious knowledge, whatever it may be, this mental illumination and power, so incomprehensible, so divine, were, indeed, to increase our resemblance to God's infinite nature, and to make a great step upward! What can that knowledge be? What strange joys and blessings may not be involved in it? Hurtful it cannot be, for God possesses it, and

he is only blessed and glorious. True, he has forbidden us its acquisition; but why? 'Lest we die.' But how can the knowledge of right and wrong occasion us to die? The serpent positively assures us it will not; and if he is right, as he plainly is, in stating one result of the fruit, may he not also be correct, and God mistaken, with regard to this? He gives a reason, too, for his assertion, — 'Ye shall not surely die,' he says, '*for* ye shall be as ELOHIM, knowing good and evil,' as if the knowing good and evil, like ELOHIM, were in itself a reason and a proof against the result of mortality. And is it not so? Has this knowledge made God to die? Then, why ourselves, who are made in his image? On the other hand, the brutes who do not possess it, differing therein from ELOHIM, differ also in this, that they are mortal, for so the bones and fragments of their perished races show us. May not, then, this unknown power of knowing right and wrong, be that which ensures to its possessor exemption from death, instead of liability to it? It is all we need to perfect our similitude to our Creator; and should it complete the resemblance in respect to this knowledge of right and wrong, and in respect to the certainty of eternal life besides, then this is, indeed, a tree at once good for food, and pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise!"

There is surely nothing forced in this chain of reasoning, as the supposed meditations of an intelligent creature, not a moral agent, and so incapable

of seeing anything improper to be indulged in its imputations upon God's knowledge or veracity. To such a being, the antagonism of God's allegations to those of the serpent, would seem simply a difference of opinion, or a mere discrepancy of statement; and between the two, that would receive the most credit which seemed to be the most plausible, or best corroborated. The question of *expediency* is, at all events, the only one upon which the narrative represents Eve as pausing to deliberate, — a circumstance which, as we have before suggested, is hardly conceivable of a holy being hesitating over her first temptation, and that, one of such tremendous moment. When this inquiry seemed plausibly disposed of; when she saw, or supposed she saw, "that the tree was good for food, and pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise," both she and her husband unhesitatingly partook of its fruit, without the faintest recorded movement of conscience to restrain them. "She gave to her husband also, and he did eat." They seem to have acted throughout like artless children, who are readily enticed to acts agreeable in the prospect, so long as they are ignorant of their moral character, and incapable of discerning it.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Paul says, 1 Tim. ii. 14, that "Adam was not deceived, but Eve being deceived, was in the transgression" (*παραβάσει*). His precise meaning in this passage is somewhat obscure. It would seem to follow from the statement that Adam (if the transgression were a *sin*) was the least excusable of the pair. It will be noticed, however, that in any light, this remark of Paul's does not militate against our view

Some other considerations in this connection ought not to be overlooked. The narrative plainly teaches that the temptation was first addressed to Eve when she was alone ; that it was not immediately acted upon by her, but dwelt in her mind until a subsequent occasion, when, Adam being present, she partook of the fruit, and persuaded him to do likewise. Of the latter fact, indeed, there can be no question, since God himself asserts it in the remark: "Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy *wife*, and hast eaten," &c. It thus appears: 1st, that the disobedience was upon full and deliberation reflection, at least upon the part of Eve ; and 2d, that the tempter in his "subtlety" approached her first, as the most likely to be "beguiled" into the act of disobedience. Yet upon the common view of the temptation, as direct advice to *sin* in order to attain increase of knowledge, it seems very inartfully presented. The appeal to intellectual ambition was a weak one to press upon a woman's mind, though it might present a powerful incitement to an intelligent, nobly constituted man ; and, on the other hand, the suggestion of sinful disobedience (even for a tempting object) would be *less* likely to succeed with a woman,

since his language does not import sinfulness in "the transgression." And farther, that Paul appends it as a reason for what he has just advanced upon his own authority, and not by inspiration; viz., v. 12: "I suffer not the woman to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." As such, it certainly looks like an illogical argument, for what many in our day will, doubtless, regard as very questionable doctrine.

in whom conscience, trustfulness, and the spirit of obedience are naturally much more than in the other sex influential upon conduct. But upon our supposition that the temptation involved a fallacy merely, and no suggestion of guilt, it was appropriate that Eve should be first approached by the tempter, since her judgment was weaker than Adam's, and the appeal was quite as strongly addressed to womanly curiosity as to manly ambition; while the wife, if gained over, would be a powerful agency in persuading the husband. In fact, it appears from the narrative that it was chiefly this female characteristic — curiosity, which influenced Eve, — the stimulus of mental ambition being in her case subordinate, though probably a leading motive with Adam. She ate because "she saw that the tree was good for food and pleasant to the eyes," as well as "a tree to be desired to make one wise," and then "gave to her husband with her, and he did eat."

And thus the great transaction was consummated. Whatever may have been the previous character and position of our first parents, or the precise *nature* of the change that was effected by this act within them, there will be little dispute that it occasioned, in some way or other, the most remarkable and important revolution that humanity has ever undergone. By it was wrought that momentous change, whatever it may have been, that altered at once the personal relations of man to his Maker, and fixed the future destinies of the whole human

race. The history of man's career dates from the moment of its perpetration ; for that moment it was, by all admissions, which gave him that direction, and those qualities of character, which have determined his whole course as a race, and his destiny. Thenceforth, relying no longer on the constant companionship of his Maker to direct his conduct, he was left to look chiefly within his own breast for the monitor of his thoughts and actions, and for the familiar expositor of that law to which he was to be held accountable. This, it is agreed by all, was one result, — was in fact *the great* result of the act we have contemplated. Shall we suppose this withdrawal of God's immediate supervision to have been because his children were fairly embarked on the fearful current of moral ruin, (whereby they would seem to need that care the more,) or rather because they had now attained that moral discernment which in a measure dispensed with his counsel, and had reached that position of free and intelligent moral agency, for which at their creation He had designed them ?

For answer, we look not alone to the goodness and benevolence of God's character, but also to his revelation, in the narrative whose consideration we continue.

## CHAPTER VI.

## EXAMINATION OF THE NARRATIVE CONTINUED. THE EFFECTS OF THE FORBIDDEN FRUIT.

IN seeking an answer to the inquiry just suggested, we come next to examine the circumstances which are related to have succeeded the disobedient action, as its actual and necessary consequences.

The next sentence to that which relates the partaking of the forbidden fruit, declares its immediate and marvellous effect:—

“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.” (Chap. iii. 7.)

The effect thus wrought seems to have been the *complete effect* of the fruit, for no other results are alluded to, and no others ensued, except such as were afterwards specially imposed by the Creator. The Almighty himself obviously announces this to have been the fact in verse 22, where he says, “Behold, the man *is become* as one of us,” etc.; plainly implying that the *whole* change which the fruit could produce in man’s nature had occurred; and necessarily implying that that change was the one indicated in verse 7, which we are considering. The immediateness, completeness, and the char-



acter of this related effect, are noticeable, as being inconsistent with those theories which hold that the change produced in man by the disobedience was such as time and experience only could reveal. We find here, therefore, no support for the idea that it wrought the loss of constitutional moral excellence, or of the ability to maintain moral perfection; none for the doctrine that it merely exhibited the certainty of man's sinfulness, through his first development of character; and as little for the fancy that the fruit may have effected a deterioration in man's physical nature, reducing it to the level of suffering and mortality. At present, however, we are more concerned with the inquiry what light this part of the story sheds upon man's previous moral nature, and what change in this respect it indicates to have been actually produced.

When, therefore, the deed is done, the fatal *sin*, as it is called, committed, how are the actors affected? At once "their eyes are opened," and to what purpose? Is it — as the common view would teach — an awakening from the infatuation of wickedness to an awful and overwhelming sense of guilt? Are they then crushed in the dust with remorse and terror? with the pangs of self-reproach? with humiliation and distress? None of these. As little do they manifest the symptoms of newly infused corruption, and rush immediately into the practice of sin. Milton, indeed, ignoring the facts of the narrative, represents their first

emotions as those of sinful passion. The story, on the other hand, reveals them as the feelings of simplicity and purity. "Their eyes were opened," not to agony and remorse for their disobedience, not to new seductions of appetite, but to the promptings of modesty, and to make themselves a covering.

It has been supposed by the supporters of the ordinary view, that the phrase, "They knew that they were naked," indicates the advent of impure emotions to the minds of our first parents, who had been previously so holy as to be indifferent to the circumstance of their want of bodily clothing. The making for themselves aprons, it is said, manifests the resistance of their lingering virtue against this impurity. If this is so, it is most strange that the story has not presented these truths in a more clear and natural way; but that it is not so, and that this is a forced and improbable explanation of the passage, will appear from several considerations.

In the first place, the expression, "their eyes were opened," can by no just construction be made to imply the inroad of sinful emotions. It is nowhere so used in Scripture. On the contrary, it always implies a mental illumination, — the attainment of desirable knowledge, — while sin is called a *blindness*. "Their eyes have they closed, and their ears are dull of hearing," says the Prophet Isaiah, in speaking of the wilful wickedness of Israel, "lest they should see with their eyes," etc., "and be converted, and I should heal them." The

Psalmist cries, (Psalm cxix. 18,) praying for the enlightenment of his moral perceptions, — “Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law”; and so in numerous other passages. Now in the light of these premises, let us examine the common idea of this passage. It is certain and admitted that Adam and Eve attained some new perceptions, not with regard to the mere physical fact of their nudity, for this they must have fully comprehended before; but with regard to a previously unimagined significance in that fact, and a new effect of its contemplation upon themselves. And what, upon the ordinary view, were these new suggestions? Not, surely, that a state of nudity was in itself improper in moral beings, for God had allowed them theretofore to continue unclothed. Not that it in itself tended to awaken impure emotions in moral creatures, for such had never before been their experience. The discovery must therefore have been, merely, that this condition, now *for the first time*, excited within them impure and immoral emotions. It was simply then (as the view would imply) a discovery that they had suddenly become more easily corrupted, more subject to the control of debasing appetites than before, and this discovery must have been through the actual uprising and prevalence of those passions within their breasts. But as we have already seen, no such experience of *sin* can be intended by the phrase, “their eyes were opened,” — a phrase used only to

convey a totally opposite signification. Nor is this the only objection. Apart from all this, the expression fairly denotes an improvement in the *mental vision*, whereby it is strengthened or cleared up, to discern things *previously in existence*, but undistinguished; and can by no just use of language be employed to describe the total change of a man's circumstances, with his natural recognition simply of that change and its consequences. It describes the enabling of a blind man to see the things already about or within him, and not the removal of one who sees to a different sphere, where his eye merely rests upon new objects of vision.

Again. It is incredible that indifference to a condition of nudity could be a result or accompaniment of the highest purity in a free moral agent. Such an idea is neither sanctioned by reason nor by observation. In a being free to sin, the practice of whatever tends to excite or foster natural passion is incompatible with the highest state of holiness. The purest and holiest creatures of earth, so far from being the most indifferent, are the most sensitively delicate and modest; and it needs no argument to show that the baser passions would be more likely to prevail among men, however holy, if all went naked like the brutes, than if they decently covered themselves with clothing. Indeed, a common brute nudity can scarcely be thought of, except as accompanied by brute-like prevalence and shamelessness of passion. Such is its notorious

influence among the filthy savage races, who alone exhibit it in practice, — the lowest representatives of humanity, — the farthest conceivable from holy beings, — so lost to moral purity as to seem almost destitute of a moral sense. The only other human beings who are indifferent, are infants too young to comprehend moral distinctions; and in both these classes, no sooner does conscience begin to appear, than this instinct of modesty awakens; “their eyes are opened,” “they know that they are naked,” and “they are ashamed.”<sup>1</sup> How unaccountable upon the common view, and how consistent with that which we are sustaining, that the first emotion of our first parents after their disobedience, should be that instinctive and delicate modesty which accompanies the earliest presence of the moral sense! How forcible a commentary upon the purport of the recorded fact, that, before that act of disobedience, they had been “both naked, the man and his wife,” and “knew not what shame was!” That this new feeling was no sinful prompting, but in accordance with the dictates of purity and modesty, is clear, for God himself afterwards sanctioned it, by clothing them in a more perfect manner. Neither here, nor elsewhere in the narrative, do we

<sup>1</sup> Missionaries among the degraded savages of South Africa assert, that the first indication afforded by these almost naked barbarians of the awakening of religious feeling in their hearts, is their application for the most essential articles of clothing. When a native comes to ask for a shirt, it is an almost unerring sign that he is spiritually awakened, and is ready to put on the garment of righteousness.

find the least hint of a sudden degradation, or of the incoming of new depravity.

Once more. A decisive refutation of this doctrine of incoming impurity found in verse 7, appears in verse 22, already quoted; where God, speaking of the effect produced by the fruit, says, "Behold, the man *is become* as one of us, to know good and evil" (*i. e.*, right and wrong). The change here referred to as having already taken place, is manifestly that which occurred when his "eyes were opened," and "he knew that he was naked." The "knowledge that he was naked," then, was associated with his new acquirement of "the knowledge of good and evil," and was in itself an evidence that in that respect he had "become like ELOHIM." The manner in which man, then, looked upon his nudity, when "his eyes were opened," was the way in which ELOHIM in man's position would Himself regard it, and occasioned his acting with respect to it, precisely as ELOHIM would, and in fact did, subsequently act. Now had man taken this new view of his nudity in consequence, and as a part of his changing from a holy to a sinful creature, and as a result of the inroad of impure emotions, then, so far from its being an evidence of his having become *more* like ELOHIM, it would have indicated his departure from such a resemblance. In such case its cause would have been described as the advent of moral darkness and blindness, instead of the dawn of moral light and

clearness of vision. Hence, the passage, while it fully accords with our theory that verse 7 relates the awakening by man to the dignity of a moral agent, is inconsistent with the idea that it represents him, theretofore a holy moral creature, as falling into his first experience of sin.

Having thus examined the transgression with reference to its immediate results upon its actors, let us consider how they would naturally be affected after the first promptings of instinct had been obeyed, and some little time had elapsed for reflection. While busy with satisfying the instinctive demands of modesty, they could think of nothing else; but these disposed of, their minds would naturally revert to the act of disobedience which they had just committed, and which in the light of their newly acquired moral sense they would now begin to view in a new and alarming aspect. It is true that no actual sinfulness had as yet, in fact, been committed by the pair, (the disobedience having been perpetrated by them in a state of moral ignorance;) nor is there any positive intimation that they now imputed to themselves guilt in the transgression; yet we may well suppose that their sensitive consciences presented their conduct to them, however incorrectly, in the light of a sin, as they can hardly be supposed to have reasoned with much metaphysical precision upon the effect of their previous moral incapacity. Indeed, some degree of morbidness is the invariable character-

istic of a newly awakened or tender conscience, even in the most cultivated and practised minds. St. Paul could not refrain from calling himself the chief of sinners when reviewing acts in which at the time he verily thought he was doing God service; and such examples are of common observation. At all events, whether Adam and Eve reasoned or not upon the sinfulness of their conduct, they could not fail to remember that in it they had disobeyed the positive commands of their Maker; they recalled the solemnly declared consequences, and it is no wonder that, when they heard his voice approaching, "they hid themselves from his presence among the trees of the garden."

"And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And He said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?" (Chap. iii. 9-11.)

Summoned thus from their retreat to render an account of themselves, Adam, under the terror of their situation, (and here, at least, the temptation is adequate,) commits his first sin, — that of equivocation, if not falsehood, in excusing his flight. This excuse, however, is not without its bearing upon our inquiry. Had Adam been conscious that his sense of shame proceeded from impure emotions, he would scarcely have ventured to offer it as an apology for his self-concealment. He must have



supposed it in itself proper and commendable; nor does God in his response imply the contrary. Without any censure for such sentiments, (which, as we have seen, He afterward fully sanctioned,) He instantly demands, in an inquiry full of meaning in this connection, "Who *told* thee that thou wast naked?" — a plain implication of man's prior want of those moral perceptions which were now associated by him with this fact of nudity. Whence comes this new sentiment of modesty? — these sudden perceptions of purity and impurity? HAST THOU EATEN OF THE TREE whose power it was to convey them? Is it from that that thou derivest this new knowledge of good and evil? this apprehension of moral right and wrong? Such were the questions which Adam elicited by this confession of his modesty; questions whose very statement disclosed their answer, and would seem irresistibly to confirm the conclusions we have drawn from other portions of the narrative.

We may perhaps incidentally remark that this sin of equivocation in Adam, was one not so heinous in its nature (especially in view of his situation at the moment) as to be unlikely to have been the first committed by a moral being. Indeed it is the very one which is usually the first serious sin of childhood, — falsehood for the purpose of escaping apprehended retribution or censure.<sup>1</sup> We thus

<sup>1</sup> "Even in the best naturally disposed children is found an element of hatred, and an element of *lying*, especially for the purposes of self-justification." — *Müller's Doctrine of Sin*, Vol. II. p. 309.

avoid a serious objection (already noticed) to the ordinary view, which represents the first sin of Adam as one of the greatest, the most unaccountable, the least excusable, and upon the smallest temptation of any recorded in the history of man.

## CHAPTER VII.

## EXAMINATION OF THE NARRATIVE CONTINUED. THE SENTENCES NOT PUNISHMENTS.

THE sentences (so called) which God proceeds to pass upon the various actors in the disobedience now demand our attention. They are recorded as follows : —

“And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field. Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

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

“And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast done this, and hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake: in sorrow shalt thou eat of it, all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat of the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”  
(Chap. iii. 14-19.)

Of these, that which is addressed to the serpent has received much attentive consideration from commentators, and various suppositions have been formed regarding it. It is of less importance in our inquiry than the others, yet not destitute of interest. It is mostly agreed that the first portion of it applies merely to the serpent tribes of creatures, whose shape, having been thus assumed by the tempter, is doomed to signify thereafter God's displeasure at the purpose which had inspired him in this transaction. The latter part, however, is generally thought to be prophetic, and to foreshadow the long conflict between the prince of darkness and the soul of man, until the coming of Christ to bruise and effectually crush the power of evil in the world.

If we adopt this interpretation of the latter clause of the address to the serpent, we at once are led to inquire, why, upon the common view of "the fall," this antagonism between man and the prince of evil should now be announced as a thing of the *future*. According to this view, man, having been previously a holy being, under the moral law, and with the power of breaking it, must have been always subject to temptation and sin; had in fact, been at this time already attacked, defeated, and completely ruined by the enemy of his soul. In his primal fidelity to God, and preference for holiness, he must have been constantly in a position of antagonism and enmity to sin and the tempter;

more so, surely, far more than since his "fall," and increased depravity of nature. Yet the Almighty distinctly speaks, not of *continuing* enmity, but of "*putting* enmity" between him and the tempter, as a thing thenceforth to take place. "I *will* put enmity," etc. It would appear from this that no such antagonism had previously subsisted between man and sin as has since subsisted; a fact inconsistent with the view of man's original moral holiness and subsequent corruption, but clearly in conformity with the theory that his moral agency, and consequently "the enmity" between him and sin, commenced after the disobedience.

In this address to the serpent we recognize a just displeasure on the part of the Almighty toward an intelligent and malignant being who has designed to subvert God's plans, but who, with the usual success of such plotters, has really been but the blind and unwilling instrument of accomplishing his purposes. In influencing man to disobedience, he accomplished no real triumph, such as the common view supposes, either over man or his Creator; he disappointed no wishes or intentions of God, even temporarily; he simply occasioned man's advancement to the condition of a moral agent, and thus furthered God's designs respecting human nature from the beginning.

The sentences pronounced upon the human pair we shall notice more at length.

In the first place: they are not to be regarded as

the denouncement of a *punishment*. For it is manifest, that if a punishment *is* proclaimed by them, it must be either a punishment for this specific and individual act of Adam and Eve, or a punishment to be visited upon them and their posterity for this and future transgressions of the race. That it is not the latter, is unequivocally declared by God in the outset. It is, "Because thou hast done *this*, and hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the fruit of the tree whereof I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it," that the results announced are to follow. Whatever the intent or *purpose*, therefore, of these foretold experiences, it is certain that they were to attach to Adam and his posterity, simply and solely as a consequence of this particular and individual act of Adam and Eve. Were they, then, so to be visited upon Adam and all future generations of mankind, as a *penalty* for this his individual act of transgression? We shall urge the negative of this proposition upon several grounds; and in doing so, we shall of course set aside for the time being all our previous evidence that this transgression of Adam *was not a sin*, and consequently offered no cause for the infliction of a penalty. We shall proceed upon the supposition upheld by the common view, that it was a criminal act in him, and as such a proper subject for punishment.

The first objection, then, is the obvious one that as these foretold experiences are evidently an-

nounced as conditions which were to attach to the whole race forever, they could not be intended as a *punishment* for Adam's individual act. Had Adam committed a sin punishable with death, it were not mercy merely, it were the simplest justice, to visit the penalty upon him and new-create the race. It were the most obvious wrong to punish Adam's posterity for the guilt of his first sin any more than for that of his second; or to punish his descendants for *his* sins any more than for the sins of any subsequent ancestor. By this, we of course do not mean to deny either the fact or the justice of God's "visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation," as he declares he does in another place. It is, as we conceive, a very different thing to "visit the iniquities of the fathers upon the children" in the natural and legitimate consequences which evil deeds may entail upon an innocent posterity, from what it is "to punish" the children for the sins of their fathers, by the infliction of special penalties totally separate and disconnected from the consequences of such sins. Such are the trials here predicted for the descendants of the human pair: the pangs of childbirth, the sterility of the ground, the necessity and fatigues of toil. These are consequences *specially imposed* for the act of disobedience, and which did not naturally grow out of it. Even mortality itself, as we have before seen, appears not to have been a necessary or natural

result of the *disobedience*; for from verse 22 it would appear that it was already man's natural condition; that it could have been averted before the transgression only by partaking of the "tree of life," and that it might have been averted by so doing, even after that event. If then the permitting it to *continue*, by depriving man of any farther opportunity of escaping it, was indeed a penalty, it was a penalty *special* and not naturally consequent in its character. This consideration is of itself an evidence that it could not have been intended as a penalty for the disobedience; for such are not the punishments of sin which God allows to descend upon even the third and fourth generations, far less upon all generations forever.

Second. Another indication that a *penalty* is not here imposed, may be found in the phraseology of the sentence itself. According to the ordinary doctrine, a curse was passed at this time upon Adam and his race. "All mankind fell under God's wrath and curse," says the Westminster Catechism; but it will be observed that no such curse upon the human family is here narrated. It is not Adam, but the ground, that is cursed. The difference between the address to Adam and that to the serpent is remarkable. Both commence in the same manner, — "Because thou hast done this;" but with the serpent it is, "cursed art *thou*," while with Adam it is simply, "cursed is the *ground*, for thy sake!" Nor is this only another form for the



same thing, as we shall see if we compare it with God's terrible denunciation upon Cain, in the next chapter:—

“And now *thou* art cursed from the earth, [or, in respect to the earth,] which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength,” etc. (Chap. iv. 11.)

So also in the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy, where curses are denounced upon the Israelites if they should be disobedient. It is done in no indirect manner:—

“Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field. Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out.”

In the case before us, the announcement of “the sentence” is not in a form that necessarily indicates anger, especially that portion which is addressed to Eve. Even mortality—as we have observed in another place—seems foretold simply as man's natural fate; a fate not specially prepared for him on account of the transgression, but only *not to be averted*, as it might perhaps otherwise have been. Such appears to be the force of the expression which is literally translated, “until *thy returning* unto the dust, whence thou art taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return;” and this inference is confirmed by the allusions in other parts of the story to the “tree of life,” and to the necessity that man, whether before or after the

transgression, should *partake* of it, in order to be rendered immortal.

Third. The experiences here predicted cannot be understood as penalties imposed for the disobedience, because (with the exception of mortality) they had not been forewarned or threatened as its consequences. God could not with justice, any more than human rulers, inflict upon man punishments of which he had not forewarned him; and if death *alone* had been announced as the penalty, he could not now inflict different and additional evils such as were not necessarily involved in mortality. That the trials here recited were not so involved, appears from the fact that God distinctly tells Eve, that her increased physical "sorrows," and those of her sex, were to be an effect specially imposed,— "I will *greatly multiply* thy sorrow," etc. The sterility of the ground, too, is the consequence of a distinct and separate curse upon it, entirely independent of man's mortality. But this is not all. The objection may be as fairly taken from what is *omitted* in the enumeration, as from what is contained. Whether this "sentence" be supposed to be an infliction for this particular sin of Adam alone, or whether a general judgment for the future sinfulness of mankind foreshadowed and typified in this first transgression, in either case it is unaccountably incomplete. For, what are undoubtedly the worst penalties of sin are not here alluded to. Nothing is said of the diseases, the violence, the

distresses, the injustice, the alarms, the remorse, and all the other direct punishments of sin in this life ; nothing of its retribution in another state of existence. Will it be claimed that God not only openly affixed unexpected additions to the penalty originally forewarned, but even in announcing these mentally added others, the greatest, most important, and most fearful of all? Clearly, if an announcement of the penalty for sin, this "sentence," while it is in one point of view unjustly enlarged, is in another as strangely deficient.

And fourth : not only do these sentences include too much, and omit too much, to be regarded as the denouncement of penalties for sin, but, what is a still more forcible objection, the evils which they do foretell are such as do not ensue to all sinners. If we allow that they proclaim judgments for general sinfulness, (though but an incomplete enumeration,) they at least ought to be as universal in their application to the race, as the sinfulness against which they are meant to testify God's displeasure. But it will be seen that the sorrows predicted for Eve, are such as visit only those of her female descendants *who bear children* ; and the burdens (if any) that are placed upon Adam, are, as we know, entirely unfelt by a large proportion of his posterity. Millions upon millions of women have lived and died without experiencing the peculiar trials of the wife and the mother ; and other vast multitudes of the race, in all ages, have been relieved by Nature's

profusion in tropical climes, the fertility of particular soils, the possession of hereditary property, or by other circumstances, from the necessity of toil for a subsistence. These prescribed experiences, then, if they are designed to be penalties for sin, differ very widely — differ, indeed, in the most essential point — from the real and admitted retributions for guilty deeds, — remorse, fear, mental and physical ruin and suffering, which no sinner ever escapes, of whatever sex, condition, or country. It cannot be believed that experiences, so uncertain and so imperfectly encountered by mankind, should have been selected by the Deity as general penalties for a guilty race, — and so held up as a special and peculiar testimonial of his displeasure at man's universal sinfulness.

These considerations alone, and certainly these in connection with the evidence adduced that the transgression was not a sinful act in Adam and Eve, must suffice to convince us that the conditions of life here imposed upon all generations of mankind forever, were not thus imposed as a *penalty* for the personal disobedience of their progenitors.

But if these experiences thus announced to ensue upon the disobedience are not *penalties* for it, in what light are they to be regarded? They are certainly not rewards, and if neither rewards nor punishments, what is their character? The question is most pertinent, yet not difficult of answer. They are, manifestly, certain new *conditions of existence*

now imposed upon man, as those into which Infinite Wisdom and Benevolence see it best that he, as a *moral agent*, shall enter; conditions which, though involving some sorrows, and entailing some burdens, are yet with wonderful wisdom adapted to his necessities in his exalted yet hazardous state of *moral agency*, in order to enable him to escape its perils, to partake fully of its blessings, and to reach, through it, the highest development of his being. This supposition reconciles all the difficulties which we have considered, and which present such insuperable objections to any other view of this narrative. These conditions of life were, indeed, as proclaimed by the Creator, to be entered into by Adam and his posterity, "because" *he* committed the act of disobedience; yet they are not open to the charge of injustice that would lie against them, were they a *punishment* for that, his individual act. They were not *aggravations* of the troubles incident to humanity, but a means adopted to *mitigate* or *prevent* the evils to which it would otherwise be exposed. To have created subsequent generations into a state of punishment for acts committed before they were born, would have been an injustice, however slight that punishment might be; but to create them into any particular conditions of life, not sufficiently onerous to make existence, on the whole, a burden and an evil, (especially if the purpose and tendency of those conditions were to promote their happiness or elevation,) would be no more unjust

than to create them into any particular age or country. That the conditions under consideration were of such character and tendency, that they were not only no serious calamity to man, but actually calculated and intended to secure his physical, moral, and spiritual welfare, we shall now proceed to show.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE SENTENCE OF EVE.

IT is plain that in the new relations of man, wherein the irregularities and excesses of his passions, otherwise merely pernicious, had become guilty and punishable, it would comport with the goodness and benevolence of God to place him in such circumstances of life as would coöperate with reason and conscience to regulate his appetites, and to restrain their strength and growth. Accordingly, we find that all the conditions of life now announced by his Maker, as henceforth imposed upon him, are such as experience has shown to be conspicuously of that character.

The "sentence" (if we may so call it) of Eve, which is first in order, peculiarly sustains this statement, and is manifestly designed for purposes of the highest importance to the moral welfare of the race: —

"I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception: in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."

A most remarkable and impressive announcement! One that must have strangely affected the trembling Eve, if she were expecting from her

Creator's lips, the threatened doom of death, and with it the annihilation of the human race! In exact and widest contrariety to the purport of such a sentence, is this announcement of her own continued existence, and through her the birth and generation of Earth's future millions through countless ages. This Divine address, so extraordinary in all its aspects, and especially when viewed in connection with the preceding parts of the narrative, will well repay the most careful study.

And first, to express the considerations which the passage suggests most obviously to the mind.

The conditions of life that are announced as henceforth imposed upon woman are the trials of parturition, and especially her subjection to the jealous watchfulness and authority of the stronger sex, — a jealousy instinctive in its character, and peculiar to the human race, — a jealousy which establishes chastity as the first female virtue, and punishes the loss of it, as woman's worst sin, with inexorable rigor, and with lasting disgrace, — which especially enforces her fidelity to the *conjugal* relation as the right and due of her husband scarcely less than of God, and regards her violation of this duty as the most flagrant crime, and the deepest wrong that she can possibly commit, — a crime never to be forgotten or forgiven. Who will deny that these have been, in all ages, among the strongest preservatives of female virtue? The fact is remarkable that in all ages and countries, and in every



form of society, from the most barbarous to the most enlightened and Christian, the purity of woman has been viewed by the natural instinct of both sexes in a light far different from the same virtue in man. By the common law of mankind, there is recognized in him a sort of right or *property* in her character, imposing upon her a special law, and a double obligation to chastity, notwithstanding that, theoretically, the rules of morality know no distinctions of sex. This instinct it is, and the consequences that flow from it in the social penalties that follow her loss of virtue, together with the physical trials to which she must be subjected in childbirth, which have been ever among the greatest blessings of woman and the world. They have operated to check the prevalence of licentiousness in Earth's worst regions and periods, and have efficiently aided to preserve the vigor of the human race. Are ordinances of such wisdom and goodness to be regarded as a curse and a punishment? Are they to be mourned over as a *penalty* for sin, or rather to be rejoiced at as means preventive or obstructive of its sway?

That all this is involved in the "sentence" of Eve, is apparent upon a merely general consideration. But if we will examine the constituent parts of the "sentence," we shall see reasons, more definite and not less powerful, for recognizing it as a wise and benevolent provision for a race of beings about entering on a moral existence. It speaks

first of a change to occur in the physical nature of woman; and second, of new relations and obligations of a moral character, to which she is thenceforth to be subject. Let us take the first portion first: "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and conception: in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children!" It is clear that some degree of pain in childbirth was to have been her lot, even in her original state, corresponding, in this respect, with the higher orders of animals, which suffer more or less of physical pain in producing their young. This inconsiderable "sorrow" is now to be greatly augmented, and if we would appreciate the effects of such augmentation upon the physical and moral welfare of the race, let us reflect how widely the relationships of parent and child, of brother and sister,—in short, *the family relation*,—differ in all their characteristics and influences among mankind, from the same relationships among the brute creation. Nor is it difficult to see how far this difference is effected by the increased "sorrow," the pains, anxieties, and labors, which the human mother experiences in producing and rearing her offspring. The lower animal, bringing forth its young with little or no physical exertion or strain, and providing for their infant wants without labor, needs no natural limitation to the number of her family. Each infant, or brood, that is produced, has passed the need of maternal assistance before the next comes forth, and is thenceforth forever abandoned and forgotten. Such, it would ap-

pear, would have been substantially the condition and relations of the human mother and her children but for this "greatly multiplied sorrow," imposed upon Eve and her daughters,— by which we understand, in accordance with most commentators, not merely the physical pains of parturition, but all the maternal cares and labors necessarily incurred, from physical causes, in producing and rearing infants. These pains, cares, and labors, inevitably restrain the mother from having more children than she can faithfully attend to both physically and morally, and keep them under her care and influence while their characters are forming for life. The *family* is thus consolidated and inseparably united. It is kept together by natural causes, long enough to make its mutual attachments and associations ineffaceable, and the strongest of human sentiments. A compact organization of intelligent creatures, compelled to associate, it would be impossible for it to subsist, except in the mutual observance by its members of those moral laws and principles, which alone can secure its harmony and happiness; and its training in those laws and principles, the form of its organization, and all its natural ties, sympathies, and influences, are most happily fitted to promote. Here the mind is trained, from the earliest hour, in ideas of obedience, truth, and mutual dependence, and in sentiments of affection, forbearance, and forgiveness, besides the manifold other virtues and graces which, implanted and cherished in the family circle,

bloom and bear fruit afterwards in wider spheres, to the admiration, instruction, and improvement of mankind. We need not dwell upon a theme so often treated as the important influence of the family relation upon the moral welfare of the human race. That influence is well understood, and universally admitted to be greater than all others combined;—and yet, it would seem (if indeed this “sentence” of Eve announced an important change in the conditions under which her descendants were to be born and reared through infancy) that, but for that “sentence,” the power of the family relation among men would have been imperfect or unknown. Why children might suitably be easily borne, and cast upon the world at a tender age, abundantly able to provide for themselves, if, like animals, they were not destined to a moral career, can easily be understood; and why, as moral beings, they require the different conditions of birth and training implied in the “sentence” under consideration, seems also abundantly manifest.

Before leaving this part of Eve’s sentence, we may allude to a subordinate effect often attributed to the maternal sufferings and cares therein imposed,—an increased affection toward the offspring that causes them. It is difficult to decide how far the intensity of maternal affection is due to this mere endurance of pain and care, as distinguished from other and powerful causes; but there are many reasons for believing that it has an important influence.

Why else is the mother's love for her offspring deeper and stronger than the father's, who associates as constantly with them, but has less of the trials and burdens of their nurture? Why, among barbarians and savages, who, approximating in their habits of life to the level of the animal creation, bring forth and rear their children with scarcely more pain and trouble than the brutes, are parental affection and all family ties so little regarded? Indeed, when we observe, what seems to be a general fact, that the amount of physical pain and trial attendant upon infant birth and nurture bears a direct proportion to the moral and social advancement of the class or community to which the mother belongs, — it would almost seem as if it were providentially proportioned to the mother's knowledge of her moral duties, and the moral dangers of her children; — and designed, by intensifying the maternal affection and solicitude, to increase her moral care, and to strengthen the family influence in those forms of society where the most varied enticements to sin prevail, and the strongest natural protection against them is required.

Let us now take up the second clause of Eve's sentence: — "Thy desire shall be unto thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." The original for "desire" is *TERSHUKAH*, and is defined by Gesenius, (Robinson's edition, 1850,) "to run;" hence, (with citation of this passage,) "to run after," "to desire," "to long for." The same word

occurs in Genesis iv. 7, where God, speaking to Cain of sin, which, like a wild beast, "lieth at the door," says, "unto thee shall be his desire, (*i. e.*, he shall long after, or to have possession of thee,) and thou shalt (*i. e.*, it is thy duty to) rule over (or control) him." The word expresses any passionate longing or desire, and may be used to express sexual passion, longing, or inclination. Thus it is employed in Solomon's Song, (ch. vii. 10,) where, in the midst of an exceedingly amatory strain, commencing, — "How fair and pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!" — the joyous exclamation of the loved one breaks forth, — "I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me!" And in the passage under consideration, the whole context seems clearly to indicate its use in a similar sense.<sup>1</sup>

But farther; the original for "husband" (ISH), though also signifying, generically, "man," has, in this place, the limited signification of its English rendering. This will appear not only from the text itself, but also from a comparison with ch. ii. 24, where Adam speaks of (ISH) "a man" leaving father and mother, and cleaving unto his (ISHA) "woman," in which case it is plain that he does not speak of "man" in general, nor of "woman" in general, but of an associated human pair. So in the passage under review, "thy desire shall be unto

<sup>1</sup> The phrase is rendered in the Septuagint, πρὸς τὸν ἄνδρα σου ἢ ἀποστροφή σου; and the Latin translation of the Targum of Onkelos, in Walton's Polyglot Bible, gives it, — "*Ad virum tuum desiderium tuum.*"

*thy* (ISH) man ” plainly means, “the man with whom thou art mated, — thy husband; and *he* (*i. e.*, such man, thy husband) shall rule over thee.”

Now, what is remarkable here is, that in this passage we find thus, for the first time laid down, the *moral duties* of the marriage relation. It is no general statement that “woman” shall have affection and “desire” towards “man,” and that “man” shall exercise government over “woman”; but it is, that the “desire” of the wife shall be confined to *her husband*, and that in their married relation she shall render to *her husband* obedience. It imposes conjugal fidelity and conjugal submission, — to “love, honor, and obey,” — the whole moral law of marriage. It is the first Divine injunction given, that there should subsist between a human pair a more sacred and exclusive relationship to each other, as a moral obligation, than prevails in the similar natural associations of birds or beasts. Like the other conditions of life recited in “the sentence,” it is established *thenceforth* : a plain implication that Adam and Eve, though called in one or two instances “man and wife,” as our translation renders the expressions ISH and ISHA, (“man” and “woman,”) in the preceding portions of the narrative, had not, up to this time, been under the moral laws and relations which were *thereafter* to be conveyed by those designations. Nor does this involve anything derogatory ; for in their peculiar circumstances, (even had they possessed a moral sense,) such a fact could be

a matter of no importance. Being entirely alone in the world, there was no room for conjugal jealousy or infidelity. The word "helpmeet," a title applied to Eve in the preceding chapter, seems to express more accurately than "wife," her relations toward Adam before the disobedience.

The whole account of Eve's creation and presentation to Adam is most curious and significant, — well worthy our study. It has been customary to say that the marriage relation was instituted at that time, and this is true, so far as regards the pairing or association of the sexes in human creatures ; but there is no proof that the narrative goes farther than this, as we shall see upon a closer examination. As preliminary to this examination, however, a few remarks seem desirable.

Whatever may have been the date or origin of this history in its present form, there can be little doubt that the original traditions or memoranda from which it is derived were among the oldest known literature. They date back to a period long preceding Moses, and anterior even to the most ancient Egyptian inscriptions. The language employed in them, and at least partially preserved in this narrative, was of the most archaic and primitive character ; so simple, that its words, few and typical, are still invested with the purely physical ideas in which they originated. Among them, we seem back at the very creation of language. We recognize the few, original and long-forgotten ances-



tors of those whole classes of kindred words, which now represent, in their respective families, so many varied shades of meaning. We behold these primitive ancestral types just expanding themselves from the primary materialism which gave them birth, and beginning to reach after higher meanings, like Milton's half-formed brutes emerging from the ground, and struggling to be free. From this simplicity and poverty of terms, it results that the same word will stand for a whole family of similar or derivative significations, and it will be left to the reader to infer the sense which the writer intended to convey, — a matter not always devoid of doubt, or incapable of leaving room for dispute by different readers. Thus the word ADAM, originally meaning “red,” or “red earth,” appears throughout the story as a word used for “the ground,” for the common noun “the man,” and for the proper name “Adam”; the original often affording no means of distinguishing the sense intended, except as the requirements of the context furnish it. Accordingly, an examination will show that there exists no sufficient reason whatever for interpreting it, at least, in this part of the story, as a proper name. It does not appear ever to have been applied as such to “the man” by his Maker. It is uniformly translated “the man” down to ch. ii. v. 19, where the translator suddenly changes to “Adam,” without any apparent reason, and uses “Adam” and “the man” indiscriminately thereafter. So, of the words ISH

and ISHA, translated "man" and "woman" in v. 24. Their original meaning is simply "male" and "female," being words of sex applicable to all animals and creatures. Thus, in Genesis vii. 2, 3, God commands Noah, "Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee, by sevens, the male (ISH) and his female (ISHA), and of fowls also, the male (ISH) and his female (ISHA)." These same words then we shall find rendered by the translators of this narrative, at their option, "male" and "female," "man" and "woman," or "husband" and "wife,"—and even diversely interpreted within the same sentence. Thus, in v. 24, our version reads: "Therefore shall *a man* (ISH) leave his father and his mother, and cleave unto his *wife* (ISHA)," where there is no more reason for not translating ISHA "woman," than there is for translating ISH "man"; our sense of the word "wife" being no more necessarily implied than it is in Genesis vii. 2, just quoted, and where it is properly translated "female."<sup>1</sup>

This primitive physical origin of terms, however, is in no instance more marked than in that expression which, in v. 18, 20, is translated "helpmeet." This phrase ETZER K' NEGDO, [translated in the Septuagint βρηθὸς ὁμοίος αὐτῷ, "a helper counter-

<sup>1</sup> So it is said, that among the Zulus of South Africa, who are among the lowest of the human race in the moral scale, "No word corresponding to the Saxon word *wife* is found in the Zulu language. The terms most nearly approaching to it are '*umkake*,' and its correlatives *umkako* and *umkami*, which mean '*his she*,' or '*his female*.' "

part to him,"] exhibits, in its primary meaning, a coarseness of physical idea which cannot be shown in a work of this kind, but of which our English word "helpmeet" (at least in its modern acceptance, implying social companionship and assistance in the duties and cares of life) is quite too elevated and refined a translation. Even the rendering of the Septuagint, "a helper counterpart to him," is an improvement of later times upon its literal primary sense. The true and simple meaning of the phrase is "a sexual counterpart" of him, and there is nothing more implied in it than this expression in its severest physical meaning conveys. In its application to woman, in the second chapter of Genesis, it means simply the female of man, as it might that of any other animal, with equal propriety, and without any change. And we shall, perhaps, understand the true spirit and meaning of the story which relates the creation of Eve and her presentation to Adam, if we transcribe it with the designations of the woman which we have just examined, substituted in their primitive literal sense: —

"And the Lord God said, it is not good that the man<sup>1</sup> should be alone: I will make a sexual counterpart for him.

"And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air, and brought them unto the man to see what he would call them; and whatsoever the man called every living creature, that was the name thereof.

<sup>1</sup> Throughout this passage, the original for "the man" is *HĀ ADAM*, except where we have otherwise indicated.

And the man gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field: but for the man there was not found a sexual counterpart for him.

“And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof. And the rib which the Lord God had taken from the man, made he a woman, [ISHA, ‘a female man,'] and brought her unto the man. And the man said, This [*i. e.*, this creature] is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she [LE ZOT, not the personal pronoun ‘she,’ but ‘this creature’] shall be called woman, [ISHA, ‘female,'] because she was taken out of man, [ISH, ‘male.'] Therefore shall a man [ISH, ‘a male man’] leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his woman, [ISHA, his ‘female,'] and they shall be one flesh.” (Ch. ii. 18-24.)

An attentive consideration of this account, and of the few verses preceding which relate the formation of “the man,” will show that it is nothing more than a detailed relation of what is generally stated in ch. i. v. 27, 28, — “So God created man in his own image: in the image of God created he him; male and female [ISH and ISHA] created he them. And God blessed them, and said, [in precisely the words employed in v. 22, toward the paired animals,] Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth,” etc.

Taking the two accounts together, we seem clearly brought to the following deductions of fact: 1st. That woman was originally created simply in the capacity of a female counterpart of man, immediately after his reviewing and naming the paired animals, and in order that his condition might be

made as complete and happy as theirs in this respect ; 2d. That this female counterpart, when created, was presented to man, by the Creator, without any injunction to either party, regarding the marriage state, that implied any *moral obligation* in it to greater exclusiveness in favor of each other, than was imposed upon the similar relationships of the creatures around them ; 3d. That though Adam, in the joy of his first reception of Eve, expressed, with a lover's poetic enthusiasm, and, perhaps, also with a prophet's divine inspiration, (for so it would appear to be intimated in Matthew xix. 4, 5,) the ardent affection with which all future "helpmeets" should be regarded, he evidently alludes to natural emotions merely, and not to any moral *obligations* or mutual *duties* involved in such relationships, and to be observed by himself or his descendants. His apostrophe (which, singularly enough, is at least partially rhythmical) is simply an epithalamium, — a nuptial song, worthy, both in subject and sentiment, to be what it is, the first recorded language of man ; but it certainly is not, nor does it recognize as its basis, a moral code of matrimonial law.<sup>1</sup> It ex-

<sup>1</sup> This apostrophe of Adam is not only the first recorded human language, but is, it would appear, a *poem* also, and that poem a love-song. The rude and partial verbal rhythm, alluded to in the text, has little weight in establishing its poetical character ; but its structure strikingly illustrates (though with primitive simplicity) that rhythm of *thought*, with the gradational parallelism, and antithesis of language and idea, which are the true indications and characteristics of early Hebrew poetry. Let us set out the passage with reference to these features : —

presses the closeness of the marriage tie, but refers solely to the natural passion or affection of the animal nature, as the foundation of its sympathies. "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: *therefore* (lit. 'upon this') shall a man cleave (or 'will a man cleave,' since the verb in the original has the force of the future) unto his wife, and they shall be (*i. e.*, 'will be') one flesh." In this sense, also, Christ presents this passage in Matthew xix. 5, 6, where he speaks of God having created man, male and female, and having said, "*For this cause* (*Ἔνεκεν τούτου*, 'by reason of this,' or 'on account of this, as its consequence') shall a man leave (*future, καταλείψει, will a man leave*) his father and mother, and shall cleave (*will cleave*) unto his wife," etc.

In all this, therefore, while we have exhibited to us the divinely prepared *foundation* for the marriage relation, drawn from man's necessities, and implanted deeply in his nature, we yet fail to find that

This is now bone of my bones — and flesh of my flesh.

She shall be called Isha, — for she is taken out of Ish;

Therefore shall Ish leave his father and mother — and cleave to his Isha,

And they two — shall be one flesh.

The song of Lamech to his wives Adah and Zillah (Gen. iv. 23) has been supposed to be the first poem in human language; but may we not rather adopt the more agreeable conclusion, that the earliest poem is found in the first recorded human utterance; and that instead of being the bloodthirsty howl of a murdering savage, it breathes only the expression of the tenderest and most lasting of human affections? Thus from the very first, Love and War have lent readiest inspiration to the poetic faculty.

relation itself, in the development of its moral rights and obligations. The situation of the pair resembles the tender and sacred state of betrothal, hallowed by a communion of sympathies, desires, and hopes, and by a mutual and unchangeable fidelity in affection; yet, to make it complete in matrimony, it needed the solemn and definite law of conjugal duty, — the rule of “love, honor, and obey,” imposed in the mandate, — “Thy desire shall be unto thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.” It is curious to remark, though it may be accidental, that it is not until after this new phase is given to his relations toward Eve, (in chap. iii. 16,) that Adam dignifies her with a proper name. Up to that time, he applied to her only a general sexual designation, — “She shall be called ‘female,’ because she was taken out of the male.” But after that period, as if, with his new moral perceptions, he regarded her from a higher point of view, or perhaps from some new revelation had received new light upon the nature and purposes of marriage, and its connection with the origin of future generations, he calls her “Eve, [HAVAĀH, to live,] because she was the *mother* of all living.” Before the Divine prescription of matrimonial duty, — the marriage ceremony, if we may call it so, — he views her like a lover, in the light of her relations to himself; after that event, like a husband or father, in that of her relations to the family. It would almost seem as if this little circumstance, in itself, were indicative of a new aspect

in their relations toward each other, and also of that in which it consisted.

We see then, if any importance is to be attached to the foregoing speculations, that not only the establishment of the Family, but also the moral law of marriage, and therefore, as we may almost say, the institution of marriage itself, was a part of the "sentence" passed upon man for his disobedience in partaking of the forbidden fruit. It may be said that the omission of the historian to refer to the prescription of such duties at an earlier period, is no proof that they were not imposed; but if so, what is the force of the *future* in the address to Eve, which would seem plainly to indicate the establishment of a new order of things thereafter? "I *will* greatly multiply thy sorrow and conception, and thy desire *shall be* unto thy husband, and he *shall rule* over thee?" It will surely not be denied that this announcement was made in consequence of the disobedience, whereby the pair had acquired the knowledge of good and evil; and if so, it must be admitted that, before that fact, this law of conjugal duty had not, at least, been *known* by them, and but for its occurrence would never have been revealed or recognized. But if it were a thing which they could not have known or recognized, it must have been so on account of their want of moral perceptions, and therefore could not have subsisted as a law binding upon them. What then do all these facts indicate with respect to the moral history of the first



pair? What, with relation to the real character of these "sentences of punishment," so called? Could the family institution and the moral law of marriage have been intended as curses, or were they rather blessings to mankind? Were they not essential and benevolent means of preserving the purity and happiness, the mental and physical elevation, of the race? — laws adapted to the condition of moral creatures alone, but for such indispensably necessary; and thus manifesting, in their establishment, the wisdom and goodness of God, — his benevolence rather than his severity toward the human race?

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE SENTENCE OF ADAM.

LET us now direct our attention to "the sentence" addressed to Adam, which we shall find no less noteworthy in the same point of view: —

"And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat of the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return [thy returning] unto the ground, from whence thou wast taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." (Ch. iii. 17-20.)

We have in a former chapter referred to several reasons why this passage cannot be regarded as the denouncement of a penalty, and it will be found that a careful analysis of it — such as shall convey to us its exact scope and meaning — will confirm the view we have taken. What then is the real purport, and what are the effects implied in and resulting from this "sentence" of Adam?

In the first place, it is obvious that the *degree* of toil which it seems to impose upon man, is only such as may be requisite to draw from the earth a

sufficient and comfortable subsistence. No mandate or necessity is laid upon him to labor without purpose, or for any other purpose than barely to maintain life. He is not even required to do *this* as, in itself, an obligation. Work is announced to him not as a duty or a punishment, but as a *means* "to eat bread"; in other words, as a simple condition of existence; and the light labor which the tiller of the soil finds necessary for this single end, is the standard and the measure of the burden which is thus intended to be divinely imposed. Hence the forced and weary toil of bondsmen, or the drudgery of starving operatives in an overcrowded population, whose half-paid exertions contend vainly against destitution and lingering death, are not to be cited as illustrations of the sentence. These small though sad exceptions to the general lot of mankind are no part of a system ordained by the wise and benevolent Creator, but spring from the avarice and injustice of men in artificial states of society, denying to honest industry its justly earned reward. From such toil there rises before the Almighty, not the sigh (well pleasing to him) of that light sorrow by him decreed in the law of natural and healthful labor, but the cry of the hireling kept back of his wages, which, when it enters the ear, awakens the indignation of the Lord God of Sabaoth. Neither are we to refer to it the incessant and exhausting toil to which we see men voluntarily devoting themselves on every side, to satisfy the demands of greed, or

pride, or the more elevated ambition of the student or scholar, the leader or the benefactor of his race. Even that honorable and useful labor, whose purpose is to promote, by the progress of science and civilization, the comfort and happiness of mankind, forms no part of "the sentence." It plainly prescribes to man, not the general duty of industry and thrift, but so much and only so much labor as his simplest wants shall require to supply them. Beyond that, every exertion that he ever makes, whether for comfort, or for ostentation, for wealth, for power, for learning, for his own selfish purposes, for the love of God or the good of men, commendable and useful as it may be, or the opposite, has yet no connection whatever with this divine decree, that the bare necessities of life should be earned by his exertions.

But having thus ascertained the purport of this passage, we are at once led to remark two considerations with respect to it.

The first of these is, that the amount of labor imposed upon man by "the sentence," is very inconsiderable, and constitutes, *in fact*, no noticeable burden in his condition. How slight is the degree of industry required to extract a subsistence from the ground in any habitable part of the earth, and especially in by far its larger portion, and among the vast majority of mankind, a very little consideration will remind us. It is not so great but that in many climates it is practically nothing, and in

most it is greatly less than man's best interests require ; so that if this " sentence " is indeed a curse, to have made it more bitter would have been a benefit to the race. It is not so great but that in the most sterile and unproductive spots which man inhabits, the hours need be comparatively few wherein he who is prudent and careful must labor in order to live. The complaining, then, against our great progenitor, and of this " sad sentence " pronounced upon him and his posterity, at times when our own selfish ambition, or possibly, in some rare cases, the oppressions of an artificial social state, make us to groan under the fatigue of toil, as if the load we thus bear, either voluntarily or by compulsion, were the ordinance of God, in punishment for Adam's sin, is unjust, both to our Maker and to our original ancestor. Let the censure, if any is due for our excessive burdens, fall on more modern shoulders than those of Adam, and let those only find fault with him for the labors of life who are averse to all work, even the most moderate and salutary.

The other consideration is, that from so small an amount of labor, as we thus see to be actually requisite for subsistence, we have no reason to suppose, either from the inspired narrative or from man's own constitution, that he was ever, even in his original condition, exempt. The first injunction laid upon him, when his mission in the world was announced, was that he should " replenish the earth and subdue it " ; subdue it by the enlargement of

his faculties, by the exertion of his mental and physical powers, by the cultivation of those numerous arts and sciences whereby the face of Nature is changed, and its thousand materials worked and fashioned into the instruments of his necessities, convenience, or pleasure. And as the first step in this study and conquest of Nature, he was placed in the Garden of Eden "to *till* it," — (not merely "to *dress* it," as our translation renders the phrase.) It is worthy of notice, that the same word in the original is used in ch. ii. 5, where, speaking of the world before man's creation, it says: "There was not a man to *till* the ground;" in v. 15, "The Lord God took the man and placed him in the garden to *till* it;" and in v. 23, "The Lord God sent him forth from the garden to *till* the ground from whence he was taken." Thus it appears that man was never intended to be idle. Even before his creation he was wanted that he might cultivate the soil; and it appears, too, that the same kind of employment, if not the same degree, was expected of him before as after the sentence. It was to *till* the soil that he was placed in Paradise; it was to do no more that he was sent forth therefrom, with what is called "the curse of toil" hanging over him; as if this were a new experience, instead of being, from the first, a necessity of his nature. God, who made him in his own image, did not design that he should wander listlessly and aimlessly over the earth, while He himself, in ceaseless displays of his infinite power, was finding

constant occupation for his own activities. Indeed, we cannot for a moment contemplate man's being, with its wondrous energies and combinations, both physical and intellectual, without being impressed with the conviction that he was a creature made for *work*. This is his mission, his necessity, his enjoyment. In his normal state he can no more be kept back from it, than he can be restrained from his food and his breath. He seeks it, not merely for its rewards, but for *itself*,— not only *for* an end, but *as* an end. He invents it, and calls it "play"; and if shut up and prevented from finding it, or making it, he loses his reason and dies. Hence, as we have already remarked, the small amount of labor which is imposed by the sentence, as one of his conditions of existence, is by no means the limit with which men can content themselves. Had it been so, the world would have been standing these thousands of years since the creation, unimproved and uninhabited, except by a straggling, imbecile, and barbarous race. Before, and at the very time that that "sentence" was pronounced upon man, there existed within him capacities and impulses to labor, in view of which such an ordinance, were it construed as a punishment, or even as a mandate, might well be wondered at for its apparent superfluosity and insignificance.

But if the sentence imposed no new burdens of toil upon man, either with respect to obligation or amount, wherein did it change his situation? for

it must be allowed that it did so in some manner. It changed it simply by making that labor *a necessity* which was before a *recreation*. It made occupation — work — unavoidable, instead of being merely the voluntary expression of a natural instinct. Man previously, as we have seen, loved labor, as he now does, for its own sake, as a means of employing his restless powers, but he was under no compulsion of circumstances to engage in it. The ground and the flocks supplied him with all the means of life, without his care, and the mental and physical labor which he put forth was superfluous, except as a mode of enjoyment. Had he ever fallen (as he might well in time have done) into habits of sloth and self-indulgence, consulting his own ease and permitting his noble faculties to sink into supineness and decay, still the teeming earth and the abounding herds would have supplied him with plenteous stores of food and clothing, and spontaneously ministered to his every need. There was, therefore, no pressure upon him to hold him perforce to those habits of industry by which alone he could properly develop his capacities and preserve his native vigor. In the circumstances, indeed, of his primeval existence, under the immediate eye and guidance of his Maker, he was in little danger of being permitted to become the prey of indolence or self-indulgence, and therefore there was little or no occasion for such external constraint. Then he was like a child under the parental super-



vision, who needs not to be confined to any regular business or employment ; but now, when he had become a moral agent, and like the youth entering upon life, was to be thrown chiefly upon himself for moral training and direction, a provision of this sort became of too much importance to be longer deferred. At once, and “*because*” man had accomplished the act whereby he had entered upon a state of moral agency, — “*because*” in this condition newly entered on, idleness was not only vicious but the parent of vice, — and “*because*,” as a moral agent, habits of industry were essential for the preservation of his moral virtue, as well as his general progress and well being, a change “in his behalf,” or “on his account,” is caused to pass upon the fruitful soil. It does not appear necessarily that the ground was rendered less productive than before ; indeed, it may have been made even more so ; but it seems that whereas it had previously brought forth the useful fruits unmixed with others, and so without occasion for special cultivation and care, thenceforth it was liable to produce with them intruding weeds and brambles, whose extirpation should tax the strength and patience of the husbandman. This seems inferable from the phraseology of “the sentence” itself. “Because thou hast done this, and hast eaten of the tree, etc., (and hast thus become a moral being,) cursed is the ground for thy sake (literally, ‘on thy account’). In sorrow shalt thou eat of it (*i. e.*, thy eating of it

shall not be as heretofore without labor, but only through its cultivation) all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles (as well as harvests, and among them) shall it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat of the herb of the field, (*i. e.*, thou shalt not be able to rely on the spontaneous productions of the ground for thy subsistence, but shalt be compelled to delve after it in the land which thou shalt till.) In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, (*i. e.*, the sweat of thy face, thy labor, shall not be for mere recreation as heretofore, but thine eating of bread shall depend on it,) until thou return (thy returning) unto the ground from whence thou wert taken.”

It now remains for us to inquire more particularly the force of the expression “*because* thou hast done this,” in connection with the announcement of “the sentence.” It plainly implies that, but for the disobedience, the necessity of labor would have been unknown by man. What reasons may be supposed, then, for placing man under this necessity, after his becoming a moral agent, which did not obtain before that event? And having answered this inquiry, we shall briefly consider what was the purpose, and what have been the effects of this necessity upon man’s condition and history.

One reason why man had less occasion to be subjected to this necessity of labor, before he became a moral agent, has been already hinted. Under the Divine direction and influence, he was sure to be

kept sufficiently and profitably occupied. When he passed from that immediate supervision, to be thrown more upon himself, this necessity was required in order to supply, in a measure, the place of that parental authority ; like it, to prevent his lapsing into inactivity, and to ensure, in some degree, the discipline and cultivation of his various faculties. Another reason, and an obvious one, is, that while he was unconscious of moral distinctions, idleness and torpor, though degrading, would not be criminal, nor subject him to responsibility ; but after receiving his moral nature, they would be fatal enemies, not only to his natural but to his spiritual welfare, and thus the necessity of labor would then become desirable to be imposed as a protection against sin. But even were these and other reasons of less weight, there is one consideration, derived from the general plan of God in man's creation, which seems of itself to afford an adequate answer to the inquiry why man's attaining or not a moral sense, should make a difference with respect to this provision of labor.

Man was created that he might become a moral being. With reference to this end, and to be of service in his moral career, all his noble faculties of every kind were imparted. Unless, therefore, he should attain to this position, he would have been created in vain, and his progress and even his existence would be aimless and profitless. It is needless to speculate as to what disposition of him would,

in that case, have been made by his Creator, since the contingency did not and would not occur. The end of his creation was accomplished in full accordance with his Maker's intention and foreknowledge, without which certain foreknowledge man would never have been formed. But it is plain to be seen, that, so long as he should remain, like the brutes, ignorant of moral principles, so long there could be no reason for his development in other respects more than for theirs. As he would not be filling his appointed station in the divine system, it might well be a matter of indifference whether he advanced or receded in the scale of being. Hence, could we conceive of the race as now existing in a state of entire moral darkness, we may well suppose that it would have been left without the incentives to progress which the necessity of labor provides, and which seem essential to preserve it from stagnation and decline. On the other hand, men having attained to moral perceptions, and having entered thereby on the course for which they were designed, it is easy to see that the divine aim would be to hold and encourage them in it, and to provide for their general advancement, and that this purpose and its execution might well be announced to Adam in the terms, —“ ‘ Because ’ thou hast become thus, let labor never fail thee, not only as thy necessity and thy discipline, but as a mainspring of thy progress.”

While upon the force of the word “ because,” in

this connection, we may again refer to a fact adverted to upon a preceding page, in our argument that this "sentence" is not the denouncement of a penalty for sin. We refer to the fact that the most numerous, direct, inevitable, and fearful of the temporal punishments for sin, — diseases, poverty, violence, and the thousand other forms of physical and mental anguish which guilty deeds produce, — are entirely unnoticed. Were these evils really and only the penalties of sin, in such sense that but for *sin* (*i. e.*, the *moral quality* of an act) they would have been unknown by man, then, surely, in an especial sense they would have ensued "*because*" he had become a possible (or upon the ordinary view, an actual) sinner. How is it then that these tremendous experiences are ignored, and the slight and beneficial toil by which man earns his subsistence is alone referred to? The explanation lies in the truth which we have before suggested, and which science, reason, and revelation itself, alike confirm. These sad experiences did not enter the world as the effects of moral guilt. They did not ensue to man "*because*" he had become a moral agent, or a sinner. They are the fruits, not of a moral quality in his actions, but of appetites and passions created in him as in all other creatures anterior and subsequent to his origin, and which have ever produced these identical fruits in those other races upon which no curse was ever denounced. The author of "*Nature and the Supernatural*," under the pressure of

the common view, alluding to these pre-Adamite confusions and woes, calls them "the anticipative consequences of sin"; insisting that God, because he foresaw the miseries, curses, and disorder that man's rebellion would introduce in his system, indicated that foreknowledge, not by providing against them, — not by displaying the harmony and peace that would have prevailed but for man's delinquency, but by himself scattering misery, curses, and ruin among the antecedent races; as if he were bent on having a symmetry of disorder, if any there must be at all. Such a view we cannot adopt. That there may be "anticipative consequences," we will not deny; but that these are ever exhibited in deliberate illustrations or aggravations of the evils foreseen, instead of attempted remedies for them, is more difficult to believe. Rather let us suppose that God, in his progressive plan of creation, had not yet seen fit to introduce beings either physically or spiritually perfect; that accordingly man himself was formed in his inception more after the similitude of the inferior creatures than his Maker intended he should eventually be, when in the distant and higher stages of his moral existence; that he was created, therefore, with the same innate passions as the races before him; that these passions, had he been left in his original state, without a moral sense, and without the necessity of labor to break and restrain their force, would have raged with violence tenfold greater than they do, being curbed by these provi-

sions ; and that, therefore, such evils as do, notwithstanding all, spring from them, so far from being properly ranked among the consequences that were to ensue “ *because* ” he “ *did this,* ” were themselves (being divinely foreseen) among the reasons why he was permitted to do as he did, and on account of which “ *the sentence* ” was pronounced.

The purpose and the effects of “ *the sentence* ” upon man’s character and destiny, after what has been said, need not be largely dwelt upon. That it was intended not to enhance man’s burdens beyond what Nature and his best interests would, in any event, have dictated, has been already shown ; and that the necessity of moderate labor, as a condition of existence, was therefore designed as a blessing and a benefit to man, were it not susceptible of proof by argument, has been abundantly demonstrated by experience. What the history of mankind would have been, even in a state of innocence, had not labor been requisite for their subsistence, let the races of men in those climes where Nature’s profusion dispenses with toil, — let those families, everywhere to be found, in which physical and mental decline proceed down generations of idleness, suffice to indicate ! Let not man’s sentence to labor, then, be termed a curse ! A thousand times more truly and terribly would the sentence have proved a curse had it exonerated him forever from that hard necessity.

Indeed, the direct advantage of labor to mankind

through its influence on the individual, in invigorating and enlarging the faculties, and in checking the growth of dangerous and degrading passions, is but a small though important part of the benefits it confers. Its necessity for man's subsistence, if it does not actually originate the ideas of property and its rights, is certainly most intimately blended with them; for it may be questioned whether, were labor only a recreation and amusement, its product would be regarded as sacred in the possessor. This necessity of toil, therefore, lies at the foundation of social and political institutions, and is intimately connected with civil order and security. Moreover, the fact that in human society the subsistence of every member is dependent upon labor in some field of usefulness, gives rise to the thousand different forms of human industry, by which the happiness, the comfort, and the advancement of society are promoted, and which would, for the most part, lie dormant, did not necessity arouse them to action. Thus on every side, in the individual and in society, we perceive the beneficial effects of "the sentence" to work in order to eat. Where law and order, virtue, learning, and civilization prevail, and where ignorance, barbarism, vice, and violence darken the earth, we find, in one guise or another, the proof how justly and significantly our English version renders it,—"Cursed is the ground *for thy sake!*"

"That like an emmet thou must ever toil,  
Is a sad sentence of an ancient date,—



And certes, there is for it reason great;  
For though it sometimes make thee weep and wail,  
And curse thy stars, and early rise and late,  
Withouten that would come an heavier bale, —  
Loose life, unruly passions, and diseases pale.”

The closing portion of the narrative is consistent with our view : —

“Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them. And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil : and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever : therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man : and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life.”

We here behold the Almighty manifesting his approval of the emotions and acts which were the first results of the pair's disobedience, by clothing them more perfectly. We find him also referring to the change that had been wrought in them, not as a lapse “into a fallen and depraved nature, come under his wrath and curse,” but as an advance to an increased resemblance to himself; and finally, we see him removing them from Eden with no mark of displeasure, but simply as a prudent provision against a foreseen contingency. Our English phrase, “drove out the man,” implies an idea of anger which the original does not convey. The expression signifies merely “a total separation, or

exclusion, as in an act of divorce." That this exclusion took place not as a retribution but as a precautionary measure, and in order that man might enter upon his purposed career, is expressly stated. It was "*lest* he should put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever, *therefore* the Lord God sent him forth from the garden, to till the ground from whence he was taken." His mission in Eden was terminated; thenceforth his field was the World; the true history of mankind was now to commence.

## CHAPTER X.

## ELUCIDATION BY HYPOTHESIS.

IN the study we have given of the historic record, we have aimed simply to ascertain and apply its true interpretation, assuming that the facts which it relates, and the moral system which they inaugurated were in exact fulfilment of the original and only plan of the Creator. It has been our purpose to examine the moral system *as we find it*, designing to show that, standing alone, it is complete, consistent, and benevolent in itself; and that there is no need to apologize for it by the doctrine that it was forced upon God's adoption, against his will, as a substitute for a better one originally planned by him, and preferred for his creatures could he have had his way. We have confined ourselves to the point of view indicated for several reasons, and especially because we believe that no moral system can be justified as the adopted plan of an omnipotent God, which is not in itself justifiable. Moreover, the plea of *necessity*, while it involves the difficult theory of a disappointed Omniscient, and a baffled Almighty, imposes also the task of contriving a conjectural better system than that which the Allwise has seen fit to adopt, in order that it may be assumed to have

been his preference, without sufficient evidence that he ever conceived it. It is (among others) a strong objection to the common view, (that the disobedience hurled mankind into ruin,) that a resort to such hypothesis of a purposed better system than the existing one is *necessarily* involved in it; and this necessity has led to various conflicting theories as to the details of that defeated scheme, most of them more or less inconsistent with themselves, and all of them full of difficulties and without adequate support in Revelation. In the present discussion, therefore, we have carefully abstained from such uncertain conjectures as to what *might* have been, preferring to confine ourselves to the moral system which actually prevails, to ascertain the true mode of its introduction, to discover its general features, and trace its general progress.

But while we thus deprecate the resort to hypothesis as a means of justifying the moral system, or conveniently getting rid of inexplicable difficulties in it, and while we see no necessity for it for either purpose under the view which we maintain, we may yet be permitted to anticipate the inquiry by some minds, whether that view may not discover confirmation or elucidation from a stand-point outside of itself, and suggested by admitted facts or principles. Such inquirers may possibly also urge that notwithstanding the proof that man, through the disobedience, was advanced in the scale of being, they cannot entirely divest themselves of

the idea that somehow, nevertheless, that act was calamitous to the race, and displeasing to God, and that the divine mandate not to partake of the tree of knowledge, was designed for man's benefit, and sincerely intended for his observance. They may, therefore, desire to know whether such impressions are necessarily incompatible with our general view, and if not, in what way the consistency can be exhibited. In the present chapter, therefore, we design to show that by a simple hypothesis entirely accordant with the foregoing views, and not discountenanced by other parts of this narrative, and of Scripture, all these inquiries and difficulties can be readily and satisfactorily solved.

Let us suppose that the human pair were placed in Eden in their primitive state of moral ignorance with the purpose, or at least the preference on the part of God, of training them there by a special process for the possession of the moral sense; — the contemplation being that they should receive that faculty only after having been fully prepared, by this preliminary instruction and development, to become, like the angels, moral agents, without the liability of falling into sin. Then the prohibition against eating would be a prohibition of *premature* knowledge, and would be strictly intended for obedience. And if we farther suppose that the privilege of immortality was to be within man's reach in case he waited for his moral sense until he should thus be secure of undeviating holiness in connection

with his endless life, we can easily appreciate the force of the warning that the result of his disobedience would be inevitable death.

It is not necessary to suppose that God so expected or designed that Adam would refrain from partaking, as that he was disappointed at the actual result. On the contrary, we must believe that he fully anticipated the disobedience, and that the world and all its races were framed with full reference to the moral system that finally came to prevail in it. But it may have been a part of this same divine scheme, that, before the designed system should be entered upon, and as a mode of introducing it, Man — an intellectual being, fully competent to exercise his reason — should have placed before him the opportunity of immortal existence on earth through obedience, with the alternative of mortality and moral frailty in case of transgression. We may then believe that the first pair, having full freedom of choice and action, by an act of folly (*but not of sin*) prematurely entered upon their moral career, and so fastened upon the race the existing moral system, with its pains and disabilities, in place of that purer and loftier destiny which man might otherwise have enjoyed. From that time onward, the moral system has consisted, not (as generally taught) of remedial measures to repair *a ruin*, and *restore* a lost original holiness, but of progressive steps in moral knowledge and experience, in order to reach, by slow and laborious ad-

vancement, that moral perfection which, had man obeyed in Eden, he would have attained by a shorter and easier course.

It will be observed that we suggest this view as an *hypothesis merely*, consistent with, but not essential to, our general view. Apart from the objection that it is a mere hypothesis, it involves the difficulty, or at least the uncertainty, of assuming that some special process is *possible*, whereby a creature could be morally trained while in a state of moral ignorance; and the more doubtful conjecture that the beneficial effects of this special training could be transmitted by inheritance from our first parents to all their descendants, insuring the permanent holiness of all successive generations. It might possibly be demonstrated that a divine training which should develop the Will of an intellectual being in such proportion to his other faculties, as to make it at once perfectly subservient to the Reason, and supreme over the Sensibilities, would be a sufficient training to insure moral perfection; but would the effects of this special cultivation upon Adam naturally descend, without exception or deterioration, to all his posterity? The case of the angels affords us no light upon either question, for we know nothing of their moral history or experience, except through a supposed intimation, (vague at best,) that some have sinned and fallen; and nothing of their families or generations, except that they "neither marry nor are given in marriage." The

hypothesis suggests the farther objection, that immortality among terrestrial races would be an anomaly, — decay and death having been the universal law of Earth in all its ages. Yet, to this it may be replied that man, too, is admitted to have been created mortal, immortality being set before him only as a contingent possibility. The immense durations of antediluvian lives would seem to indicate that man's primitive organism must have been far more vigorous and enduring than now, requiring but slight improvement to make it imperishable; and although a race of immortals, as they "increased and multiplied and replenished the earth," must, at no distant period, have over-peopled it, unless constantly removed by translation to some other sphere, the examples of Enoch and Elijah, and perhaps also of our Lord himself, may remind us that this is not an impossible supposition.

While the hypothesis thus seems intrinsically not improbable, and well worthy of consideration, there will be found in the narrative a number of features apparently tending to support it. Of these we may mention first, the fact that Adam, after his creation, was "taken and put" into the garden of Eden, a place specially planted and prepared, as if for some special purpose of education and training connected with the acquisition of the moral faculty, since the tree of knowledge is the central feature in his history there, and he was removed from the garden as soon as the moral faculty was acquired. Upon



this hypothesis also, the presence of “the tree of life in the midst of the garden,” which was left accessible to man until he acquired the moral sense in a mode that was forbidden, and was then immediately guarded from his approach, is invested with much significance. Still more noteworthy is the confirmation derived from the account of the temptation and its consequences. And again, in the same light, the malevolence of the tempter, the artfulness of his insinuations, and the folly of the pair in harboring his suggestions, are strikingly exhibited and explained. We thus see the serpent—“more subtle than any beast of the field,” and for centuries after, the symbol among Orientals of that intellectual subtlety, that cunning sagacity, which the Eastern mind is apt to confound with *wisdom*,—addressing himself to the task of inducing the pair to disobey the mandate of their Maker. The narrative gives no hint of his motive, nor does it intimate that beneath his reptile form was disguised a higher intelligence, an evil spirit, an enemy of God and mankind; yet it would seem that such an inference may fairly be drawn from various circumstances of the transaction;—from his interference on the scene, from his insolent denial of God’s veracity, and from the curse which is afterwards denounced upon his head by the Almighty for his conduct. Assuming, then, the malice of the tempter, we can readily see what he aimed to accomplish by inciting our first parents to the untimely acquisition

of the moral faculty. Seeing them to be as yet incapable of safely assuming its responsibilities, he strove to plunge them into it, expecting their ready and helpless subjection to passion and sin, their alienation from God, their ruin as a race of moral beings, and the utter failure of the moral scheme as apparently formed.

Had Adam and Eve been aware, or had they suspected that they were to receive "the knowledge of good and evil" by the Divine permission at some future time, it is scarcely conceivable that they would have disobeyed in order to attain it more speedily. But there is no intimation that such was the case, and from the prohibition they would probably draw an opposite inference. Yet this consideration hardly mitigates their rashness and folly in the disobedience, since as intellectual beings they had capacity enough to understand that their Maker might more reasonably be trusted, and his commands more safely obeyed, than the insinuations of an inferior or unknown creature. Not less certain is it (under the hypothesis) that their disobedience was a disastrous event to them and the race in its consequences; for though they by it advanced themselves a step in the scale of being, yet they also lost by it the inconceivable blessings and privileges by which that same step would otherwise have been accompanied. We can easily understand, therefore, how God, while not inculcating them as criminally guilty in the act, should yet administer a just rebuke for

their want of confidence in him, and should present to their view somewhat in the light of a *retribution* the pains and sufferings which their rashness had compelled him now to impose as indispensable conditions of their existence, for the prevention of their moral, mental, and physical ruin. For while these pains and disabilities thus imposed were, like the bitter and painful remedies of medical science, of the highest benevolence and among the greatest blessings, and can no more appropriately be denominated punishments than the prescriptions of a kind and sympathizing physician, they were yet in some sense the penalty paid for that inconsiderate conduct by which man had brought upon himself a feeble moral constitution, instead of the highest condition of moral health and soundness which he might and would otherwise have enjoyed.

But while God's sternness toward the human pair is thus paternal, in a far different tone is the malevolent plotter addressed. Instead of "cursed is the ground for thy sake," it is, — "Cursed art *thou* above every beast of the field: upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." When we observe (what Geology teaches) that this curse worked no change in the serpent form or habits, its significance in its application to the animal would seem to be that a

conspicuous and perpetual *stigma* should attach to it, which these natural characteristics should serve to symbolize, and so to keep in remembrance as a lesson and warning to mankind.<sup>1</sup> It announces that the creature whose form and name must be forever associated with the disobedience in Paradise as the prompting instrument to it, should remain forever in the seeming debasement of its form and life, and in the disgust and hatred which it should inspire, a sign to man how odious and despicable is the subtlety of human wisdom, when its judgments and counsels are in disagreement with the Divine monitions. Or, if we regard the serpent in this transaction as the impersonation of an evil spirit rather than of a subtle sagacity, then the sentence dooms the reptile thus forever marked as the representative of the evil principle, to carry down to all

<sup>1</sup> Some Biblical critics have found their sympathies moved in behalf of the serpent family, on account of this curse; deeming it unreasonable and cruel to punish them for the use of their form without their knowledge or consent. It may relieve such doubters somewhat, to notice that the curse affects the creature's *reputation* merely, as it will hardly be thought that this could be a source of much discomfort to a brute creature, unconscious of the *fact*, and insensible to the ignominy. The force of the expression "Cursed art thou," etc., seems to be the same as in Jacob's malediction,— "Cursed (*i. e.*, *detested*) be their wrath, for it was cruel." As to the enmity put between the serpent tribes and man, it was undoubtedly *real*; but it will be observed that it was to be *reciprocal*. If the animal was to excite hatred, it was to inspire terror also,— and it has thus been greatly protected from the active persecution which many other creatures have suffered. Indeed, as a mere brute, it would have been far more to be pitied had God *honored* it on this occasion by making it thenceforth man's favorite article of food or ornament. The truth is, that as the serpent form was only used as an *impersonation*, so it was only cursed as a *symbol*.

human generations the lesson, how detestable and dangerous evil is. The enmity which God declares he "will put" between the serpent and man, must be regarded as a special instinctive hostility that would not otherwise have existed. As applied to the brute creature, there can be no question that the declaration has been fulfilled; but in its deeper meaning, the plotting adversary of God and man disguised beneath the serpent form, is shown how completely his principal hope, the ruin of man as a moral being, was to be baffled and to fail. The language, in its application to him, meant this: — "The human race is not to be thy unresisting prey. The moral faculty itself, which thou didst conceive of as a mere intellectual perception affixing but not deterring from guilt, shall be a mighty *force* exerting its influence within the human breast against thy sway; the voice of conscience shall be constantly heard, inciting opposition to thy power; and though (as illustrated in the hostility to subsist between the serpent race and man) thou shalt succeed in working more or less of harm in the world, yet 'the seed of the woman shall bruise thy head,' (by a fatal, incurable wound,) while thou (in a merely temporary and partial success) shalt only 'bruise his heel.'" In other words, (if we adopt the spiritual sense so generally accorded to the passage,) "A scheme of salvation shall be put in operation, whereby a long and doubtful warfare between man and evil shall terminate in his deliverance from

sin; and the final destruction of thy power on earth shall come to the human race through a future 'SON OF MAN,'—its triumphant Redeemer and Saviour."

It is unnecessary to dwell longer upon this hypothesis. If not susceptible of demonstration, it seems at least well worthy of being attentively considered, and whatever of doubt or difficulty may be thought to becloud it, may possibly be dissipated by a more careful study or a fuller examination. Containing so many marks of truth, and having so close a connection and agreement with our general view, we should have been unwilling to omit it from this discussion of the narrative, even had we been less inclined than we are to accept the conclusions which it suggests. We have reserved it, however, from view, until the true interpretation and import of the narrative could be shown to be attainable without its aid; considering (as already urged) that History should, if possible, be explained by its facts alone, and without resort to assumptions.

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We have thus gone carefully through the whole of this remarkable narration, and can form our own opinion of its purport. If no such teaching is conveyed as we have supposed, it is strange that our view should find such singular corroboration, not only in the general features of the story, but even

in its minutest details ; and that all these particulars should display such consistency with each other. In this respect we need not fear to challenge for our interpretation a comparison with that which has been heretofore ordinarily received, as well as in the no less important qualities of simplicity, reasonableness, and significance. Unless we are much misled, also, it will be found to possess other marks of truth in its power of reconciling theological diversities which spring from different admitted and indisputable, but apparently inconsistent facts. Some of these we shall hereafter briefly advert to, but before we take leave of the narrative, we must notice one source of probable objection to the correctness of our view, which is found in another portion of Scripture.

## CHAPTER XI.

REVIEW OF OBJECTIONS FROM THE FIFTH CHAPTER  
OF ROMANS.

“WHEREFORE, as by one man sin entered the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned; (for until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed where there is no law: nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence so is the free gift: for 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, Christ Jesus, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation; but the gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one,—Jesus Christ.) Therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men to justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” (Romans v. 12–19.)

The passage quoted above, from the fifth chapter of Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, is invariably made the battle-field in controversies which turn upon the history of Adam and his relations to the



race. Within it, as by instinct, theological belligerents make it their first object to get themselves securely intrenched, persuaded that if once well covered by the advantages of that ground they may then safely undermine, batter, and bombard the strongholds of all adversaries. Times innumerable has it been the theatre of assault or of sortie, of capture or repulse. Happily, its capacity is ample enough to afford comfortable accommodations for all; and it is accordingly at this day quietly occupied by at least half a dozen diverse creeds, each of which, in its particular quarters, claims to be master of the field, and glares self-complacent defiance at the rest. And so, as it is by universal consent the Malakoff of Theology, — the key of every position, — we must, in deference to the established practice of polemic warfare, establish our title to respect, by either carrying its ramparts, or proving that we are out of the range of its fire.

We frankly admit that we question the infallibility of the rules which declare this a battery to be spiked by every proffered theory, as a condition of success. We have great doubts whether it were constructed by Paul as a barrier across the road toward truth; we believe that he rather intended it as a friendly way-mark, to guide the inquirer along the unobstructed path. To drop the figure, we cannot think that the Apostle's glowing and rhetorical mind, when it threw out this passage in

the course of his argument in support of the claim of the Gentiles to salvation as well as the Jews, ever designed it as a precise and definite formula of dogmatic belief, in all its parts and expressions. We do not believe that it was ever written for analysis in theological alembics by the microscopic scrutiny of syllables, or the mathematically accurate weighing of significations, in order to detect the measures of doctrinal equivalents. It is simply an illustration with which he closes an argument, and exhibits its bearing; and it is to be held to no greater precision of terms than will suffice for illustration, and extended to no farther reach of doctrine than is sought to be enforced by the argument.

The point of these remarks becomes manifest when, upon a careful inspection of the passage, we find that there is nothing whatever in its main idea that conflicts with the view contained in the foregoing pages. That Adam, in his relations to mankind, was the type of Christ in *his* relations to mankind;—that as, through the disobedience of the one, universal sinfulness and universal mortality were brought into the world and passed upon the Gentiles as well as the Jews, so, through the obedience of the other, universal righteousness and universal life are offered to the world, to Gentiles as well as to Jews, — this, which is all that the Apostle has sought to establish in his preceding argument, and hence all that he has designed to illustrate in

this comparison, is completely accordant with, and sustained by, the view we have presented. The only possible discrepancy which can be made to appear between this passage and our theory is found in the terms "sinning" (ἁμαρτήσαντος) and "offence" (παράπτωμα — literally, "a falling away"), which are here apparently applied by Paul to the first disobedience of Adam, as if he regarded that act as characterized by moral guilt.

With regard to these expressions, however, we insist that they are to be considered as incidental expressions merely, not committing the writer to any particular view of the transaction to which they are applied, but casually used by him as words ordinarily employed to designate it, unless they can be shown to have been derived from his previous argument as an essential feature of the inferences therefrom. In other words, the illustration must not be pushed as a proof of doctrine further than the reasoning which it was merely intended to illustrate. Now Paul announces this passage, as the *sum* and *result* of his previous argument. "Wherefore," he says, *i. e.*, "To sum up what we have before shown, the argument may be briefly exhibited in the following comparison." In order, therefore, to fix the precise limit of the principles or doctrines to which he intends to commit himself in the comparison, we must go back to the beginning and follow the course of his argument, that we may remark the particular doctrines there set forth

which he is here attempting comprehensively to restate and illustrate.

What then are the drift and scope of the preceding portions of this Epistle to the Romans, and how far do they bear upon this reference to Adam? More especially is the disobedience of Adam, as an action having a *moral* aspect, so far discussed or made use of as to render the designation of "sin," here applied to it, essential to the argument? Let us examine it and see.

If we go back to ch. i. v. 16, we shall there find Paul announcing, at the outset, the theme of the whole discussion, namely, — that "the Gospel of Christ is the power of salvation to *every one* that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile." From this point, anticipating the hostility which the declaration of this universality of the Gospel would encounter from Jewish bigotry, he proceeds in the support of its truth by arguments from reason, from Scripture, and from the established course of God's dealings with men.

He reminds his opponents, as the groundwork of his reasoning, of the admitted application of God's moral system to the whole human race. He shows them that all men, without exception, the Jew as well as the Gentile, are all gone astray from moral rectitude, and are all alike punished for their sins. And while all alike share in the responsibilities of the moral law, shall they not, he inquires, be admitted to its privileges also? "Yes," he re-

plies (ch. ii. 6-16), "He who renders unto every man according to his deeds, — tribulation and anguish to the unrighteous, to the Jew as well as the Gentile, — He also confers glory, honor, and peace upon him that worketh good, to the Gentile as well as the Jew." It is not the mere accident of nationality that makes men differ in his sight. "For not the hearer of the law, (the Hebrew,) but the doers of the law, (of all races,) are justified before God." "Do you think," he continues, "that because you happen to be a Jew, with the law and the circumcision, that you can therefore lead an unholy life with any more security than the Gentile who has not these outward tokens? Is it being a Jew, then, which is to purchase special favor from God? If so, be assured that he is not the Jew, in God's estimation, who is one outwardly, but he who is one in the spirit; and such an one shall be accepted by Him, of whatever lineage or origin."

Pursuing this idea in the next chapter (ch. iii.), Paul examines the real advantages which the Jews possessed over the Gentiles, showing that they consisted merely in national blessings and privileges, (such as that "unto them were committed the oracles of God,") and not in any different rights or liabilities as subjects of the moral law. He shows that they have merited no special favors under the law, having been equally corrupt with the Gentiles; and concludes that in this respect, therefore, they have no reason for boasting or expectation of preference

in the impartial administration of the Divine government, since "God is the God of the Gentiles, as well as of the Jews."

"But," it would be asked by the Hebrew objector, "was not a covenant made with Abraham for himself and his seed after him?" "Undoubtedly," responds the Apostle; and he now refers to this very fact as a farther proof that the reward of faith shall come to the Gentiles as well as the Jews. He adverts to the important fact (ch. iv. 10), that the faith, on account of which this covenant was made, "was reckoned unto Abraham for righteousness while he was yet uncircumcised;" and from it he draws the conclusion that Abraham, "the father of the faithful," thereby became and was recognized as the father of the uncircumcised faithful, no less than of such as were his lineal descendants, "for the promise (v. 13) was not to Abraham or his seed through the [Jewish] law, but through the righteousness of faith." It applies, therefore, not merely to his natural posterity, but to *all* "out of *many* nations," who shall imitate the faith of Abraham; that is, (v. 24,) "who shall believe on Him that hath raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead."

Then, after a short discursive allusion to the ground and the joy of faith in Christ, having arrived at the point for which he set out, he looks back, and reviewing the path he has gone over, he sums up the effect of the whole argument by declaring it *proved* that the "Gospel of Christ," like the

moral system itself, is *universal*, both in its responsibilities and privileges. "Wherefore," (*i. e.*, as the result and the illustration of the foregoing,) "as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon *all men* for that all have sinned,"—in other words, (v. 18,) "as by the offence of one, judgment came upon *all men* to condemnation, so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon *all men*, unto justification of life."

From this review, it will be seen that the moral character of Adam's act, so far from being relied upon as a material part of Paul's previous argument, was not even alluded to in it, however distantly, nor is there any portion of that argument upon which it can have the remotest bearing or influence. In its light we see at once, that Paul's object in this passage, as well as in the whole discussion, is not to define the character of Adam's transgression, (such an idea never entered his mind;) but to exhibit the wide application of the office of Christ. For this purpose he here refers to Adam's disobedience with sole reference to the *universality* of its *effect*, using this both as an illustration of, and an argument for, the *universality* of Christ's remedial dispensation. It could make no difference for this purpose, whether the common idea that Adam's act was a sin were correct or not, and although he calls it "an offence," casually adopting the common expression and idea respecting it, yet, inasmuch as this designation is entirely outside of his previous train of thought and

argument, it must be regarded as "*obiter dictum*," and not an authoritative declaration of its true character.

"But," it will be urged, "does not this destroy much of the force of the passage, which is plainly 'judicial' in its character? It speaks of 'condemning' and 'acquitting,'<sup>1</sup> and how can there be condemnation except for sin? Is not the idea of *sin*, therefore, an essential part of the contrast instituted?" Let it be admitted in reply, that the passage is judicial in spirit, and that the condemnation spoken of is for sin. Of *what* sin, and *whose*, does the Apostle declare it to be the judgment? Observe it is the condemnation of all mankind that he speaks of, — the single topic of all his previous discussion; — and although he here alludes to Adam's act as introducing this condemnation, he directly declares, both in this passage and in the outset of his argument, that it so comes on all mankind, not for Adam's act, but because "all have sinned." We do not here examine at length, the claim, supported in "The Conflict of Ages," that *in this place*, the expression "all have sinned" should be translated "all have been treated as sinners"; and so the whole phrase read, — "Death passed upon all men, for that all were treated as sinners," *i. e.*, "All were treated as sinners, *because* all were treated as sinners," or, perhaps, "because all were regarded as sinners." We think it unnecessary to dilate upon it,

<sup>1</sup> *Conflict of Ages*, p. 397.



for according to the one mode of reading, it is mere nonsense, and according to the other, it simply comes back to the present translation, "because all *have sinned*." Besides, the true sense of the phrase is to be found not merely by scrutinizing it by itself, but by referring to the argument with which it is connected. It is the restatement of that which constitutes the basis and foundation of Paul's whole argument, as will be seen by consulting the previous chapters, wherein he sets out by showing the sinfulness of all men as the reason of God's judgments. Thus, (ch. i. 10,) "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men," of whom (ch. ii. 9) "We have before proved [or 'charged'] that they are all under sin, as it is written, 'There is none righteous, no, not one.'" In all this there is not the slightest reference to the sin of Adam as the ground of the condemnation of the race, but, on the contrary, there are plain intimations, in almost every verse, that [notwithstanding Adam's act] had men been *themselves* righteous, they would have been justified. If it is true, then, as asserted by some, that in this *particular passage* "the sin of Adam, and not their own actual transgression, is given as the ground and reason of the subjection of all men to the penal evils spoken of,"<sup>1</sup> then it is in direct variance and opposition to the whole of the preceding argument, both in its letter and its spirit, a circumstance

<sup>1</sup> Professor Hodge, quoted in *Conflict of Ages*, p. 406.

which should cause such a view to be received with some hesitation.

What Paul attempts in the argument is the exposition of *two great systems* in the moral government of God. The first, a system (without reference to the mode of its origination) of condemnation upon all who have violated the moral law, *i. e.*, upon all men, "for that all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," (ch. iii. 23,) (*i. e.*, "failed to illustrate his holiness.") The other, a system of justification through "faith of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all them that believe," (ch. iii. 22.) Having set forth these systems in the preceding chapters, he now, in this summary of what has gone before, contrasts them; the system of judgment, as having been introduced or originated by the disobedience of Adam, our natural head, with the system of justification, as having been introduced or originated by the obedience of Christ, our spiritual head. We may admit, if we please, that he makes "the sequence of justification and life from the obedience of Christ, a sequence in which there is a real and glorious causative power";<sup>1</sup> but it is certain that he sets up no such causation and effect between the act of Adam and the condemnation of men, so, at least, as to teach that the latter was a *punishment* for the former. But if Paul does not mean that this "judgment" upon men was in consequence of any *guilt* in Adam's

<sup>1</sup> *Conflict of Ages*, p. 375.

act, then the question of guilt or not in that act does not enter into the spirit of the passage, and his use of the word "sin," in reference to the act of Adam, is not essential to the force of the contrast, or to the judicial interpretation of the passage.

The substance of the foregoing argument is this : That so far as Paul contrasts the act of Adam with the acts of Christ (in distinction from the *effects* of the acts in the two cases respectively), this is incidental to the main course of thought, and should be interpreted as referring to their outward semblance, and not to their internal character. We may present some considerations, however, upon a different ground, which will bring us to the same conclusion.

Paul in this passage is using Adam and his act simply as an antithetical *type* of Christ and his acts. Adam, at the head of his system of "sinfulness and condemnation," appears the counterpart or antithesis of Christ, at the head of his system of holiness and life. Adam's act of transgression inaugurating the one, is the antithesis of Christ's acts of obedience inaugurating the other. As a *type*, therefore, the correspondence in the external aspects of the two sets of facts was sufficiently exact, and it was not necessary that their internal character should be in precisely corresponding contrast. In facts or events merely types, established for illustration simply, such exact correspondence is not required or expected. Thus, the sacrifices of

lambs and goats typifying the death of Christ, neither in the moral nature of the victims, nor in the manner of their death, exhibited to that great event the slightest resemblance. Accordingly, Paul here using Adam's transgression merely as an antithetical *type* of Christ's holy obedience, could have designed no other reference than simply to its external aspect, and to that only so far as in its general form it presented a typical illustration. Hence he should not be understood as expressing an opinion upon the real internal character of the act when he calls it Adam's "sin," or "offence"; but simply as calling it a sin because in its circumstances it resembled one sufficiently to be an antithetical type of Christ's holiness. Nay, we go farther. If we suppose Paul himself to have believed this act of Adam's to have been a sin, even that will not make his entitling it so in this place authoritative on that point. For though we must suppose that Inspiration dictated his reference to the act as a type in this case, still Inspiration sanctions and invests it only so far as it is presented as a *type*, and does not authoritatively fix its character any farther. In other words, a statement or illustration may be inspired to a certain degree, and be true to that degree, but be untrue, or at least not authoritative, beyond that particular point, even though put forth in good faith as a broad truth by the writer. To illustrate. We have no reason to suppose that Paul knew of the perished races an-

terior to man, — the history of these having been but recently brought to light by Geology. We can therefore have no doubt that when he wrote that “death came into the world by sin,” he supposed that fact was true in its widest acceptation. Thus indeed have all theologians believed up to a very recent date, and have doubtless considered this declaration of Paul as inspired truth to the full extent of its broadest meaning.<sup>1</sup> But since we have learned that the statement is true only in its application to man, we perceive that, although inspired and true to the extent necessary for illustration of the subject in hand, it is not so beyond that limit, even though Paul himself may have considered it entirely true as broadly as written.

Wherever, in fact, we meet with expressions used in connection with types, we are to receive them simply as illustrations, the precise accuracy of which is not manifest on their face, but subject to be ascertained from other sources. We may well accept the term “offence,” or “sin,” as properly applicable to Adam’s act for the purposes of typical allusion; but to ascertain how far it was *really* a sin, or offence, when committed, we must go to the original story, — the same and the only source from which Paul himself derived his impressions of it. For the purpose for which he needed it, he was not called upon to examine its

<sup>1</sup> Thus Dr. Dwight says, *Theol.*, Vol. I. 424: “Until the fall, death was a total stranger to Creation; and but for that event, all animals, as well as man, would have been immortal.”

internal nature, and so just glanced at the facts in the light in which they were commonly presented. We, on the other hand, have been called upon to examine that internal nature, and having so done, have a right to form our own opinion respecting it. It would be no more just then, to insist that the literal and extreme sense of ἀμαρτήσαντος (sinning), thus incidentally and typically used in reference to this act, is an inspired declaration of its real character, than to maintain that the Apostle's statement that "death entered into the world by sin" was meant to deny and disprove the records of Geology; or that his declaration (in Heb. xi. 17) that "Abraham offered up Isaac," is of greater weight than the account of that transaction in Genesis. The truth is that these expressions in each instance, coming in incidentally, and for another purpose, are to be taken as rhetorical expressions merely, and not as the infallible announcements of inspiration.

Under such circumstances, looking entirely to the enforcement of his central idea, the Apostle would naturally refer to Adam's act in the terms most familiar to himself and his readers, just as he might use an illustration from classic fable, or an unscientific but common view of natural phenomena, without pausing to satisfy himself of the reality of the supposed facts, and certainly without stamping them with divine authority for their truth and accuracy. Thus Christ himself, in remonstrating with

the Pharisees for their unbelief, demanded, "If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out?" where it is not probable that he meant to admit the incantations and charms of the Jewish sorcerers to be efficacious for genuine cures. So Jude says, "Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses," referring to an old fable or tradition as an illustration, without asserting its truth. And Paul himself (Heb. xi. 13), speaking of the patriarchs previously enumerated, says, "These all died in faith," though of one of them (Enoch) he had just declared that he did not die, but "was translated that he should not see death." It was not the practice of Christ or his apostles to combat the settled doctrinal notions of the Jews, when these did not affect the vital truths of Christianity, or interfere with practical holiness of life. It was not their purpose to teach dogma, but to preach righteousness. Hence merely controversial inquiries, when addressed to them, they uniformly evaded. In the same spirit they observed and recommended compliance with ceremonial usages and other matters, which they yet regarded as indifferent, or even abrogated by the new dispensation. There is therefore no reason to suppose that Inspiration would have checked any adoption and application by Paul of the common view of Adam's disobedience for the purposes of typical illustration; or would have corrected in his mind any erroneous

impressions with regard to it, which he might have received from his Jewish education, so long as that correction was not requisite to affect the reality and truth of the type, or to promote the efficient preaching of the Gospel. Paul had much fuller and more just perceptions of the scope and bearing of Christianity than some of the other apostles, equally inspired, and this difference of views at times gave rise to divisions of opinion among them; yet doubtless there were many truths relating to God's government of which he, no less than the rest of mankind, entertained ideas obscure or tinged with error. The time had not yet come for these to be clearly revealed.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The foregoing remarks suppose the Apostle in this passage to refer distinctly to Adam's act of disobedience as a simple and complete fact in itself. We would suggest, however, that his argument may be looked at from another point of view, which may be stated as follows:—

Paul presents the act of Adam as he presents the act of Christ,—each in the light of its consequences in their individual characters. He looked in his own mind upon the disobedience of Adam with its attendant result of *sinfulness* in him (not separating the act from the character that followed the act, and speaking of “the offence” of Adam as a figure for the sinfulness in him which it introduced), just as he refers to “the obedience” of Christ and his consequent righteousness, without meaning to allude to any or all of the specific acts which made up his obedience.

The central and main idea is the parallelism of the justification by Christ in respect to its consequence on man, with the disobedience and sinfulness introduced by Adam in reference to *their* consequence. The first is broadly stated, without exhibiting the contents of this justification or the *mode* of its consequence; so also the disobedience of Adam and its results to him and the race are stated with corresponding breadth. These two parallel sets of facts (and not their analytic con-



Having thus asserted our claim that too much stress is not to be laid as authority upon the designations applied by Paul to Adam's act and its effects, in contrast with and as a type of the acts of Christ and their effects, it remains for us to show that the adoption of the view which we have urged by no means destroys the force or value of Adam as a type of the Messiah, but rather enhances it. In the first place, it does not impair that value. For though it sets aside the *literal* sense in which his act may contrast as *a sin*, with the holiness of Christ, it still leaves the contrast perfect in a *typical*, or *illustrative* sense. Obedience is still set in opposition with disobedience, and righteousness with an act of transgression so nearly resembling sin as to answer every purpose of a typical antithesis. But besides the correspondence in this respect, and in respect to the universality of the two dispensations, and in respect to their opposite character (the only particulars in which the Apostle suggests a comparison), the completeness of the parallel is farther extended by our view in several important particulars.

For not only does it satisfy St. Paul's declaration that Adam's act inaugurated a system of universal *condemnation*, just as Christ laid open one of uni-

tents) it was, that formed in the Apostle's mind the analogical argument of parallelism which he here employs; leaving the reader to refer on the one hand to the Gospel for the particulars, and on the other to the account of Adam and his disobedience for farther light; presenting both, therefore, as subjects for investigation and study.

versal (*i. e.*, free) *salvation*, but it also shows a parallelism in the *mode* of the effects of each upon men. It justifies in an especial manner the Apostle's statement that, "As by one man many were made sinners, *even so*, by one shall many be made righteous." How then is it that men are "made sinners" (or "come to be regarded as sinners," if that is a better translation) through Adam's act, and how does it appear to be the same way as that in which "many are made righteous" (or "come to be considered and treated as righteous") through the agency of Christ? Not, in either case, by an inevitable *infusion* into the race or the individual, and without its coöperation, immediately upon and by virtue of the obedience or disobedience, (as the case may be,) of guilt or holiness respectively, or of new tendencies toward guilt or holiness. Had Adam been a holy being and lost that holiness both for himself and his posterity by an act of sin, as the ordinary view teaches, so that by and through that act he and they thenceforward became inevitably sinful, then it must have been that immediately upon that act and *by it*, some change for the worse was wrought in the constitution of the race. Were Christ's influence, then, the exact antithesis of this, it would follow that immediately upon his obedience and by it, some change was wrought for the better in the constitution of the race. But this, as we all know, is not the manner in which Christ's righteousness affects the condition of man-

kind. Man is not made the subject of God's grace involuntarily, although he is, without his agency, admitted to the *opportunities* of its benefits. So, on the other hand, our view shows us that he does not partake of the *evil* effects of Adam's act involuntarily, although he is, without his own agency, made a moral being by it, and so exposed to the *opportunity* of being affected by them. Christ's work, it is agreed, in itself alone and without reference to its acceptance by man, affected the moral position of the race only by the new *opportunities* of holiness and pardon which it introduced. So, by our view, Adam's act, in itself alone and without reference to the actions of men as moral agents under it, influenced the moral position of his posterity only by making guilt a *possibility* for them. Christ only removed the impediments to men's salvation. Adam, according to our view, did nothing more than open the way to moral ruin. Thus, in short, (as we say,) Adam made men *capable* of becoming sinners, and left it for them to adopt the character, or to remain holy if they would; just as Christ opens to them the opportunity of becoming righteous, but leaves it dependent upon themselves to embrace it: "To as many as received him, to them gave he the power (*ἐξουσίαν*, the faculty or privilege) to become the sons of God." (John i. 12.)

In respect to the actual moral situations and relations which ensued to the race as *historic facts*, in the two cases respectively, we find the Apostle's

presentation of the parallel sustained by our view. For as the actual result of Adam's act was, that in consequence of it the race *did* voluntarily lapse into a sinful and lost condition, entailing punishment, so, on the other hand, the mission of Christ has had, and will have for its actual effect the salvation of believers, and finally the whole race, from this unhappy state of sin and peril. It appears, then, that though men's natures were by Adam's act, in itself considered, enlarged and exalted, yet, as the result of their own course in consequence of it, they have fallen from moral innocence into guilt and condemnation. *In this respect*, therefore, it may be said that the result and effect of Adam's act have been disastrous to the race. Christ's work, however, can have no such unhappy though indirect consequence. For while faith in Him strengthens and ennobles human nature for its contest with sin, it also relieves the soul from the peril impending over its safety. Thus "if through the offence (transgression) of one, many be dead, *much more* the grace of God, and the gift by grace, hath abounded unto many." Or, to adopt the other words of the Apostle, "As by the offence (disobedience) of one [it resulted] unto all men to condemnation, even so, by the righteousness of one [it resulted] unto all men to justification of life."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> We follow the literal reading of the text, v. 18: Ἄρα οὖν ὡς δι' ἑνὸς παραπτώματος εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους εἰς κατάκριμα: οὕτω καὶ δι' ἑνὸς δικαιοσύματος εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους εἰς δικαίωσιν ζωῆς. It will be noticed that in our English version the words "judgment came" and "the free gift came" are inserted by the translators.

**PART III.**

**THE CONFIRMATIONS OF THEOLOGY.**



## PART III.

### THE CONFIRMATIONS OF THEOLOGY.



#### CHAPTER I.

##### THE COMMON VIEW STATED AND COMPARED.

IN the exhibition of the view presented in the foregoing pages, the object of this work is substantially accomplished. Our purpose in it is to discover the true import of the narrative which we have reviewed, not to support or to controvert any particular deductions from it. The true interpretation of Scripture arrived at, we leave to others its proper application in the department of Theology. The field for which we assume responsibility is within the limits of the narrative alone, and should we or others fall into mistaken inferences from the results to which we have arrived, as these erroneous deductions cannot impair the truth of the premises, so they ought not to influence the judgment to be passed upon them. But notwithstanding the peril of entering the mists of theological speculation, where so many and great minds have been "in wandering mazes lost," as anything that tends to confirm the truth of the interpretation we contend

for may reasonably claim our attention, we propose to advert, as briefly as may be, to a few of those objections which Theology suggests to the common view of Adam's character, history, and relations to the race, for the purpose of showing that these objections are avoided by the adoption of our own.

Skeptics have ever made it a reproach against Theology, and even believers have found it a painful mystery, that there have sprung from its teachings so many variant dogmas and creeds, all based on seeming truths, yet in many cases mutually irreconcilable. That there may be a variety of aspects in which the same truth may be regarded, and that thus in the theological domain, from the want of Revelation or its uncertainty, as well as from the limited powers of the human mind, there may be different modes of contemplating or applying the same general principles, may be easily granted. But that propositions should arise, all apparently truthful to a certain extent, and yet inconsistent; while from the diverse attempts to reconcile such contradictions, or from disputes as to which of these discordant truths is most essential and vital, and should, therefore, override the rest, doubts and confusion should ensue, is a more serious difficulty. It ought, nevertheless, rather to convince us that there is error in the premises whence these discrepancies are drawn, than shake our faith in either Revelation or Reason. For it is self-evident that truth must be uniform. The fundamental principles and the fun-



damental facts of God's moral government must be consistent with themselves and each other. He cannot be the only being in the universe whose character is falsified by his voluntary acts; hence his word cannot manifest him in a light which Reason may not discover to be consistent, benevolent, and just. If the thought and study of ages have failed to effect such a reconciliation, this fact argues a misinterpretation of Scripture, and demands its reconsideration. And, therefore, if under one view of Adam's disobedience and its consequences, Revelation and Reason seem at variance, while under another they are clear and harmonious, this is of itself an argument for the adoption of the latter view rather than the former.

That the theory we have urged in the foregoing pages does in all cases avoid such discrepancies in relation to the subjects involved in it, would be perhaps a presumptuous averment, before it shall have been fully tested by time and discussion. We propose, however, to consider some of the more prominent difficulties which arise upon the common view of "Adam's fall," and which ages of controversy have not cleared up, as finding in it a reasonable solution. And in order that the nature of these difficulties may be more clearly apprehended, it will be proper for us to settle distinctly, at the outset, what the ordinary view inculcates with regard to Adam's original nature, his disobedience, and its effects upon mankind.

The more liberal theologians, especially those of modern times, seem disposed to modify the extreme views of Adam's original nature and character which have in some quarters obtained, and which are thus expressed in the Westminster Catechism: "God created man in his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness." Though the doctrine of man's original holiness in character and disposition, has been in times past, and perhaps still generally is, held by the great body of believers, yet as there has been among the leading writers an inclination to qualify it, our attention ought to be directed to the more moderate view. This may be stated to be that Adam, though a moral creature, conscious of the distinction between right and wrong, capable of choosing between them and accountable for his choice, and in this freedom or capability to act in either direction, choosing to do right, preferring in his conduct holiness to sin, was yet not what can be called a holy being. That he was only an innocent childlike creature, without sin, chiefly because without experience of temptation; morally intelligent, indeed, but weak in rectitude, because without moral discipline and training. The description by Dr. Bushnell of primeval man ("Nature and the Supernatural," p. 104) is among the most recent, and is, perhaps, the most clear and elegant: "He (the Creator) will have given us, or at least the original new created progenitors, a constitutently perfect mould. So that taken simply as forms of being, apart from

any character begun by action, they are in that exact harmony and perfection, that, without or before deliberation, spontaneously runs to good; organically ready with all heavenly affinities in play, to break out in a perfect song. So far, they are innocent and holy by creation, or by the simple fact of their constituent perfection in the image of their Maker; only there is no sufficient strength or security in their holiness, because there is no deliberative element in it." Other writers hold substantially the same view; thus Dr. Harris ("Man Primeval," p. 395) declares: "As a free agent, his liabilities would (apart from a special provision to the contrary) be coextensive with his multiplied obligations. His nature is a living law table." "That his nature was potentially (not actually) perfect, we affirm in effect, when we say he was made in the Divine image," (p. 432.) In connection with the views thus set forth, is to be remarked, nevertheless, the obvious truth, as expressed by Dr. Harris in another place, that in any moral agent, "mere sinlessness, even for a moment, is impossible. The nature of a moral being involves the necessity at every moment of actual compliance with every known claim of law, or else the actual refusal of such compliance." So, also, President Edwards remarks in his "Treatise on Original Sin," (p. 166,) "In a moral agent, subject to moral obligations, it is the same thing to be perfectly *innocent* as to be perfectly righteous." Without multiplying ci-

tations farther, we may say, generally, that there are almost no theologians who do not at least hold, with these writers, that man's moral faculties were so far awake and informed as to make him fully accountable for his acts; that his disposition was naturally and voluntarily right; and that he was not only absolutely, and from choice, "sinless," (which sinlessness in a moral being must clearly be, as stated by Harris and Edwards, the same thing as holiness,) but was in his moral nature and capabilities at least "potentially" perfect, — a capability which is claimed by but few to subsist in him since "the apostasy."

Taking, then, even this qualified estimate of man's original moral character, it would seem that the distinction attempted to be made between his supposed "sinlessness" or "innocence," as a moral agent, and the "holiness" by others ascribed to him, does not suggest any real difference in the theories. We should be at a loss to give a definition of a holy being, if that of "a being knowing the difference between right and wrong, and free to choose between them, who voluntarily remains in a state of moral rectitude," does not apply. Nor does the supposition that he has never felt temptation to be otherwise, affect the case so far as we can discover; for if temptation (*i. e.*, a motive actually exciting inclination to sin) be essential to holiness, it is difficult to see how that attribute can be ascribed to God himself, who certainly cannot be im-

agined to have ever been in any degree disposed to do evil.

This modification of the old doctrine of man's original holiness, seems to have been adopted in order to avoid the difficulty which that suggested, in connection with the fact that man, thus holy, yielded so readily to the first assaults of sin. But were it admissible at all, it would itself create an equal difficulty, in the necessity to account for the radical and permanent change which is still supposed to have been occasioned by the transgression, both in God's relations and disposition toward man, and in man's own nature, character, and destiny. For it would seem strange that the Creator who had formed him thus on the very division line between holiness and sin, — so nearly on it, indeed, that, as some writers insist, his overstepping it at the first pressure was inevitable, — should have discarded him with anger when he so toppled across. Still more strange would it be that so small a change of position should have been regarded as so immense, so irrecoverable ; that so slight a shock to his nature should have shivered it into ruins. We can comprehend how an angel who, by a mighty rush, has broken away from holy inclinations and influences, and abandoned his soul to the tide of evil passions, to follow them thenceforth as its ruling forces, should leave behind him all thought and all power of return, and declare eternal war against God and goodness. But we do not so clearly understand why an innocent,

well-meaning creature, which, like a child, is just beginning to use its moral faculties, should, because its feeble hand has failed in the first attempt to wield them steadily, find itself in consequence forever incapable of holding and applying them with even its original firmness and skill. If, therefore, any of the various doctrines be adopted which make man originally "a moral agent, free to sin, but sinless by disposition and intelligent choice," then, we insist, his character must be considered as far different from that of "childlike innocence," (the distinguishing feature of which is the deficiency or obscurity of moral intelligence,) and as so closely allied to that of a "holy" creature as to justify our so regarding and styling him. And, in confirmation of this conclusion, we may quote one of the most recent and able writers on this subject, who, distinguishing between the original (concreated) holiness of Adam, and the holiness of his primal *character*, quotes Turretin's description of the latter as peculiarly "correct and felicitous":<sup>1</sup> "It comprehended knowledge in the understanding, holiness in the will, rectitude in the affections, and such an entire harmony in all his faculties that his members were obedient to his affections, his affections to his will, his will to his understanding, and his understanding to the Divine law." The original holiness of his nature, however, the writer concludes to have been "not so properly just views of God, and proper

<sup>1</sup> Payne's *Lectures on Original Sin*, p. 15.

affections in regard to God, *i. e.*, right thinking and feeling. It was something which stood, partly at least, in the relation of cause to all this,—something which led to all this. It was, in short, that spiritual life which we have predicated of the mind of Adam on his creation, resulting from the presence and influence of the Holy Spirit of God. Holiness was thus *native* to Adam. He was *created* spiritually alive, though all spiritual apprehensions and affections, *i. e.*, all spiritual actings, were subsequent to his creation.”<sup>1</sup> “The holy principle, the spiritual life which we have predicated of him, had its natural actings in obedience; it rendered it his meat and his drink to do the will of his Father in heaven.”<sup>2</sup>

This “original holiness,” then, being a cardinal doctrine of the common view in all its modifications, it goes on to assume that, in consequence of such natural and voluntary virtue, man was regarded by his Maker with complacency and favor. This it was which caused God to walk and associate with his creature in familiar friendship as a being worthy of his companionship and love. While in this state of free moral agency, “under obligation to keep the whole law,” and voluntarily doing so, for some reason unexplained, but as if the moral law itself were either not a sufficient, or perhaps too severe a test for this holy yet frail humanity, a special command is imposed upon Adam, whereon the whole future

<sup>1</sup> Payne's *Lectures on Original Sin*, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 21.

career, character, and destiny of himself and his race are made to depend. The peculiar nature of this test we must leave to its advocates to explain. "It is not that he is thereby discharged from any of his other obligations. This he could not be; but by some" mysterious "Divine influence or sovereign appointment, his thousand liabilities are reduced to one. He was rendered invulnerable except at one point. Looking abroad over the wide field of duty, he might already foretaste the security of heaven, save in one spot. This was moral liability reduced to a minimum."<sup>1</sup>

This sole and special probationary mandate, it is said, man deliberately violated. Led away by some incomprehensible desire for knowledge (but *what* knowledge is either not explained, or in dispute), he partook of the forbidden fruit, and in so doing wilfully sinned against his Maker. The effect attached instantaneously, conspicuously, and forever. In the very act, and during its occurrence, he fell from his high estate and glorious prospects. His soul turned at once into channels of guilt, and began to flow with fatal sweep down the descent of sin. His nature, as is generally held, underwent a sudden and material change, though what that change was, or how exhibited, has been the topic of endless discussion. His relations toward God were immediately altered for the worse; but in what way, and to what extent, has never been agreed; only it is

<sup>1</sup> Harris, *Man Primeval*, p. 396.



admitted that, in consequence of the transgression and the change which it effected in him, God came either to contemplate him less favorably, or at least to associate with him less familiarly than before. His act having been representative for the race, his posterity share in its evil results. In what way they were affected by it has never been agreed; but it is generally allowed that, in consequence of it, they come into the world, not indeed less free in moral agency nor with less personal accountability for their acts, but with a nature abnormal or deformed, less prone to good than that original one of their first progenitor, and, as most insist, possessing less capability of attaining to moral perfection.

These are all the points in the ordinary view of Adam's history to which we need refer; and these we believe (although possibly with some modifications in form here and there) are and must be substantially adopted by all believers in Adam's original moral agency. It will now be proper for us to note distinctly with how many of these propositions and how far our view is consistent. It admits then —

1. That Adam was created, and continued up to the disobedience, a noble and sinless being, and in intimate and friendly association with his Maker.

2. That to him, as such being, a special command was given, on which were made to depend his moral destiny and that of his coming race.

3. That he disobeyed that command, and that,

consequent upon this transgression, a radical change occurred in him with respect to a moral nature and relations, — a change which left him, however, a moral agent, personally accountable, and with inherent tendencies to pursue in life a course of conduct self-gratifying and sinful.

4. That in consequence of that change the personal intimacy of his Maker was withdrawn, and that man subsequently fell under the power and dominion of his appetites and became a sinful creature.

5. That all Adam's posterity, in consequence of his transgression, inherit a nature like that which he possessed after the transgression, instead of that with which he was originally formed. And that thus the existence of sin in the world, and men's liability to it, may be referred back for their origin to Adam's transgression.

The exposition of these propositions under our view has been already set forth in the preceding pages. We have there seen how Adam in his original state, with grand and vigorous intellectual powers, and a soul whose want of an innate moral sense was supplied by the Divine temporary instruction and guidance, must of necessity, at least for some period of time in his early existence, have been an exalted and innocent being. That there subsisted within him, nevertheless, in full array, the slumbering appetites of his natural constitution, whose undeveloped energies required but time and

opportunity to press beyond their due and healthful bounds, and, gaining the ascendancy in his being, to achieve its final overthrow. We have shown that by the transgression these innate tendencies were unchanged in nature or in force ; that the only bearing of that act upon them was an indirect one, — that of investing their indulgence with a moral character ; that this new influence or effect, however, implied in itself a radical progress in man's moral condition and relations ; that by virtue of it, the undue allowance of these propensities, otherwise morally innocent, came to be sinful, and man's prevailing tendencies towards such allowance, tendencies to evil, — influences and manifestations of corruption and depravity. That thus also all his posterity, inheriting from him these natural propensities by virtue of Adam's original animal nature, and inheriting too these moral perceptions by virtue of his moral nature acquired through the transgression, find themselves in consequence of that act influenced by inherent powerful tendencies sweeping them toward evil. How far these tendencies toward sin, arising from the native force of the passions, are strong enough to affect man's freedom of action, is a fair question for metaphysical discussion under any view, or no view, of his moral relations. That they are so powerful that no mere human being has *in fact* ever completely controlled them, is undisputed. But it is to be noted that He " who was made in all points like as we are, yet without sin,"

did overcome them, and we should therefore be cautious in asserting that they are absolutely irresistible. Indeed, in such an inquiry we should find it difficult to estimate the *natural* strength of our propensities, as distinguished from their *developed* strength through repeated indulgence; yet when we speak of man's inherent tendencies to evil, we must refer to the former alone. Can we be sure that these are such as to warp and determine human character with a power beyond man's capacity of control? May it not be that if he were to train his moral powers unswervingly from infancy in the government of his passions, just as instead thereof he from the outset permits his passions to override his conscience, he might at length secure for virtue the easy and undisputed ascendancy in his soul?

Whatever may be the *possibilities* of the case, it is certain that none of Adam's posterity have, as a matter of fact, achieved in life or in heart the entire subjection of passion to duty. As the actual result, therefore, of their moral agency, they have come to be sinners, with controlling tendencies toward sin. Here is the true "apostasy" both of Adam and the race, their falling into sinfulness almost at once upon entering on their moral career. Let us not be understood, however, as maintaining that since the transgression man has any natural or acquired disposition toward sin for its own sake in preference to holiness. The distinction is to be observed between the indulgence of the natural propensities,

and the moral character of such indulgence. It is true that man turns to gratification more readily than to resistance, yet it is not true that he therefore prefers the *sin* involved in it, to the virtue of abstaining. Love sin in the abstract he does not. On the contrary, he by innate instinct hates moral evil, and loves moral good. God's declaration in the garden, that he would "put *enmity*" between Man and the principle of evil, has not been falsified. He blames himself for vice, and yields to it; not because he finds pleasure in the criminality, but because his appetites solicit him more effectually than his principles. It is this very truth which enhances, if indeed it does not constitute, the guilt of his act. Had he an inborn pleasure in sin for its own sake, God, who so created him, would share with him the responsibility for its choice. It is because he has these better instincts and promptings by nature, and because his Will (given him for their support) permits them on the contrary to be supplanted by abnormal passions, that he, and he alone, is held accountable for his wickedness and folly.

It is strenuously argued by many, indeed, that the universal sinfulness of man is of itself irresistible proof of a native tendency to sin. Such is the argument of the great Jonathan Edwards in support of the doctrine of native corruption or depravity. If the claim be that it indicates a constitutional superiority of influence over the mind and

will of the inferior or material principles inclosed in the material body, — in other words, the natural power of the appetites to influence and control man's actions, — it must be admitted ; but if it be meant that man has an inborn love of sinfulness for its own sake, it must be denied. In thus yielding to his appetites, man but follows the analogy of all animals in recklessly obeying, even to excess, their animal impulses ; and the fact in him no more proves a natural depravity or love of sin for its own sake than it does in them. True, in the human animal the restraints to be overcome are stronger, but so are the appetites and the temptations. True, in him this subservience and bondage to passion are far more degrading, and, in consequence of his moral light, are invested with an infinitely more fearful and distressing character. We do not argue against the evil or the heinousness of sin ; but we insist that these outbreaks of appetite — these “ victories obtained by the inferior principles of man's nature, especially the animal propensities, over reason and conscience,”<sup>1</sup> (for this is laid down by these writers as the definition of actual sin) — do not nevertheless demonstrate an innate love of sinfulness in him, any more than similar outbreaks, though against less potent opposition, demonstrate a hatred of Nature's laws and of the universal order in the inferior races which also exhibit them. It is surprising that the obvious distinction between acts

<sup>1</sup> *Payne's Lectures*, p. 373.

themselves, and the abstract moral character investing those acts, has been so often overlooked in these discussions, and to its neglect much of the confusion that marks them is attributable.

## CHAPTER II.

DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED BY THE COMMON VIEW,  
AND THEIR SOLUTION.

WE now pass to examine some of the difficulties attending the ordinary view, as we have presented it, in order to inquire whether that which we support would enable us to avoid them. These difficulties are, of course, of a different sort from those which we have already considered, as arising out of the narrative. They are simply such as exist intrinsically in the doctrines themselves, or are developed by their mutual comparison, and they suggest errors in these by revealing inconsistencies where truth should disclose only general harmony.

The first difficulty to which we will advert is one that has greatly embarrassed theologians, and springs from the doctrine of Adam's original, intelligent, and voluntary holiness and obedience, taken in connection with the doctrine of his subsequent deliberate sin. A late writer, whom we have before quoted, thus refers to the strange phenomenon: — "Adam was created in the image of God — in the full maturity of his powers. The law of God and the law of love were inscribed upon his heart. His body was the temple of the Holy Ghost. Preserved as we have seen he was by this Divine agent from



moral failure on all other points, he was left without any special divine influence to guard him against taking the forbidden fruit. Still his mind was in a perfectly holy state; the disposition to obedience remained in all its pristine vigor up to the moment of temptation; he had the strongest conceivable motives to resist it; the destinies of the entire race were in his keeping; he must ruin himself and his race if he did not stand fast in his integrity. And yet he fell! Man in innocence and holiness, sank; and sank just at the point, too, where he was left, as I conceive, to the unaided support of his vigorous and perfect moral powers.”<sup>1</sup> In this passage, however, forcible as it is, the difficulty to which we now refer is only dimly suggested. If Adam’s “mind was in a perfectly holy state, the disposition to obedience in all its pristine vigor,” by what possibility could he be brought at once voluntarily to act in opposition to this mental state and disposition? The supposition that he was left unsustained by special divine aid at this particular point does not account for it; for he is said to have had, nevertheless, his natural holiness both of disposition and habit to oppose to temptation. This difficulty is no imaginary one in metaphysics. “The question,” says Dr. Dwight, “How can a holy being become sinful? or, How can a holy being transgress the law of God? is a question to which, perhaps, no satisfactory philosophical reply can be given.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Payne's Lectures*, p. 98.

<sup>2</sup> *Dwight's Theol.*, Vol. I. p. 410.

So also Dr. Harris: "How sin is metaphysically possible in a perfect being we know not. Innumerable solutions have been attempted."<sup>1</sup> And he adds, in a note quoting Dr. A. Neander: "According to my conviction, the origin of evil can only be understood as a fact, — a fact possible by virtue of the freedom belonging to a created being, but not to be otherwise deduced or explained."

The difficulty may be thus stated: If Adam was a being entirely occupied and directed by a holy disposition, this holiness of disposition or "holy principle" must have prevented the rise of inclination to sinfulness. And if he could thus have had no *inclination* to sin, how can he be conceived to perpetrate sin? The problem springs from the doctrine that that which constitutes a man's controlling principle of action determines his conduct in every given case. "Upon this foundation," says Dr. Dwight, "the inquiry [how could Adam sin?] is made; and if the foundation be solid and just, the inquiry cannot be answered, because in the actual case there was no other principle of action than a holy principle."

<sup>1</sup> *Man Primeval*, p. 404. To the same effect see Müller's *Christian Doctrine of Sin*, Vol. II. p. 396. "We are not at all able to see how the possibility of evil for the personal creature could have been present from the beginning, (of which we have the most striking proof in the same having become a reality,) if directly at the beginning he was possessed of moral perfection." And again: "The *possibility* of the fall is not reconcilable with the moral perfection of the personal creature, consistently with a correct insight into the notion of creaturely freedom."

Should any insist, however, that a free agent must necessarily have the *power* of acting in opposition to the prevailing "principle" of his mind, and that it is therefore no *impossibility* for a holy being to sin, we may present the inquiry to such in another form. Suppose the temptation just suggested to Adam in his imagined state of intelligence and virtue. It is the first approach of sin to that clear and holy mind; and in itself considered, therefore, must be repulsive and alarming. We learn that he was not taken by surprise, but deliberately surveyed and weighed the criminal proposal. His appetites are in perfect repose and in normal subordination to reason and conscience; hence there is nothing here to incline to the sin whose deformity is so manifest and so odious. Through his moral intelligence and reason he is fully conscious of and weighs all the inducements that can be offered for and against compliance, and finds the motives for refusal to be paramount.<sup>1</sup> Thus disposition, conscience, and reason all unite to influence him to a particular course. Now is it conceivable that a rational and virtuous being will, after such a debate and such a conclusion, immediately proceed to sin,

<sup>1</sup> It may be objected that this was not the conclusion he arrived at, having been deceived into committing the act by the expectation of greater advantage than would follow abstaining. But had he been truly under the influence of holiness, — his desires duly subordinated to his duty, — he would not have been deceived into this expectation; or if he had, it would not have proved a sufficiently powerful inducement to sin. We are supposing him to have been under such influences, and to have reasoned accordingly.

not only without motive but against motive and against desire? Is not such a result as inconceivable as if it were an actual impossibility? Without engaging in a metaphysical discussion of the bare *power* of a free agent under such circumstances, we cannot doubt a ready admission that to believe man would thus exert it for his own misery and destruction would be irrational and absurd. From such considerations as these, therefore, the theologians, finding themselves unable to explain the occurrence of Adam's sin, under the theory of his prior moral agency and virtue, adopt with Dr. Dwight the conclusion that "a cause exists, though indefinable and unintelligible to ourselves. In other words, the cause is unknown except by its effects."

We are aware that some have sought for an argument, or at least for a suggestion, under the embarrassment in question, by referring to the fallen angels as a proof that holy beings have sinned, and that the alleged difficulty, therefore, must be merely in appearance. Such a course of reasoning, however, is worthy of no consideration. Admitting that there is Scriptural proof that such beings exist as we mean by "fallen angels," how much do we know of their nature or history? Where do we find such definite or positive evidence that they were originally holy, or respecting the circumstances of their defection, as suffice to demonstrate an analogy? Revelation furnishes us with little information regarding them, even of a vague and almost mythical

nature ; enough, indeed, for speculation and conjecture, but nothing for the purposes of argument. Whether their moral nature and relations resembled those of man ; whether their intellectual and emotional being were similar to his ; amid what circumstances and influences they were placed ; what led them to disobey their sovereign, and what were the character and the consequences of that disobedience, — all these are wrapped in obscurity. To cite them in the present discussion, is an attempt to elucidate the unintelligible by a resort to the unknown. No one can say that were they fully disclosed, they would throw any light on the question, and would not even enhance the difficulty, instead of relieving it. In the discussion of matters pertaining to our own moral career and relations, let us confine ourselves to the facts and principles which our Maker has placed within our knowledge and comprehension, for our instruction and guidance. If mysteries arise which these cannot remove, let us frankly admit them, but let us not seek refuge or concealment in that which is still more obscure or uncertain.

We ought not to leave this topic without making one point more, even at the risk of repeating somewhat upon previous pages, for the consideration of those who may still believe that a holy being might possibly sin, or who may not admit that Adam had such kind or degree of holiness as should have proved a preventive. Let these explain, then, if

they can, how Adam with the least virtue of disposition, nay, with the faintest spark of *prudence* or of *reason*, could, situated as he was, have yielded so readily to so slight a temptation, against such overwhelming responsibilities and influences. Let us quote from another the circumstances of the act: "Adam was left, in regard to the prohibition of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, to the unaided strength of his own mind, — a mind in the full maturity of its powers, and in a perfect moral state. . . . The consequences which were to follow transgression were of two kinds, — personal and relative. He himself was to die if he took the forbidden fruit; his posterity also were to die with him. How tremendous the responsibility which rested upon him! How unparalleled the force of the motives which were brought to bear upon him! How incredibly superior in inherent power to those which have been brought to bear upon any other man except the God-man, Jesus Christ. *We* may plunge ourselves into ruin, — eternal ruin. *We* may indirectly bring such ruin upon those who spring from us to the latest moment of time; but we cannot plunge a world into ruin! Adam was, however, placed in circumstances in which this was possible to him. The condition of the whole race was practically in his hands. He could bless the world or destroy the world, and he *chose* to *destroy* it! He put forth his hand and took the fruit, — an expression which denotes the spontaneity of the act, — and ate it, and

brought death upon himself and the race. I marvel that even the infidel himself does not blush when he talks of '*the little sin*' of eating the apple! Can any sin, I ask, — even the sin of Judas in betraying his Lord, or the sin of the Jews in crucifying him, — be compared with the atrocity of the sin of Adam in eating this apple? Transgression gathers its guilt from the magnitude of the motives to avoid it; and that again from the amount of ruin and wretchedness into which it plunges. Who then can calculate the guilt contracted by Adam when he ate the forbidden fruit?"<sup>1</sup>

And yet this atrocious — this enormous sin — committed in the face of such unparalleled motives to obedience, it is alleged, was the deliberate, spontaneous act of a holy being, assailed for the first time by temptation! And how great was that temptation? The inducements which could lead Adam to set aside these influences and restraints, ought, according to all known rules of cause and effect, to have been correspondingly alluring, at least in appearance. How despicably insignificant, under any view of them, and how little calculated to persuade a reasoning creature they were in fact, we have seen in another part of this work. But if Adam thus fell into guilt, beside which even that of Judas grows dim, he — the holy man, except in this one fault — must surely have felt afterwards a remorse not less than that of the corrupt and hardened traitor! And

<sup>1</sup> Payne's *Lectures on Original Sin*, p. 47.

yet we find in the narrative no hint of anything more than a natural timidity in the presence of his disobeyed sovereign. Is it credible, is it conceivable, we ask once more, that a crime so enormous, against motives so overwhelming, could have been perpetrated by a holy being with so little hesitation and so little remorse?

It is quite manifest, then, that the difficulty we are considering is inseparable from the doctrine of Adam's original virtue and subsequent fall, under whatever modifications it may be presented. The only escape is by abandoning the idea of his original moral perfection, and this, as we have before seen, implies the relinquishment of all moral agency. Then of course disappears also the idea of sin in the transgression; and now the question at once arises, If Adam was not a moral agent, and did not sin in his disobedience, what was the nature of that act and its consequences? — a question to establish whose answer these pages have been written. Here the whole mystery, in fact the whole problem, is resolved. Nor does any other equally inexplicable assume its place, as so often occurs. We easily account for Adam's disobedience in the circumstances in which we suppose him. For it is plain, as we have before exhibited in our chapter on the Transgression, that to suppose a disobedience of God's commands by one who had only reason to oppose to the seducer, involves no such mystery as that of a sin by a holy and intelligent being, who acts against



the remonstrances alike of reason, inclination, and conscience.

A second difficulty which grows out of the doctrine of Adam's moral agency, and his moral probation in the command which he disobeyed, arises from the plain and admitted principle, that as such moral agent he must have been "under the indispensable obligation to keep the whole moral law," while it is also indisputable that "his acceptance, justification, and reward were suspended upon the single point of his abstaining from the forbidden fruit." Both these propositions are taken from Dr. Dwight, and both are, in some form or other, repeated by other theologians; though President Edwards, and those of his views, consider that the "acceptance, justification, and reward," thus suspended upon Adam's obedience to the special mandate, were only the acceptance, etc., which were to include his posterity. They insist that, upon all other matters, his obligations and responsibilities were purely *personal*; that in this alone he stood in a representative or federal capacity. With this qualification, they entirely sustain the proposition above cited from Dr. Dwight. Thus Dr. Payne, in his able "Lectures on Original Sin," says: "Little room is left for doubt that obedience, on other points, was rendered certain, by sovereign sustaining grace preventing failure, and that in no point was his obedience contingent but in reference to the condition of the charter. The Holy Spirit, dwelling in the

mind of Adam, may easily be conceived to have secured by special influence, yet in a manner perfectly compatible with free agency, obedience to other precepts, while He put forth no such influence to secure obedience to the interdict." (p. 73.) And we may cite upon the same point, Dr. Harris ("Man Primeval," p. 395): "The law implies that every avenue of evil was for him closed up — one excepted. For surely it was not to be understood that he might violate every other obligation, natural and moral, with impunity. Left to himself, 'he was a free agent, capable of self-government, and held responsible for a life of obedience.'"

The doctrine, then, clearly is, that Adam was a free moral agent in respect to all duties, yet under a dispensation which insured him against the violation of all except one. Now we are free to confess that we cannot see how both these things can be true. No man can be at the same time morally free, and yet be by some *external power* prevented from moral dereliction. The "security of heaven," to which Dr. Harris, as we have before seen, compares the state of the first man, guarded from sin without violation of free agency, consists in the inherent, self-sustaining strength of the beings who remain untouched by sin, and is consistent with their free agency, because it results from the constant exercise of that free agency. There is no resemblance between this and the supposed condition of Adam, protected not by his own inherent

moral strength and preference, but by some spell or influence from without, from yielding to temptation. It is impossible to conceive of *any* species of "special influence" whereby the Holy Spirit could secure Adam's general obedience consistently with his free agency. Besides, to say that he remained a free agent in respect to other matters, implies a responsibility connected therewith, that he was (either personally or federally) *on trial* with relation thereto. To make a single test his sole condition of acceptance, is either to *discharge* him from all others, which leaves him without a moral responsibility and trial, or to guarantee him against all other temptations, — *i. e.*, to prevent him from exercising free agency in any other matter,—which is to that extent to annihilate free agency. Says Dr. Payne, "Immunity from temptation, or from the possibility of being vanquished by it, is utterly incompatible with a state of moral trial";<sup>1</sup> and again, "a being sustained by sovereign effectual grace cannot be in a state of probation."<sup>2</sup>

To say, then, that but one condition of acceptance was imposed upon man, yet that he still continued subject to many obligations, is not a mystery but a contradiction. Equally so, that he was a free moral agent, (*i. e.*, uninfluenced from without, and on full moral trial,) and yet was specially secured by the Holy Spirit with relation to all points but one, so that, except as to that point, he was not free

<sup>1</sup> Payne's *Lectures on Original Sin*, p. 349.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 75.

and not on trial. We have seen that the difficulty is not avoided by the Edwards theory, that Adam was *individually* accountable as to his general duties, and *federally* accountable as to this particular interdict; that in relation to his personal duties he was specially guarded, but that in relation to his *representative* duty he was left to himself; in other words, that he was a free agent only as respected the special prohibition, and in his federal capacity. Apart from the fact that this does not relieve the difficulty, we may inquire, with regard to the view itself, what Scripture ground is there for it? Where is the least suggestion of such a distinction? or any recognition of it, either before or after the disobedience? Where is the probability of it? for why should Adam be so carefully protected as respected his personal welfare, and be left exposed as to the vastly more important interests of the race? Moreover, supposing Adam to have delayed or refrained from partaking of the forbidden fruit, *how long*, upon this view, were this arrangement and his personal exemption from moral liability and free agency to continue? The view seems to consider his personal free agency, at some time of his life, as essential; — when was it to be resumed? And after its resumption, if ever, should Adam happen to sin personally, but never federally, or conversely, how was he to be punished, and in what way would his posterity be affected? If there is enough in the narrative to suggest any such complex arrangement

as the view asserts, there must be enough to suggest some hints in reply to these inquiries. We think, however, it must be evident that the scheme itself is only an ingenious but improbable invention, totally devoid of authority.

The difficulty, then, which we are considering, meets us irresistibly, either alone or in concert with others, upon any theory which views Adam as a moral agent before the transgression. It yields only with the relinquishment of this idea, but then it yields entirely. There is then seen to be no variance between the plain teaching of the Word, that but one command was laid upon man as law for his obedience, and that that was made the pivot of his moral destiny, and the equally plain dictate of reason, that a moral being must be subject to the whole moral law, — as fully free to break it as he is free and accountable to keep it in all its provisions.

It may be worth remarking here, as a feature of improbability in the common view, that it exhibits Adam, whose natural disposition for holiness and constant association with God fitted him to endure a far more severe probationary test than his posterity, as subjected to one which is singularly insignificant, while his descendants, weak, corrupted, and environed with sin and sinful influences, are placed for their trial under the manifold requirements of the whole moral law, and left to combat with every conceivable temptation. If the conditions imposed upon *us* be no more difficult than moral beings re-

quire, why was the first man shielded from these and admitted to less? If the test applied to Adam were sufficient, why are we subjected to one of so much greater severity? The purpose of any probationary trial is (*probare*) to prove the moral firmness of the creature, and to strengthen his moral powers by discipline and exercise. It would seem, then, that he who has the greatest original advantages should encounter the most arduous trial, and that he who has the fewest aids to success should be most easily dealt with. It has been replied, indeed, to this objection, that in the case of Adam, who was, at least in this matter, the representative not only of himself but the race, the test was purposely made insignificant, in order that he (and through him the race) might have the greatest possible chance of success and of after-acceptance and blessedness. It is surely, however, a sufficient answer to such a position, that the very insignificance of the test must have also destroyed its value. If it were intended to be sole and final, as respected Adam or the race, what would have been established or effected had Adam succeeded in abiding it? So slight a victory would neither have proved man's moral fidelity, nor have availed as a means of his moral development. When God tempted Abraham, it was with no easy trial, and surely Adam should have been as secure in virtue as the patriarch, his "degenerate" descendant. But if the test were *not* intended to be sole and final, but only

preliminary to successive and more difficult trials, then of course this particular experiment could not have been the turning-point of man's moral destiny, according to the universal doctrine, as well as the clear import of Revelation itself. Thus, at every turn, we encounter objections to be avoided only by returning to our starting-point, and taking a different path from the outset.

We may also remark, that in the foregoing considerations we touch the ground of certain complainings which the received view of Adam's transgression and fall has awakened among men in all ages, against their Maker and his moral system. How often do we hear objectors complain that God has made an unreasonable difference between them and Adam, as respects their opportunities of acceptance and life! — that Adam's posterity have never had so favorable terms of probation as he, and that God did not deal fairly by the race in making Adam their federal head, since there must have been in him a special deficiency of moral firmness, to have so easily fallen! "Why," they will say, — "why was not some Abraham first created and deputed to encounter for the race this test, so easy in itself, yet so momentous in its consequences? Nay, why should not I myself have been offered a similar trial; for it surely seems hard that I should be ruined by Adam's failure in a trial which it seems incredible that *I* could not have endured?" Thus has grown up in human hearts an unfilial feeling of bitterness not only toward God, but to-

ward our first progenitor ; and, indeed, it does seem unaccountable that the normal man, fresh from the hands and society of God, should not have been able to withstand a temptation far less trying than many which thousands of his “depraved” descendants have triumphantly resisted. No less reasonable, also, in one point of view does it appear, to expect that God should permit all men to enter upon probation on uniform terms and under equally favorable conditions. And it is therefore worthy of notice, that of all the complaints and cavils to which we have alluded our view finally disposes. It exhibits the transgression not as an act of moral weakness and folly — at once imbecile and disastrous. It represents it as an act which any being in Adam’s situation would have undoubtedly committed, — an act not sinful nor necessarily productive of sin, and not intrinsically evil to mankind ; but one, on the contrary, which elevated man in the moral scale, and opened to him opportunities of exaltation and glory otherwise unattainable. It reveals, too, the fact that no difference has been made between Adam and ourselves in the terms of probation, unless in our favor ; for it shows him entering upon his moral career, after the transgression, with precisely the same nature and under the same obligations as every other being of the succeeding race ; and that the only difference between him and ourselves, in moral circumstances, is found in the vastly greater advantages by which we are surrounded, to attract and keep us in the path of rectitude.



## CHAPTER III.

THE COMMON VIEW OF THE FALL EXAMINED WITH  
RESPECT TO THE METHOD OF ITS INFLUENCE UPON  
THE RACE.

ANOTHER recommendation of the view which we urge is, that it simply and comprehensibly explains the *nature* and *method* of that radical change in man which is universally agreed to have taken place at the disobedience. It has been generally insisted that this change was some kind of a "fall,"—a deterioration or prejudice of some sort, — sustained by Adam and transmitted to his posterity, either in his nature, character, or relations to God. We propose to examine this doctrine, and to show, if possible, that no such deterioration or "fall" can be believed to have attended the act of transgression, as a result involved in its commission. We do not deny, as we have before intimated, that there was a fall by Adam, subsequently to and independently of the disobedience, into sinfulness and alienation from God, — the same "fall" or "apostasy," in fact, of which every one of his descendants has been individually guilty. The "fall," against the probability of whose occurrence we shall offer some considerations, is such an one as the common view

supposes to have been associated with and effected by the act of transgression itself.

Let us inquire in the outset, "Wherein consisted that supposed 'change for the worse' in man's condition, alleged to have occurred at and through the disobedience?" The number and diversity of the replies furnished to this inquiry by the different schools of Theology, of themselves indicate the difficulty contained in it. One party insists that by the transgression man lost all "natural ability" (*i. e.*, all inherent power) to keep the law of God. Another declares that by it he only lost the "moral ability" to keep it; meaning thereby that the disobedience, without taking away man's *power* of obedience, effected such a loss of *disposition* thereto as rendered it certain that he never would entirely submit to its requirements. But these, after all, are rather statements of *effects* than of the *mode*. The question still recurs, what was the *change* in man which left him thus naturally or morally unable to keep the law? That no satisfactory reply has ever been made to this is evident from the fact that it is still as much as ever a subject of dispute and discussion. Perhaps the most rational and intelligible answer, however, that has been offered, is contained in a theory already alluded to; that, in consequence of the disobedience, God withdrew his Holy Spirit from man, who had been theretofore under its influence, and so left him without "spiritual life" and the restraining power of the

Divine indwelling, against the assaults of sin.<sup>1</sup> To the same effect Dr. Bushnell says: "It is not that man fell away from certain moral notions or laws, but it is that he fell away from the personal inhabitation of God, lost inspiration, and so became a dark, enslaved creature, alienated, as the Apostle says, from the life of God."<sup>2</sup> This seems clear and explicit, and partly satisfies our inquiry. Yet we still are constrained to ask, What happened to man, that caused God thus to withdraw his Holy Spirit from him, to cease his personal inhabitation, to deprive his creature of "spiritual life"? There must have been some reason for so sad and fatal a visitation, and what was that reason?

It is urged, indeed, by some of the advocates of the particular doctrine in question, that these spiritual blessings, of which Adam and the race are supposed to have been thus deprived, were "chartered privileges";<sup>3</sup> meaning thereby advantages not naturally or originally pertaining to humanity, and specially granted only on certain conditions; so that on the breach of these they might be withdrawn without injustice and without prejudice to the race, since men were not thereby placed in any lower or worse condition than if this special opportunity had never been permitted. Yet, even upon this theory, unless this experiment with Adam were

<sup>1</sup> Payne's *Lectures on Original Sin*, p. 144.

<sup>2</sup> *Sermons on the New Life*, p. 36.

<sup>3</sup> Payne's *Lectures on Original Sin*.

totally without meaning and without purpose, we must suppose that there was some real and necessary connection between his transgression and the withdrawal from him of these "chartered blessings," so called. Doubtless when conferred it was the sincere desire of the Giver that they should be preserved by man. Is it conceivable, then, that their continuance was made to depend upon something which had not, in itself, the slightest bearing upon it? If not, *why* was Adam's disobedience incompatible with this continuance? Why, and from what motive, were they withdrawn when this disobedience occurred, and never again offered to the race? These are the questions which we purpose to investigate.

Obviously, this final withdrawal of blessings from the race, in the manner supposed, must have been either the direct act of God, not necessarily occasioned by the transgression, or the necessary effect of the transgression itself. If the direct and unnecessary act of God, it must have been either with displeasure or without displeasure; and in this latter case it must have been intended either for man's benefit, or have been without any reason at all. But inasmuch as the withdrawal was, by the hypothesis, a great loss and evil to mankind, and inasmuch as God cannot be believed to have acted from mere caprice, the last suggestion may be dismissed, and we may consider the supposition that the withdrawal was the unnecessary act of God, merely

from displeasure at Adam's disobedience to his command. We should, perhaps, be less likely to discuss this at length, but as it closely borders upon a view supported by some theologians, that mankind by the fall fell into a state of disfavor with God (though without explaining the nature of that disfavor), and as the same considerations will apply to both hypotheses, we shall consider it somewhat fully.

Was this final withdrawal, then, (or this disfavor,) occasioned by a mere feeling of Divine anger at this personal act of Adam, — a feeling extending from him to his posterity; so that although there was no inherent obstacle to the continuance of his former blessings (or favor), yet, in consequence of this displeasure, they were forever withdrawn both from Adam and his race? It will be readily seen that were this supposed displeasure and its consequences confined to Adam, there would be little difficulty in accepting an affirmative answer. The trouble arises from the doctrine that they extend to his future race in all generations, who had no participation with him in the guilty act. If this be true, then, unless we believe that such divine displeasure against Adam's posterity on account of his act was without reason on the part of God, (a doctrine out of the question,) we must account in some way for its existence, and there are but two methods of doing so. Either it is because they *are* his posterity, though not in any sense responsible for his

sin, or because they are regarded by God as implicated in the guilt of his disobedience.

That God does not cherish displeasure or disfavor against us for Adam's act, simply because we are his descendants, while admitting that we are in no way responsible for his conduct, we ought not to feel obliged to argue. Such a displeasure would be a mere resentment, alike unphilosophical and unjust. That God would harbor such vindictiveness toward a race of innocent beings, simply because they were that which He himself had made them, thus punishing them for his own act, is utterly incredible and revolting. Apart from its intrinsic impossibility, God himself expressly declares that he does not punish the children for the sins of their fathers, though undoubtedly, under the inflexible laws of his material universe, the natural *consequences* of sin may extend beyond the perpetrator. Nor is the injustice implied in such a view the only argument against it. We are led to inquire why, if God foresaw that the whole human race were to be thus displeasing to him, he did not refrain either from their original creation or from their continuance after the transgression of Adam. It can hardly be believed that he would preserve the existence of a race in which every new birth awakened new sentiments of disfavor and displeasure.

Is, then, this imagined displeasure of God against us on account of Adam's act, because he holds us responsible for it, or implicated in its guilt? If it

be so, either man must be regarded as having (by virtue of his descent) participated with Adam in his act of disobedience; or else, by virtue of that descent, the guilt of that act must be *imputed* to him, though he be not regarded as having participated in the act of transgression. We confess that in stating these propositions, which we do because they form received topics of theological discussion, the obscurity which would be admitted to invest them were they anything but theological dogmas, does not seem to us much relieved by the fact that they are such. But to consider them fairly and in their order: It is perfectly manifest that, if our descent from Adam identifies us in any way with his act as participators in it, then such participation consists in or arises from the fact of such descent, — something, therefore, of which God alone is the author. Consequently, if he may be justly displeased with us and hold us responsible as participators, he should also be displeased with himself, for at least sharing in such participation. If he is not so displeased with himself, then he cannot be with us; and if he is so displeased, then follows the absurdity that, having been pleased to create us and being displeased that we are created, he is both pleased and displeased at the same thing. We need not dwell on a proposition which leads to such conclusions; and therefore turn to the inquiry whether, by virtue of our descent from Adam, the *guilt* of his act is *imputed* to us, though not participating in

the act. As the advocates of this view themselves admit it to be "a mystery," we shall not be expected to see plainly the method or the justice of thus *imputing* guilt to perfect innocence. But it is evident that this proposition, though in a different form from the last, is substantially the same thing. For if this "imputation" is in consequence of our descent from Adam, then it is this descent which constitutes our guilt. In other words, we are held guilty for the act of God himself. God then shares in the guilt of Adam's sin, and, being holy in all his acts, is both holy and guilty at the same time. Such are some of the inconsistencies in which the doctrine of God's displeasure with, or disfavor toward the posterity of Adam, on account of his transgression, involve us. It seems incredible, therefore, that this supposed final withdrawal from the race of the blessings previously enjoyed by it, could have been the *unnecessary* act of God. We now proceed to inquire whether it resulted as a necessary consequence of the transgression itself.

Did, then, this "deprivation" ensue, as is more commonly and rationally believed, because by the disobedience some *change* had occurred in Adam (to be by natural transmission perpetuated in his descendants), impairing and corrupting his mind and character; unfitting man, therefore, for God's personal inhabitation; of itself excluding the Holy Spirit, and so destroying "spiritual life" in the soul? If this be so, — if the relations either of



Adam alone or of man in general were really prejudiced by the disobedience, — if that act of itself tended to separate the race from God, it must have been by producing some radical and permanent deterioration, either in the actual moral character of mankind, or in those qualities of the mind which lie at the basis of character and go to its formation. Let us see, therefore, how far these suppositions respectively are admissible.

That this act so impaired the moral *character* of man (irrespective of any change in his faculties or disposition) that God could no longer abide in his soul, — in other words, such that had no other sin been ever committed by Adam or by any of his descendants, and this particular sin been fully forgiven by the Creator, still the corruption left by this single act would have tainted men in all generations and rendered them unacceptable to God, has been sometimes inculcated. Thus the Westminster Catechism teaches that “the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell consists in the guilt of Adam’s first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of the whole nature, which is commonly called original sin.” How far Adam’s descendants can be justly held accountable for his personal act, we have already considered: at present we confine ourselves to the latter part of the proposition, which speaks of the want of original righteousness and the corruption of the whole nature, as being themselves of the nature of “*sin*,” and implies that every

man comes into the world, not merely destitute of "original" (*i. e.*, native) holiness of character, but with an "original" character of sinfulness, even before he has thought, spoken, or acted. "Character," then, in the sense here used, means something separate from "disposition" or "tendencies." Properly, it is the moral tone, or hue, which invests a man's life, thoughts, or actions. It is absolutely requisite for its existence, therefore, that there should be moral faculties already existing, as well as life and acts, — for a brute has no *character*, nor an idiot, nor a man that never thought or acted; while "disposition" may exist in the brute or the idiot, entirely separate from moral agency. By the proposition of the Westminster Catechism just stated, however, man possesses a character before he enters on moral agency, — a character anterior to moral agency, and anterior, therefore, to the possible commencement of character, which is absurd. In fact, the principle that man can have no character except through acts in which he personally participates, is one too plain to need discussion. It is universally recognized in the ordinary affairs and judgments of life, and is questioned nowhere except in the domain of theology, and survives even there in connection with no other subject than this transgression of Adam. Probably it would have forsaken this retreat also, were it not retained as a refuge from other difficulties of greater magnitude, which the ordinary view must encounter in its absence; — a

necessity which should excite suspicion of the theory which is compelled to resort to it.

If, then, this supposed deterioration or fall of man was not of the nature of a change in his moral *character*, apart from his disposition, will, or action, it must have been in the disposition or will themselves, — that is, in those mental qualities or faculties which are concerned in the determination of conduct and character. Such alteration, if it occurred, was necessarily either by the absolute or relative weakening of the *will*, rendering man to that degree incapable of rendering perfect obedience ; or in such loss of *disposition* thereto, as rendered him thenceforward unwilling to render such obedience, — that is, a change from both a natural and moral ability for holiness, to a natural or moral inability, or both. In what way, then, could any such change have been produced? Evidently it could have been effected only either by a supernatural or a natural process of mental alteration ; — that is, either through the direct interposition of the Creator, acting upon the mind thus to impair and degrade its properties and powers, or as an ordinary and necessary consequence of the state or condition in which the mind was at the time of the transgression. That it was not the former, we need hardly insist. That God would deliberately mar his own work, no intrinsic necessity existing for it, is incredible. “ Previous to the disobedience,” says a recent writer, “ Adam appreciated the perfections

of God and loved his attractions. After that act, these perfections presented no loveliness, elicited no affections. Light, and love, and filial trust, yielded to darkness, enmity, error, and despair! This could not have been effected by the direct act of God. It is impossible to conceive that Jehovah did or could deface the spiritual beauty with which He himself had adorned the soul of Adam.”<sup>1</sup> To have done so, we may add, and to have inflicted upon man a mental and moral prostration, rendering him more liable than before to sin, and inevitably determining his subjection by evil, — a condition to which his own act would not have naturally reduced him, — would have been to relieve him of the chief share of responsibility for the prevalence of sin in the world, since such prevalence would have been then attributable, not to man’s disobedience, but to God’s intervention. We must conclude, therefore, that whatever evil effects upon the human mind were produced by the transgression were natural effects alone.

These natural effects, as we have before suggested, must have consisted in either the absolute or relative weakening of the will or disposition, as respected resistance to evil; and must have been either a natural diminution of power in the will or disposition, or a natural augmentation of strength in the appetites and passions, or a natural depreciation of the influence exerted upon the will or dis-

<sup>1</sup> Payne’s *Lectures*, p. 144.

position by the moral faculty. Let us consider, first, whether it could have consisted in a mere natural accession of new force to the propensities, or a mere natural enervation of the disposition or will.

We submit that it cannot be placed upon either of these grounds, because, —

1st. The change supposed to have been produced was by far too immediate and too great to be ascribed to any such naturally produced “tendency to repetition,”<sup>1</sup> as the commission of all acts creates. This “tendency to repetition,” — in other words, “the influence of habit,” — is not one that becomes suddenly manifest, since an act must have been done a considerable number of times before it is felt as a “habit.” That a single commission *tends* to the formation of a habit, cannot be disputed, just as it cannot be denied that a drop of water must raise the level of the lake, but the truth is recognized rather by the reason than the senses, so slight is the actual result. “As the snow gathers together, so are our habits formed. No single flake that is added to the pile produces a sensible change; no single action creates, however it may exhibit, a man’s character; but as the tempest hurls the avalanche down the mountain and overwhelms the inhabitant and his habitation, so passion, acting upon the elements of mischief, which pernicious habits have brought together by imperceptible accumulation,

<sup>1</sup> Harris’s *Man Primeval*.

may overthrow the edifice of truth and virtue.”<sup>1</sup> Hence the effect of habit can only be exhibited after time and repetition; and should repetition never occur, no appreciable force or influence will have been created. Indeed, it not unfrequently happens that the commission of an act, so far from inciting to repetition, actually deters from it, in view of the remorse and distress, or other evils which follow as its consequence. This would certainly seem as likely to be the result in the case of holy beings as in any other; and the idea is confirmed by our observations of human character, so far as we can derive instruction from them.

2d. The various appetites, like other mental faculties or properties, are, to a considerable extent, distinct from each other, and are, for the most part, affected, each for itself, independently of the rest, and only by their respective gratifications. In other words, the indulgence of one propensity does not ordinarily foster or strengthen another of an entirely different character. If this be questioned, as respects the effect of *habitual* indulgence, it is sufficient for our purpose to confine our proposition to that of a single vicious gratification. We think it will hardly be claimed that a man's single and only act of intemperance has left him more cruel or more deceitful than he was before he committed it. Now, if it be admitted that Adam's transgression was prompted by some evil appetite or desire, even this,

<sup>1</sup> Bentham.

though it might explain an augmentation of that particular propensity, would not account for what is alleged to have resulted, — the entire corruption of his whole heart and being. It is allowing much, even for the sake of the argument, that the single and slight outbreak of passion here described (supposing it to be such) could give that particular propensity a preponderating influence in the human heart for all generations. It is far more than reason or experience will admit, that such an act could, by a mere natural consequence, place at once and forever the whole tribe of evil passions upon the throne of human character.

3d. Had the transgression simply produced a merely natural growth or development of appetite, or a merely natural effect upon the disposition or will of the race descending from Adam, as yet in his loins, the same results must have been consequent upon any other evil indulgence of any other evil propensity. This is manifest. Yet the narrative plainly teaches that the effects of the disobedience depended upon that particular act, and no other; and that no different violation of duty, however flagrant, could or would have been followed by the same consequences. This fact alone seems fatal to the idea that the supposed "deterioration" or "fall," in man's condition, whatever it may be imagined to have been, could have consisted in any *natural* change produced by the transgression, at least in any of his intellectual faculties.

We come next to inquire whether man's moral sense, or his conscience, may not have been enfeebled or blunted, either in its energies or its influence over human conduct, through which loss of power or influence the race became thenceforth less able to cope successfully with its own inherent tendencies to self-indulgence.

In reply to this portion of our inquiry, we may refer to substantially the same considerations as just have engaged our attention. It can hardly be believed, in the first place, that a single disregard of conscience would have been equivalent to its permanent overthrow, and have accomplished its incapacity farther to dispute the field successfully against all the propensities. Such a sweepingly disastrous result does not agree with our observations, nor is it conformable to the expectations we should naturally form respecting a divinely implanted monitor over human conduct. Repeated violations of conscience will undoubtedly, in time, blunt and deaden its force; but a single commission of a single sin does not, so far as we have reason to believe, permanently and effectively undermine its influence within us, or render it perceptibly less active or efficient in its opposition to indulgences of a different character. Still less are future generations so influenced by the acts of their ancestors, that in consequence of a single sin they are born into the world perceptibly deficient in moral faculties. Such a theory would require a continual and progressive depreciation in the moral



powers of the race, and this we know is far from being exhibited in fact. And in the second place, could we believe that any such consequence naturally ensued to the conscience or its influence, by the disobedience, there would have been no reason why any other sin, actually committed by Adam, should not have produced a similar result. The story, however, shows that this could not have been the effect of any other act, however repugnant to the conscience; and for this, with the other reasons we have urged, we are driven to conclude that the supposed "fall" of Adam and his race, did not consist in the natural loss of moral strength or influence.

We have thus exhausted, as we believe, all the grounds upon which the doctrine of a "deterioration" or fall in man at the transgression, or his loss of God's favor, or Holy Spirit, at that time, can be rested. If no such change for the worse can be made out, and if it cannot be believed that he could fall under God's displeasure or disfavor without some such adequate cause, then we seem compelled to explain the undoubted cessation of the Divine intimacy and companionship which ensued, by supposing it to have been unattended by displeasure on the part of the Creator. This conclusion coincides with the view we are urging in these pages. We suppose that man, by the transgression having acquired a conscience, was no longer in need of God's personal indwelling or influence to direct his con-

duct; that he was now prepared to walk alone in the path of duty, and was accordingly left by his Maker to put forth those unsupported movements in the formation of moral character, which were necessary for his strength and discipline as a free moral agent. Adopting this view, the difficulties which we have noticed as embarrassing the common doctrine are met no longer. Discovering that the evils *necessarily* incident to humanity are not of the nature of penalties, and that we are, therefore, not *punished* for Adam's disobedience, we are no longer driven to believe that we are in any way held accountable for it, or for the nature with which the Creator has endowed us. While insisting that we are judged for our own acts alone, in accordance with the plain and admitted rules of justice, we yet do not ignore any of the facts of experience or of Scripture, nor deny that in consequence of Adam's transgression death was entailed upon all his posterity forever. All the difficulties, the inconsistencies, and the impossibilities which we have been discussing, take their rise directly or indirectly in the doctrine that Adam's transgression was a "sin," and that the burdens imposed upon him in consequence were "penalties" to which his race were "sentenced" therefor. While this ground is adhered to, they are unavoidable, and can never be fully disposed of without either abandoning this foundation, or the doctrine of God's benevolence, as well as the first principles of justice and reason.

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE COMMON VIEW OF THE FALL EXAMINED WITH REFERENCE TO ITS DOCTRINE THAT MANKIND IS A FAILURE.

OUR limits will permit us to refer to but one more difficulty to which the common view gives rise. It is of scarcely inferior magnitude to those which we have discussed, though of perhaps less practical moment. The view represents to us God creating Man in a high and responsible condition as a moral being,—his native character and faculties, his rank in the universe, his relations to his Maker, and his prescribed destiny, being far more exalted than they have at any time since been exhibited. It tells us that scarcely had he been formed in this perfect mould, and inaugurated in this lofty place and mission,—scarcely had his Maker pronounced him “very good,” and begun to lead him upward in his destined path of greatness and glory,—ere, by a single step, he fell from his high estate, and sank into corruption, wretchedness, and ruin. It is not merely that he failed to become all that his opportunities might have made him. “It is on all hands admitted,” says one of our strongest modern theologians, “that the fall of Adam involved the race in RUIN !” Man, at the very outset, broke down in fail-

ure ! For this, the system of the universe offers no analogy. All created things are in the divine wisdom made of temporary continuance. By their very constitution, being formed to fill a particular sphere, and accomplish a particular end, having answered their object they fall into decay and disappear. All this we see without impeachment of the divine power or foresight, for here is a manifest fulfilment of design,— a purpose, a progress, and a consummation. Nowhere among all the kingdoms of Nature can an object be found which is stamped with the mark of its own failure and of God's disappointment. But theology insists that one must be excepted. In man, it declares,— in man we behold a work which, as originally made, was the last, the noblest, and the best of God's creating. He was the work upon which God entered with a special solemnity, and which, when finished, he displayed as the masterpiece of his wisdom and power ; a creature which he cherished with affectionate and careful attention, and which he destined for a career as splendid in the illustration of his character as its nature was glorious by the reflection of his image. And this creature, so glorious, so perfect, so tenderly guarded and instructed, before it has fairly started on its course, falls into sudden and hopeless RUIN ! Instead of remaining in and reflecting his holiness, it sinks at once into corruption and sin ! Instead of preserving its harmony and friendship with himself, it repels him from the very beginning of temp-

tation with hostility and hatred! Its normal state has scarcely been disclosed ere it has disappeared; its purposed destiny, even before it is fully revealed, is forfeited; the joy and love which were to mark its career are changed to gall and bitterness, its intended glory to shame and contempt!

We will not assert that here is implied a disappointment, — a thwarting of God's plans and expectations. We will not deny that man might possibly have been created for the very purpose of having him thus miserably and deplorably fail of his natural destiny. We will not dispute that God might be conceived to have thus formed him noble, holy, and angelic, with the full design that he should sink immediately into a state earthly, sensual, and devilish. But what we insist is, that if here was not a disappointment of God's original plan, — if man's failure was really accordant with his first scheme, — then the moral system presents a stupendous anomaly in the universe, — a strange and terrible departure from the otherwise invariable divine methods of progress and order. In it we see what nowhere else is displayed to us, — the Deity working by retrogressions, retreats, and corrections. We behold Him, after creating man to his satisfaction, — after pronouncing him "very good," (*i. e.*, in full accordance with the Divine purpose at the time of his formation,) — immediately, in pursuance of an original intention, degrading and mutilating this perfect work; and

next, (again turning upon himself,) drawing out the energies of Heaven, and Earth, and Hell, to accomplish its partial restoration.

Let it not be urged that this asserted degradation and mutilation of man was the free act of man himself, and consequently something for which God is in no way responsible. Such an answer may suffice, so far as respects the divine irresponsibility for Adam's personal act; but not as respects the influence of that act upon the race,—its relation to their condition and destiny,—and the incorporation by the Almighty of the fall as a fundamental feature and portion of his general moral system. No one hesitates to attribute to divine agency the changes which occur in the history of men or of nations, although these changes result from the voluntary acts of the parties affected; and in the case of this great event in human affairs, the same mode of reasoning is applicable. Supposing this event to have been a fall of the race in Adam, then God, when he created man, either designed for the race (not merely *foresaw*, but *purposed*) a moral system involving its fall, degradation, and sinfulness through its progenitor and representative; or he designed for it a system not involving this reverse and ruin. If the former, then it *must* follow that the representative degradation and sinfulness of Adam, however voluntary, were in fulfilment of the divine purpose in his creation,—that had he, in the exercise of his free agency, and in his capacity as a

federal head, *overcome* temptation and remained free from sin, this original divine purpose would have been frustrated: that in that case the moral system as first planned must have been abandoned; or else, to carry it out, Adam must have been exposed to such other successive trials as would at last have resulted in his freely sinning, and with the design that they should so result, or have been removed, and the experiment renewed with another and less resolute federal head.

It will probably be difficult to assent to the idea that God could desire and deliberately plan for the guilt, ruin, and wretchedness of the race. And if, to avoid such conclusions, we assume the other of the two suppositions suggested, and assert that in creating man his Maker designed for him a moral system that did not involve this representative fall and corruption in Adam, then it must follow that he has been disappointed and thwarted by the actual result, and has been drawn into a system different from that which he originally contemplated. Apart from other objections to such a conclusion, however, we cannot admit the possibility that Adam's individual act (even if unforeseen) could change or thwart the divine purpose with regard to the race in general. If we can admit that his Maker might have made him the federal head of the race without knowing into what position, as such head, he would bring it, still it will be hard to admit that God could not remedy the evil, when

Adam had acted in his federal capacity in a manner different from that expected and designed. As a free agent, Adam might doubtless defeat God's plans for him as an individual ; but the great predestined course and sphere of the human race, that for which it was in the far counsels of eternity projected, and for the accomplishment of which it was now created, could not be thus easily disturbed. If Adam failed to inaugurate its career in the manner designed, (and this as a free agent he *might* do,) nothing would be easier than to form another federal head for humanity. And it is inconceivable but that in this or in some other way, the Almighty would have secured the initiation and advancement of the race in the particular course he had marked out for it.

It will be perceived that we herein distinctly take the ground that the actual moral system must have been the one originally purposed, and, hence, that the actual moral condition and experiences of the race must be those which were at the outset designed for it as a race. Under any view which gives a moral character to the representative act of Adam, and so makes that act prejudice the moral position, character, or relations of the race, it seems impossible to hold such a doctrine without supposing a divine agency or connivance in the inroad of sin ; but under the view we are advocating no such consequences follow, and we believe that the proposition just enunciated must, at all events, irresistibly result from any correct system of reasoning.



“But,” it may be inquired, “does the fact that man is corrupt and miserable, prove that God designed he should be so? Is God, then, pleased with man for so fulfilling his designs by wickedness and misery? If so, how can sin be said to be displeasing to the Creator? Where is its heinousness, and where man’s accountability for it?” Certainly we cannot believe that God is in any way responsible as the author or introducer of sin, or that he views it with any other feeling than abhorrence. We cannot believe that sin is the legitimate and proper destiny of man, that he ought not to resist it with all his power, and that he would not better please his Maker by so doing than by yielding as he does to its sway. How, then, are these different positions to be reconciled?

We believe that no difficulty will be met in such reconciliation, if the distinction is recognized between “the race” as an entity, an undivided unit in its whole history and existence, and “the race” as separated into the different individuals composing it. Now it is manifest that, as regards these numberless separate individuals, inasmuch as they are all free agents, God cannot determine by his own will what their various characters shall be. He may, and doubtless does create each one of them, desiring his personal holiness, and giving him the requisite capabilities for achieving it; thus designing holiness to be the individual state of each and every man, and happiness and glory his indi-

vidual destiny. This being so, if, notwithstanding this purpose and desire of the Creator, they do, each and all of them in the exercise of their separate powers as free agents, become wicked and miserable, the act is their own, and God is free from all responsibility, even though he may from the beginning have foreseen the result. Now this has been actually the case with the whole race, viewed as individuals; and thus we say that, in this sense, man alone is the author of sin, is responsible for it, and in committing it displeases God, and forsakes his legitimate and intended destiny.

On the other hand, it is clear that the race *as such*, as it has no personality, cannot have the power of deciding its own character, and therefore cannot, *as a race*, have any moral accountability. The same distinction may be made with regard to individual and *national* character. Any individual man may and must control his own separate character and destiny; but no man can determine the character and destiny of his race or nation *as such*,—that character being the aggregate of all the separate characters of all the different persons composing the race or nation in all places and ages. Now we may evidently agree that certain general causes or influences, permitted by the Almighty to exist in his moral system for man, may continuously operate through the innumerable ages of human history, which, without impairing the free agency of any individual, may render probable or certain a certain

general character in the whole race taken together. Thus a government may be so administered for generations, that, without forcing any man to the commission of base or fraudulent acts, the character of the nation shall inevitably become corrupt and deceitful. In the case of a human government, indeed, such a course and result imply wrong and injustice on its part, for the reason that human governments are but the creatures of the governed, and under solemn obligation to them to use their powers in a particular manner; but in the divine system no such inference can be drawn, because no obligation exists to establish any particular system for the masses, provided no injustice or hardship is done to any *individual*. We would reverse a common theological dogma,—that God has a right to pursue any course with the individual that tends to advance the general good of the whole. On the contrary, we insist that the divine obligation is to the individual alone, for he is alone held accountable. The Almighty may not do *him* injustice or wrong, nor adopt any general system that involves such special injuries. But this principle observed, God has a right to select any moral system for *the race* which will best answer his wishes and designs; and it must follow, as a matter of course, that if no injustice or hardship is done as against any single creature, none can be charged as against the aggregate of the race. If, then, no one person is unduly influenced to evil, and yet the whole race has be-

come evil, — if, in other words, the Almighty has selected for this world a moral system involving an aggregate sinful character of mankind, though through the voluntary sinfulness of each individual, — then He may be properly said to have contemplated for the race as such the character thus resulting, so to continue until in the progress of his plan it shall be changed to one that is higher and better. And in all this, as we have already seen, no injustice is necessarily implied; — we can only say that so, for his wise purposes, God willed it should be.

To enunciate the principle in general terms we may express it as follows: Every created thing has its prescribed place and purposed destiny in God's scheme of the universe. Of free agents, since these hold necessarily the decision of their own character and destiny, that character and destiny can only be *foreseen*, not *determined*, by the Creator. Of all things not free agents, the character and destiny must be *predetermined* by Him. Hence, the race as such, not being in its collective capacity a free agent, whatever character and destiny it may have in that capacity, must be that which it was designed to have.

To apply these conclusions to the subject under consideration will be easy and simple. The common view, as we have seen, attempts to explain the existence of evil, and the wretched condition of the race, by saying that they are both in opposition

to the divine intentions, — that the race, as a race, has gone astray, has missed its destiny, is lost and ruined. It argues that our confidence in God's benevolence and justice compels us to believe that God must have created the race for a holy and happy career and destiny; that a different state of things having ensued, the race as such must have disappointed those purposes and missed that destiny. Casting about, then, to find *when* and *how* that common forfeiture occurred, it fixes on Adam's transgression as the occasion, and concludes that this transgression must have been a fatal and federal sin, of which corruption, ruin, and death, in Adam and the race, have been the fearful penalty. Of all this, the views just presented, if correct, completely dispose. For it is apparent that benevolence and justice do not require that God should prescribe a holy and happy career for the race *as such*, so long as he does place such career within the reach of the individuals that compose it, or offer to these individuals such other destiny as is consistent with justice. As no man is punished for the character of the race apart from his own, or is prevented by the prescribed destiny of the race as such from achieving perfection as his own, — in other words, as no harm or injustice is done by designing for the race *as such* that which has been its actual career and condition, — of course, the principles of neither benevolence nor justice are impugned by supposing such design to have existed. Accordingly, it be-

comes no longer necessary to relieve God from the responsibility of having designed for the race as such that which is its actual condition, or to suppose a fall and forfeiture by it, in order to account for that general condition. Regarding, then, the original transgression of Adam as neither a fall nor a sin, nor necessarily productive of either, there can be no repugnance to believing it to have been accordant with God's wishes and designs, and entirely consistent with his benevolence and justice, both as regards its effects upon Adam and upon the succeeding race.

But while it is thus insisted that the race as such has not missed its destiny and is not, therefore, with reference to its original condition, in a lost and ruined state, no such claim can be made for the different human creatures that compose it. That each one of these has missed the path of his true destiny, and is in a lost and ruined state through his own sinfulness, until redeemed and saved, is painfully indisputable. Through the energy of the appetites, the habit of submission to their force is formed even before the awakening of conscience; and men thus almost invariably become sinners upon their first temptation after becoming moral agents. When we say, however, that they are lost and ruined, we use the expression rather with reference to what they might and ought to be, than to what they ever have been; for, becoming sinners even upon their first entrance into moral

life, their spiritual advancement is one of progress rather than restoration. Herein we detect the analogy between the moral career of the individual and that of the race. Properly understood, we believe the same general method will be found to appear in both, and that a parallel may be closely followed between them. In the few following pages of this work we shall attempt, in however brief and imperfect a manner, to trace the main features of that parallel. We shall endeavor to show that in his moral plan with men, both individually and collectively, God's course has been, as in all other works of which we are cognizant, that of a steady and constant progress, beginning with immaturity and proceeding toward perfection. Upon no other theory can the difficulties we have been discussing, and others, be avoided. "The conflict of ages" respecting the moral government of God, originating in, and waged over, the doctrines of man's primal fall, and a system of restoration to God's favor, — a conflict still as far from being settled as ever, — warns us to abandon the foundation which has proved so unsatisfactory. Perhaps no other will ever be offered that shall be free from objection; yet in hopes that we may awaken in others a spirit of reflection on the subject, we venture to close this work with a rough outline of God's progressive moral system, such as revelation, reason, and experience seem to reveal it.

## CHAPTER V.

## OUTLINES OF THE PROGRESSIVE MORAL SYSTEM.

IN turning to contemplate the moral history of the race, we naturally revert first to the circumstances of its origin. We go back to the time when the Almighty, having brought his material creation by successive and advancing stages of preparation toward the crowning work of MAN, is now ready to usher *him* into being. Being thus on the threshold of his moral scheme, we may suppose the Deity planning in advance the method by which he will raise this moral system upon the foundations so slowly and elaborately reared for it. When we remember the uniform mode of action exhibited in all his previous works, there seems but one supposition to be made of the course he will adopt. We almost of necessity suppose him, conformably with his invariable plan of orderly progress, marking out for his moral scheme successive stages of advancement, from its commencement to its consummation. He will not, as he never has, begin with completeness, and make his system a mere succession of injuries and repairs, of ruins and partial recoveries, but every step shall be an advance upon the preceding ;— all together exhibiting an orderly and progres-



sive plan, proceeding onward and upward, from the first awakening germs of moral nature and government, toward their highest manifestation in the perfect holiness and freedom of their Infinite Author. Such being supposed to be the general design, how does Revelation exhibit the process of its accomplishment ?

First, He creates the being in whose career this moral system is to be exhibited. He forms this being on a scale, both physically and intellectually, worthy of his high mission, and endows him with all mental attributes, which will be useful when he shall come into possession of his moral faculty. So far, in all these noble qualities, is he made in advance of all other creatures, — so much more closely in resemblance to the attributes of God himself, that he is said to be in the divine image and likeness. Yet his first necessities, both of body and mind, pertain to his physical nature and to his material circumstances. Until the rudiments of his education in relation to these matters shall be gained, any *moral* faculties or training would be premature and superfluous. Accordingly, the first hours of the first man's life, as of every one of his descendants, are spent in learning to preserve his own physical existence, and to secure physical comforts and convenience ;—in other words, to acquire habits, powers, and principles requisite for supremacy over material nature. These essential experiences being gained, and he fairly installed in life, all is now ready for

his introduction to the moral career for which he was created.

Nor is it merely proper and fitting that the moral life should begin in man at this period of his existence, but it is also just here that his nature requires its appearance as a restraint upon the propensities within him, whose energies his growing wants and coming circumstances are about to develop. Before increasing intelligence should awaken new and perilous cravings, before society should grow up around him, with its excitements and temptations, and especially before posterity — who, by the Divine plan, were to be born with moral faculties — should be generated, it was necessary that the progenitor of the race should become a moral being. Just at this time, therefore, in a way the circumstances of which, and the reasons for which, have been set forth in previous pages, the first man, then in himself comprising the race of whose future myriads he was to become the father, enters upon his moral career by awaking to the perception of moral truths, just as all his descendants first became conscious of moral distinctions at a corresponding stage of their being. This original state of man, then, may, in reference to his moral history, be properly designated the *infancy* of the race.

The nature of the change that thus occurred in humanity when moral consciousness first dawned, was not, any more than it is in individual experience, an *alteration* of its character or propensities,

so as to make it intrinsically different from before. The moral scheme, if it designed to leave man a free agent, could do no more than give him the *ability* and *opportunity* to shape and determine his own character, and the first step toward this was, of course, to make him a creature capable of having one. Up to this period he had been under the immediate supervision and tutelage of his Divine Sovereign, and so had had neither occasion nor opportunity to develop and discipline his moral powers, had he been in possession of such. Now, having received them,—having the inward voice of conscience to guide and warn him,—he may and will be thrown more upon these inner resources and aids of moral development. Man will be no longer carried as a moral infant in the divine arms; he will be left, in some degree at least, to bear his own weight, to walk by himself, no matter how awkwardly and imperfectly, until he shall have learned the use and value of his inner faculties. We shall find the Creator, then, not entirely withdrawing from his supervision of the race, yet communicating with it only in such occasional manner as exigencies may demand,—such as shall aid the growth and direction of the moral powers in a right direction, and keep alive among men the recognition of his existence and his relations to them as their governor. These revelations will not relate to *general principles* of morality, but only to the law of particular cases;—the child is, as yet, to be only supported when he

totters, not instructed in the *science* of walking with precision and grace. The first phase of the moral system, then, is the *régime* or DISPENSATION OF CONSCIENCE, the only rule of conduct of which the Patriarchs and their contemporaries seem to have had any knowledge, excepting, as we have before seen, such rules and regulations as were received through special communications of the Almighty.

In those early days before History, Philosophy, and Revelation had done anything toward exhibiting and settling the principles of right and justice, so imperfect a guide in morals as conscience alone, must necessarily have been inadequate to human necessities. Happily, however, men were scattered; — there were few if any social organizations more complex than that of the family under the absolute government of its patriarchal head. The wants of mankind were, therefore, few and easily supplied, their habits simple and hardy, their opportunities and incitements to evil comparatively inconsiderable; and from these causes, as well as from the occasional divine interposition for direction, control, or rebuke, the terrible consequences that might be expected, were, if not wholly prevented, at least delayed. Human passion, nevertheless, asserted its ascendancy. “The whole earth became corrupt and filled with violence;” and the Deluge, sweeping a generation from existence, came in the history of the race like one of those long-remembered experiences or punishments of childhood, — a crisis in

the individual life which leaves a lasting impression upon the mind and character. Looking back upon these early and sad experiences, — these enormities and these retributions, — we can see that they were producing a purposed effect. They were exhibiting to the race, and forcing upon its recognition, the necessity for a *system* of divine and human law, comprehensive, clear, and immutable, for the government of men, and also developing the principles upon which such law should rest. To Noah after the flood, certain simple and primitive rules and teachings preparatory to such a system, and embracing some of its essential particulars, were imparted, — such, indeed, and such only as the then moral development of the race had fitted it to receive. Now we begin to see human governments established for the first time, — a fact which of itself implies some comprehension of legal and constitutional methods, barbarous and imperfect enough no doubt. At a later period, after ages of experience, when civil society was better settled and organized, and religious forms and doctrines more fully reduced to system, there had come to obtain more general and philosophical conceptions of abstract morality, especially among the chosen people which God was training to be the vehicle of his revelations and laws to man. Yet no one can carefully read the history of the race down to the exodus from Egypt without observing how crude and imperfect were men's moral notions, the remarkable abstinence by

the Almighty from enunciations of general laws and principles, (even the observance of the Sabbath does not seem to have been enjoined or practised till the time of Moses,) and how low a standard of morality God was content to accept and even to require. He seems to treat mankind as immature and ignorant children; and when he imparts instruction it relates only to particular cases, as if a knowledge of abstract moral principles were, as yet, not to be expected of men.

This early experimental training of the race, in learning the necessity and the principles of moral and social law, corresponds with the process which every human creature goes through immediately after his infancy is passed, and he has entered on the comprehension of moral distinctions. His mind, as yet immature and incapable at once of digesting abstract truths, gradually deduces them from the experiences of life, assisted by the instructions, the reproofs, and the chastisements of parents or guardians. Thus he learns moral laws, not at first in the form of a system, but by seeing them disclosed in particular cases, and so is gradually prepared to receive them reduced to a code, and to recognize the justice, the authority, and the necessity of such code when presented. As the period, then, when mankind was insensible to moral distinctions was denominated its *infancy*, so the period just considered as immediately following, may be called the *childhood* of the race in respect to its stage and process of moral development.

Having thus passed through the requisite preliminary training, by the time of Moses, as we have seen, the world was prepared for the next great step in its moral history, — the revelation of a MORAL LAW, exhibiting with divine authority and completeness the whole code of human obligation. This was the law given to Moses. The Ten Commandments, which were its basis, constituted a brief and comprehensive epitome of moral duty of universal and unchanging obligation; while the attendant statutes, ordinances, and revelations, although a great portion of them applied especially to the Jews, were yet of inestimable value to the race, not merely from their typical significance, but as containing a system of true religion, and as illustrating the moral law in its application to the affairs of individual and social life. It will be remarked, however, that the law thus given sought chiefly to regulate or suppress man's evil propensities by prohibitions and commands, rather than to do so by imbuing the heart with spiritual affections whose superior strength should supplant and prevent those tendencies to evil. Its spirit and effect, indeed, were it fully obeyed, could not fail to promote the inner and spiritual life of the soul. It even inculcated, here and there, such sublime precepts as indicated the future and higher stage of moral growth for which it prepared the race; but its main idea was *discipline*, obedience, a pure *morality* in mind and conduct, as the essential and sufficient ground, at that stage of man's moral growth, of his acceptance with God.

This revelation was committed to a people whose character and designed history were specially adapted for the diffusion and preservation of it among men. The effect which it was purposed to produce, and did produce, upon the moral growth of the Jews, may be seen by comparing their moral condition and tendencies when they first received it, with what they had become at the opening of the Christian era. At the first period, their whole idea of religion was associated with childish materialism and superstition, with manufactured divinities and sensual ceremonials. At the latter, they had long outgrown these degradations, and the adoration of the one invisible and eternal God, with the recognition of His law, and reverence of its authority, were fully and finally established. Viewed, then, as a means of moral development, this was the great object and result of the Mosaic revelation: to show clearly to man his relations and responsibilities to his Maker as a subject of His moral government, to disclose the main features of a true religion, and to exhibit the whole outward duty of every human creature, both to his Maker and his fellow man.

This phase or epoch of moral growth in the race corresponds to the experience which every individual soul goes through when it outgrows a reliance upon conscience and special instructions for the direction of its conduct, and begins to comprehend for itself the revelation of God's law, measuring its



obligations by the system of duty therein disclosed. It is common experience that the moral part of man, when awakened by conscience to the sense of duty, first sets itself with energy to the study and observance of *the law*,— seeking for satisfaction and growth in the strict attention to the external forms of religion and practices of morality. Commonly and naturally, though not, of course, universally, this process occurs when the mind, emerging from the fickleness, weakness, and dependence of childhood, begins to feel the first serious promptings of religious thought, and the growing powers which have not yet become fully tempered and disciplined by maturity and experience. It then by a natural tendency turns to general truths; and, strong in its self-confidence, even selects the principles, pure and true, which it thinks shall direct its future course, fully assured of its own ability to follow them unswervingly. This moral epoch and experience, then, whether of the race or of the individual,— the intervening stage between the commencement and the maturity of moral life,— may fitly be called the *youth* of man's moral development.

It would be impossible within our prescribed limits, perhaps impossible for human intelligence within any limits, to exhibit in full detail the economy of the Mosaic dispensation in the work of man's moral development. Even those particular features immediately illustrating our argument cannot be all referred to, and we must simply notice the most

prominent. That dispensation, then, found the race in a state of moral ignorance, illumined only by conscience and vague traditions. It revealed to it with particularity the existence and character of God, the Creator and Ruler of the universe, his purpose in man's creation, the relations and obligations toward him of the individual and mankind. It definitely disclosed the principles and precepts of the moral code, the sublimity and glory of holiness, the heinousness, deformity, and destructiveness of sin. It showed the real moral position and character of men in their actual life, — that they were a race of sinners, prone to wickedness, constantly incurring God's displeasure, exposed to the punishment of his law; — thus revealing in the clearest manner their lost condition and their need of the divine assistance and mercy. Ages of experience under it proved conclusively, what itself recognized in all its parts, that from this lost condition the law itself, as a system of commands requiring perfect obedience, was inadequate to save them; that human nature, however well instructed in duty, was too weak against imperious appetite to render complete submission to pure morality; that neither the race as such, nor the individual man, could be brought up from a sinful state to holiness, — could be redeemed, sanctified, and perfected, — except by means which the same Mosaic revelation divinely foreshadowed, — the scheme of redemption and atonement typified in the Jewish system of sacrifices

and ordinances. Thus "the law was a school-master" to bring the race to the Christian dispensation, exhibiting to men at once their need of a Saviour, with the character of his mission and sacrifice, and training them in the moral knowledge and discipline requisite to appreciate and embrace his scheme of salvation.

"In the fulness of time," therefore, was inaugurated the third great stage in man's moral advancement, by the advent of the promised Messiah and the publication of his Gospel. We need not here consider at length the nature and effect of the Christian religion as distinguished from that which preceded and prepared for it. Yet it must be obvious to the most superficial observer that Christianity was the complement of Judaism. It followed up the work of moral discipline with that of atonement, justification and sanctification. It accepted what had been already accomplished by the aid of the conscience and the law, and pursued the labor still farther into the innermost chambers of the heart. The inadequate system of law was not supplanted, but perfected, by the new dispensation. Man was not discharged from his obligation to a pure morality. On the contrary, a higher standard was revealed, and a more perfect code of duty both toward God and man, enjoined for his observance. Entire obedience to the law had been found impossible for human weakness, and the effort after it wearisome and painful. Yet Christianity proclaimed

this higher plane of duty which it instituted, as a freedom instead of a servitude, and was able so to inspire and illumine the soul with its spirit, as to make it accept, realize, and rejoice in the doctrine. It entered into the race and the individual as a new life — a regeneration — awakening new principles of action, new motives and affections, creating aspirations after holiness for its own sake ; a holiness not of the conduct only but of the heart, a complete similitude to the divine likeness. Thus its tendency and its object were to supersede the old mechanical obedience by a true spiritual virtue far transcending in purity and beauty the sphere of mere legal requirements. By the same influences it tended to deepen man's fear and hatred of sin, — that dreadful evil, so abhorrent to God, so variant from his character, so disastrous to his universe, so fatal to holiness and the soul, so enormous a woe as to have necessitated the sacrifice of Christ himself that man might be redeemed from its power and consequences. Nor did it excite his longing for holiness and the divine acceptance, while leaving these beyond his reach on account of his weakness and guilt. It provided the means of obtaining a full forgiveness for past transgressions while really striving after spiritual life, and strength beyond his own to aid him in his struggles. Thus it supplied the deficiencies of the law by admitting faith to supply the incompleteness of works, and so constantly inspired the believer with new courage and energy in his endeavors after perfect obedience.

Thus the rise and growth of Christianity among the race represents the maturity, the *manhood* of its moral development. In it we behold man's attainment to the true conception of moral *principles* (as distinguished from a moral *law*), and a just appreciation of their elevating, ennobling, liberating nature, — his transit, in short, from a formal to a spiritual religion. Not that this complete result is yet fully manifested: not at once does the man reach all the maturity and power of his manhood, or the Christian the culmination of his Christian experience. But the race has entered on the period when its previous education has ripened, and truth begins to bring forth her perfect fruits. How great the harvest shall finally provè, is known to the Infinite alone; but if we look abroad upon the world, bad as it still is, and observe what Christianity has done for it already, we may form some conception of the greatness and glory which, when the race and the world shall end, that religion as the last stage in the divine scheme of man's moral advancement will be seen to have achieved for him and in him.

Having thus traced man's moral progress from unconsciousness to instinct, from instinct to discipline, from discipline to faith and liberty, the inquiry naturally arises, whether in these, so far as they shall be manifested or experienced on Earth, the race will find the last stage of its advancement. To this question that great eternal future which

shall open to all of us, can alone supply the full response. Yet as to the nature of that response Revelation offers no indistinct intimations. As we have illustrated the moral history of the race, in its various steps, by corresponding moral advancements of the individual, so we look forward as a race, after the dissolution of this material world, to the new heavens and the new earth, with the same faith as we expect the ultimate holiness and blessedness, in another sphere, of him who has passed through an accepted experience in this. God has created mankind to exhibit his grand system of grace in their sanctification and redemption ; and neither with respect to the race as a whole, nor to the separate beings that compose it, will the work be left unfinished. The last great stage will be, as was the beginning, conducted under his own personal supervision. Man, — the perfect (or *perfected*) man in Christ Jesus, once more innocent, — not now, as at the first, from moral ignorance, but from a matured moral wisdom and strength, — in God's image, not merely in a natural but in a spiritual likeness also, will again walk with his Maker as a personal disciple and familiar friend. In that final heavenly Paradise, the description of which closes the Bible, as that of the primal and earthly Eden commences it, it is proclaimed that "the Tabernacle of God shall be with men, and He himself shall dwell with them, their God." There "there shall be no more sorrow, nor pain, nor crying, and no more curse ;"

and man shall again "have right to the Tree of Life," which shall "stand by the river in the midst of the City," as of old "in the midst of the garden;" for, "to him that has OVERCOME," the divine companionship, with freedom, rest, and immortality, are no longer incompatible with "THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL."

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Here we must pause. Neither our purpose nor our limits permit us to pursue the subject further. We set out to learn, if possible, somewhat of God's moral plan, by investigating that portion of its history which relates to the origin of moral evil in the world. If any light has been let in upon this from nature or from revelation, — a light revealing more clearly than before the goodness, the justice, the consistency, the upward progress, without check or failure, of God's moral system, while not obscuring but rather illustrating the great facts of human corruption and human free agency, — then others with stronger vision, will see more fully than we the truths which it discloses, and lift the curtain for more perfect revelations.





**APPENDIX.**



## APPENDIX.

FROM THE ANNOTATED PARAGRAPH BIBLE.

Genesis.  
Chap. I.

AND God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly 20  
the moving [*or* creeping] creature that hath life, and  
fowl *that* may fly above the earth in the open firma-  
ment of heaven. And God created great whales, and 21  
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. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, 22  
and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let  
fowl multiply in the earth. And the evening and the 23  
morning were the fifth day.

And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living 24  
creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing,  
and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so,  
And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, 25  
and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creep-  
eth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that  
*it was* good.

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after 26  
our likeness: and let them have dominion over the  
fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over  
the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every  
creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God 27  
created man in his *own* image, in the image of God  
created he him; male and female created he them.  
And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be 28

fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living  
29 thing that moveth upon the earth. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which *is* the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to  
30 you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein *there is* life, [a living soul,] *I have given* every green herb for  
31 meat: and it was so. And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold, *it was* very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

Ch. II. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.  
3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.  
7 And the LORD God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life [lives]; and man became a living soul.  
8 And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.  
9 And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.  
15 And the LORD God took the man [*or*, Adam] and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it, and to  
16 keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man,  
17 saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 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.

And the LORD God said,—*It is* not good that the man 18  
 should be alone: I will make him an help meet for  
 him. And out of the ground the LORD God formed 19  
 every beast of the field and every fowl of the air; and  
 brought *them* unto Adam [*or*, the man] to see what he  
 would call them; and whatsoever Adam called every  
 living creature, that *was* the name thereof. And 20  
 Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the  
 air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam  
 there was not found an help meet for him.

And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon 21  
 Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and  
 closed up the flesh instead thereof: and the rib, which 22  
 the LORD God had taken from man, made he a  
 woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam 23  
 said, *This is* now bone of my bones, and flesh of my  
 flesh: she shall be called woman, [*Isha*,] because she  
 was taken out of man [*Ish*]. Therefore shall a man 24  
 leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto  
 his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were 25  
 both naked, the man and his wife, and were not  
 ashamed.

Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of Ch. III.  
 the field which the LORD God had made: and he said  
 unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat  
 of every tree of the garden? And the woman said 2  
 unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees  
 of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in 3  
 the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not  
 eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And 4  
 the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely  
 die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat there- 5  
 of, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as  
 gods, knowing good and evil.

And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for 6  
 food, and that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree

- to be desired to make *one* wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband  
7 with her; and he did eat. 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.
- 8 And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of  
9 the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto  
10 him, Where *art* thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I *was*  
11 naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou *wast* naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst  
12 not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I  
13 did eat. And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this *that* thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.
- 14 And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou *art* cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of  
15 thy life; and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.
- 16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.
- 17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sor-

row shalt thou eat *of* it all the days of thy life : thorns 18  
also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee ; and thou  
shalt eat the herb of the field ; in the sweat of thy 19  
face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the  
ground ; for out of it wast thou taken ; for dust thou  
*art*, and unto dust shalt thou return.

And Adam called his wife's name Eve, [*i. e.*, living,] 20  
because she was the mother of all living. Unto Adam 21  
also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of  
skins, and clothed them.

And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become 22  
as one of us, to know good and evil ; and now, lest he  
put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life,  
and eat, and live forever : therefore the LORD God 23  
sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the  
ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out 24  
the man ; and he placed at the east of the garden of  
Eden cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned  
every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.





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