THE

DOCTRINE OF SIN.

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OTHERS IN PREPARATION.
PREFACE.

The chief theme of this little book is, Man himself as he came from his Maker's hands, and Man as he made himself by his disobedience and fall. The discussion thus necessarily extends to such grave questions as sin's nature, origin, and effects upon our first parents and the race; and our effort takes somewhat the character of a Theodicy. Writing principally for the people, we have done our best to keep our pages unencumbered with the technical language of theology, and would gladly have omitted the polemical element altogether if that had
been suitable to our circumstances. Our desire has been to write with such simplicity and love as are consistent with fidelity to the truth. Perhaps it is too much to hope that we may give instruction to all readers, offence to none.
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God has said, "My will is that no one should will otherwise than I, and that there should be no will without Me and my will."

What then is there which is contrary to God and hateful to Him? Nothing but Sin. But what is Sin? Mark this: Sin is nothing else than that the creature willeth otherwise than God willeth, and contrary to Him.

The more a man followeth after his own self-will, and self-will groweth in him, the farther off he is from God the true Good, for nothing burneth in hell but self-will. Therefore it hath been said, "Put off thine own will, and there will be no hell."

Behold, Sin is so hateful to God, and grieveth Him so sore, that He would willingly suffer agony and death, if one man's sins might be thereby washed out. Now, if one man's sins grieveth God so sore, what must the sins of all men do?

Theologia Germanica.
(Circa A.D. 1350.)
THE DOCTRINE OF SIN.

PART I.—MAN'S NATURE & RELATIONS.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY—MAN'S ORIGIN.

What is Man? is a question that must be answered before we can even consider what is Sin? Man's being cannot be transcended by his doing: there can be nothing in his action that is not first in him. What, then, is man as to his origin? Is he a growth elaborated by the play of forces that work unconsciously, and have made him as it were "by chance"? Is he simply the efflorescence of that universal nature-spirit which in our ignorance we name Life? What is he in his nature? Is he nothing apart from the organism that can be seen and handled? Is his life determined, his experience formed, simply by laws and forces that belong to the visible and temporal sphere? Is he, in short, as a heathen writer says, "the noblest of the animals"—his
reason, conscience, and religiosity mere natural developments of latent germs in the lower animals, and, indeed, hidden qualities of matter in its subtler combinations? Or is he a denizen of another clime? Does he contain other potencies than those of matter? Is he subject to other laws than those which rule Nature and its facts? And are these laws the expression of a personal Will which has the right to be obeyed because it is the fountain whence his being sprang? Can this personal Will be disobeyed? Can man be other than the obedient servant of his organism or environment? Such are the problems that lie in wait for us on the very threshold of our inquiry. According to the answer given, Sin will either become "that abominable thing which God hates," or it will be found to be "a chimera," and "the fear of having offended God" "the source of all superstition." 1

Modern science claims to have discovered the facts and evolved the method which are ultimately to explain man to himself. We turn without prejudice to be guided by its light and leading; but we find that to science, aided by its kindred philosophy, man is unaccountable. Nature brought him forth,

1 Froude's *Nemesis of Faith*, pp. 90, 92.
but what Nature is science knows not. As to his essence, man is matter; but what matter is, or whence it came, or to what it tends in its apparently infinite capabilities of evolution, science can tell almost nothing. How organism should arise from matter, and how life is related to its organism, science does not explain. Why the human race alone, among all the creatures of the earth, should have a civilisation, a conscience, and a God, it has tried to answer; the answer, by its own confession, is still far from adequate. "Man grew" is at once the measure of its insight and its ignorance. The law of evolution is its Deus ex machina; but evolution fails when brought to the test of facts. No case of transmutation of species has been found; nor have the advocates of evolution been able to explain by what combination of happy chances a certain feeble spark of life could possibly grow upward in one straight ascending line, through the multitudinous gradations that lie between a monad and a man.

In striking contrast to this crass ignorance, so badly disguised as a new and specious knowledge, is the simple and stately narrative of the Hebrew Scriptures. Whether the creation narrative of Genesis be the stored tradition of
the primitive generations, or the revelation of a later Seer, unlike all other Eastern cosmogonies it describes the process of creation in a manner which makes it in its totality acceptable to most men, and in some of its important features admired by all. It opens with a sublime announcement which satisfies both the reason and the heart of man: "In the beginning God made the heavens and the earth." Matter is neither eternal, as the Western philosophy will have it; nor is it a necessary and involuntary translation of Divine essence, as Eastern fancy has imagined. It is a product of the will of God, exercised in that unbounded liberty which nothing can invade. The same creative fiat gives order, light, and beauty to the primitive chaotic mass. Then comes life in its natural gradations: first vegetable life, then the humble creepers of the waters, the fowl and larger fish, and last of all, the great beasts of the land. And now draws near the great climacteric event, the advent of that creature without whom, it might be said from a loftier view-point, "and the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the land." All that has gone before is meaningless without man—a pedestal without its statue, a living trunk without its head.
How wonderful are the physical laws, which in the mineral world express themselves in cohesion and affinity, and reach their efflorescence in the crystal! how marvellous the vital laws by which plants subsist, and animals move upwards into sense-perception and voluntary locomotion!—but how senseless and incoherent were this brainless world without a being who is able to unite all these subordinate kingdoms in himself, and crown them with that regent intelligence which is "the candle of the Lord" and the revelation of creation's purpose. Therefore, man steps forth in the image of his God, "the finite archetype and summary of all things, the world over again, at once its lord and its epitome." How great a contrast is the picture which science labours to justify to that which Revelation sketches on its glowing page. Evolution leads us back to the semi-brutal form which has just emerged from the almost brainless life of some advanced, but as yet imaginary ape—a creature ruder in his structure, grosser in his tastes, filthier in his habits, than any savage cannibal that modern travel has unearthed; and from this base ancestry "the struggle for existence" and "the survival of the fittest," with the help of time are to develop the statesman, the artist, the
scientist, and the Christian worshipper of today! The Scriptures project upon the scene of earliest history two fair beings, who have been made but "a little lower than the angels," and who wear that lofty mien which makes them worthy of the poet's eulogy:—

"For contemplation he and valour formed;  
For softness she, and sweet attractive grace; . . .  
Adam, the goodliest man of men since born  
His sons, the fairest of her daughters Eve."\(^1\)

Not placed, however, according to the usual Eastern taste, amid barbaric wealth of splendour and of gold; nor amid the refinements of modern civilisation; but with that simplicity of manners and of circumstance which wisdom most approves as the fittest nursery for the parents of the race.

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**CHAPTER II.**

**MAN'S NATURE.**

It has been remarked by the able apologist of conditional immortality, that in the Bible "there is indeed no word descriptive of man's

\(^1\) *Paradise Lost*, B. II.
inner nature which is not also used to describe that of the animals."¹ Even if the claim had to be granted, it might rather be interpreted as raising the animals to the human level in some grand respect, rather than as depressing man in any one respect to theirs.

From the standpoint of Inspiration, all life is supra-mundane, is, in fact, an emanation from the Divine. It does not, however, follow that life is everywhere identical in its forms and qualities, and has the same capabilities of permanence. The primitive seers might well be able to discern that all life is supernatural and worthy to be called "the Spirit of God;" they might be perfectly cognisant of that life as existing in two degrees so far apart that they are not to be confounded without involving the most fatal errors, and still be unable, or think it undesirable, to crystallise their analysis into a metaphysical expression that would appropriately symbolise the Diviner form of that mystic essence which in its unity they

¹ Life in Christ, p. 94. Yet Murphy says that N'ahamah (Gen. ii. 7.) "is invariably applied to God or man; never to any irrational creature."—Com. on Genesis, in loco. White claims it for the animals in Gen. vii. 22; but, as Delitzsch says, it is the only instance where it can be claimed, and the reference to the brutes is "doubtful."—Psychology, p. 94, n.
knew as Spirit, the *ruach* of Jehovah. The question, therefore, with the interpreter of the Scriptures is not simply, Is there a word which represents a different essence in man's nature as distinguished from the brutes?—there may be or may not; but it is this, Are there phrases descriptive of distinctive qualities or relations which significantly point to an essential difference in the nature of the two?—a difference as to essence which may really be as unnamable by us, with all our philosophical acumen and linguistic facilities, as it was by the human authors of the Bible. We shall see that these are not wanting. Meantime, it is somewhat noticeable and suspicious that no distinctive dignity seems to be conferred on man in the title by which he was originally known. *Adam* simply means one that is formed from the earth. It is indeed remarkable that a name so empirical, and equally appropriate to the humbler animals, should have been applied to one for whom a nature far superior to earth is claimed. Our Aryan forefathers used the appellation *manu*, or *manusha*, originally "the thinker;" and from this word, through the Teutonic *mensch*, we have our word *man*. The Greek *anthropos*, as Plato tells us, comes from a phrase which
signifies "the looker upwards." The Hebrew knew man neither by his intellectual power nor by his upright stature, but by his kinship with the dust. How shall we account for this, seeing that earthliness is a common characteristic of all terrestrial creatures? Much as we can account for the fact that another early name for the race was (in Sanscrit, marta; Greek, brotos; Latin, mortalis), "one who dies." As Max Müller says, "They would hardly have called themselves mortals, unless they had believed in other [kindred] beings as immortals." ¹ In like manner man calls himself earthly, because he knows of other beings who, like himself, are made in God's image, but, unlike himself, are not clothed upon with an "earthly house," have no kindred with the lower creatures of this world, and are not, like him, "the point of union of two worlds, the centre, the copula of all created being, the final member of the work of creation, and the moving principle of the world's history." ² The title Adam, therefore, seems to express man's consciousness of his radical identity with the immortal Sons of God; but with this distinguishing characteristic, that he is the meeting-place

¹ Lectures on the Science of Language, I. 367.
² Delitzsch, Psychology, p. 83.
of two lives—the angelic in the earthly—the sphere of mind encircled by the life-forms of this earth—the microcosm, the image of the universe, the synchronism of the finite and the infinite, the representative of the world as surely as the representative of God.

The essential superiority which the entire Scriptures attribute to man is distinctly traceable, in deeply-cut outline, in the very beginning of the Sacred Book. The creative fiat gives being to all the lower orders of life through the mediation of that universal vital potency with which the world was at the first invested. "Let the waters and the earth bring forth" the creatures whose life is rooted in their substances; as if it were beneath the dignity of the Creator to come into immediate relation with creatures of such a lowly order. It is true that man also has his humbler side, his alliance with the earth. But he draws his body-substance from the very finest dust; and this possibly implies that it was dust which had already had its two ascensions—from inorganic to vegetable life, and from that to animal—before it was called upon to assume the dignity of becoming a temple for the soul of man. Even then the formation of man's framework is not delegated to any plastic
nature-spirit, but built up directly by the hand of God; and he draws his life, or still more Biblically, his "lives," from the inspiration of Jehovah immediately inbreathed. Again, the lower creatures of the earth are brought forth in shoals or multitudes, as if rivalry and division were an essential feature of their nature; while mankind starts into life as a solitary pair (and she taken from his side), in order that human beings may not be a multiplicity of isolated souls, but may make a mankind of one single organism, with an inborn sense of brotherhood in every breast.¹ Peculiar distinction is also awarded man by the authority which is given to him to exercise dominion over the earth and all its living constituents; by the superior home which he found provided for him; and by the appointment of a Sabbatic day, in order that Adam might have worshipful intercourse with his august Maker. Lastly, we have the emphatic statement, that man was made in the image and likeness of God; and upon a statement so pregnant with significance for our subject we must pause and ponder for a time.

¹ Science has ceased to offer any serious opposition to the unity of the human race, and there is no occasion to offer evidence in proof.
It need not excite our wonder that these words in Genesis have frequently been interpreted as applying chiefly to the bodily figure of man. The fact that the various theophanies of the Old Testament were in human form, almost necessarily suggests such an interpretation of the text; and it has had its advocates, sometimes in the grossest form, in all ages of the Church. The opinion is, however, indefensible when stated otherwise than in the refined suggestion, that the body may be said to know something of the glory of the soul, as the symbolism of its divinest powers; or, as Arminius suggests, is a reflection of God's nature in its destined immortality. Undoubtedly, the essential constituent in man's godlikeness is the inner nature, which has been outbreathed from God, and which crystallises into the personality of man.

Conspicuous among its elements is Reason. Without rational discernment, reflection, judgment, by which man distinguishes between right and wrong, true and false, and attains to principles of knowledge and of action, man were no better than the brutes. His knowledge would be limited to the contents of his sensuous perceptions, and his motions would be dominated by the promptings of his appetites.
or instincts. He could neither know himself nor God: neither be moral nor religious. As it is, however, he has a mind that spans the sciences, manipulates with ease the subtlest abstractions, revels in poetic imagery, discerns the spiritual in material forms, seeks and apprehends the infinite, and aspires to God Himself. The noblest brute knows nothing of these high gifts, and while grazing in the fields, or devouring its prey in the forest, neither lifts its eyes to map the stars, nor its thoughts to God in thankfulness. To man alone is the dominion of true knowledge given. "Though plants may be charming, and animals beautiful, man alone can be sublime."

The possession of such exalted faculties of knowledge implies a still more regal power—viz., a power to will or choose between the true and false, the good and ill, without any compulsion to the one course or the other. However the problem of the freedom of the will may be stated and decided in the controversies of the schools, this much must be admitted on all hands, that man cannot be a moral and responsible being unless the character of his choices be determined by himself and by no extraneous power, either below or above himself. Deprive a man of his self-mastery, or
the arbitrament of his own actions, and he is no more a moral agent than an ox or ass is. He may attend to a command, or he may neglect it, but he is no more moral or immoral than the dog that trots at its master's heels and obeys the habit to which it has been trained. If man be made the subject of his natural organisation, and he takes his moral character from it, instead of being able to control its inclinations, then nature is responsible, and man is simply servile and inculpable. Or if man's will were necessarily subject to God's will, then he would be utterly destitute of moral power, and no more capable of obeying or disobeying than a windmill is the breeze that fills its sails. Every phenomenon of his history must strictly affiliate itself to God; and this not merely destroys morality, but the very selfhood of the soul, and reduces man to a passive organism in which the Divine will effectuates itself. The issue in the first case is, that man is part of Nature; in the second, that he is part of God; in either case, man ceases to be man. Every other creature on earth seems altogether subject to its nature. The beast does what its nature prompts in the most mechanical manner; its instincts are its master. Man is not
dynamically subject to any but himself, and herein lies the awfulness of his responsibility, the supernatural character of his person, the likeness of his soul to God. Find in his nature that which invariably determines the choices of his will, and you lift his nature above himself and enslave him. Hence, it is not correct to say—"the will in its choice is just the index of the nature; it is the expression of the prevailing bent of the soul." ¹ How, then, are we to explain the lapse of holy angels into Satans, or the rise of impure natures into states of comparative purity, in consistency, at least, with their responsibility for what they are and may become? It is man's specialty to rule his nature, not to be ruled by it; to make it, and not be made by it. The doctrine of self-determinism, with all its apparent difficulties, is the only view consistent with the moral dignity attributed to man. "The will," says Coleridge, "is ultimately self-determined, or it is no longer a will under the law of perfect Freedom, but a Nature under the mechanism of Cause and Effect." ¹ The explanation of this apparent marvel is that man is not natural, but supernatural: the

¹ Fairbairn, Revelation of Law in Scripture, p. 40.
² Aids to Reflection, CIX. 16.
image of his God; made competent by God’s power to transcend, as it were, himself and hold his nature in subjection; or in self-forgetfulness to fall beneath himself, and by his own foolish and persistent choice enslave himself to the nature which he is competent to rule. It is here, and only here, that we can find a satisfactory genesis for human sin.

The Scriptural conception of man is not yet complete. While man is rational and free, his rights are limited by a law that he finds within himself. That law is Conscience; or rather, that law becomes vocal and imperative by the faculty of Conscience in the soul. Whatever be the disputations of philosophy as to the origin of this power, its existence cannot be denied. Every man is conscious of an inward sense of obligation to attain the best—the best in action, which is duty; the best in feeling, which is joy; the best in reason, which is truth. He says always of the best, “It ought to be.” Here also he is like God; God must do the best. When He creates, He looks upon His work, judges, tests, and with inward satisfaction says, “It is good.” The best, therefore, is always the will of God, always the voice of conscience in the soul; and man’s highest wisdom is conformity, as close as
possible, to what is God's order of the universe. But what, in its origin, is this IMPERATIVE which we find within ourselves, and feel to be a law of universal obligation? We are justified in lifting this law within the heart to the highest pinnacle upon which it can be set; it is "the candle of the Lord" in man—God's voice uttering His commands—witnessing for His presence and authority within the soul. Happily, however, this law does not come within the consciousness of man as the imperative imposition of Heaven's will. Rather is it in the soul as something written in its constitution, something kindred to itself, and in consonance with its nature. Reflection will, however, lead the mind to trace this unchanging and universal imperative to the will of an unchanging and universal Lawgiver, whose nature is the final ground of right and wrong. Thus God is felt to be indissolubly related to the soul as the fountain of its moral life; while the imperative of God is so tempered to the finiteness of man, that he can remain conscious of his freedom to obey or disobey, and thus to render unto God the purely voluntary homage of an obedient will. We cannot attribute more than this even to Adam, near as he stood to God. The very sensitive-
ness of his untarnished nature made it all the more needful that he should stand "in law, rather than under law," in order that he might be thoroughly spontaneous in the offer of his love and the submission of his will to his august Creator.

There are other elements of likeness between the first man and his Maker, but these alone are germane to the subject which we have on hand. With reason, will, and conscience man becomes a personality—a self-conscious, self-contained, self-governed unity. With such superior powers, and with the entire range of the lower world in his nature as their platform, man by constitution is "the monarch of all he surveys." He is the end for which all things subsist: the explanation of all that has gone before. Great as he is, he would be a mystery to himself, but for what is spread out beneath his feet. The three kingdoms over which he rules are the elaborate details, in complete pictorial form, of what is involved in his own subtle and compact figure; and it is only, therefore, as he knows these worlds in detail that he can possibly understand the delicate complexities of that many-sided nature which he is so apt to confound with his own proper personality, but which in reality is only its
organism and environment. His dominion over nature, while a gift of God, is therefore no absolute possession, only a potential quality. Heaven gives him only the title-deeds of ownership, the actual Lordship must come from a knowledge of his subject and the mastery of himself. Meanwhile, man steps forth the visible expression of his nature's dignity. Lordship is stamped upon his erect and pliant form. The signs of his universal power are in his eye as his glance sweeps over the planes of earth and heaven; and the very structure of his hands betoken the sceptre that he is to wield. His face is radiant with the capability of unlimited intelligence; and in its mobile features, its vast range of expressiveness, he carries the open prophecy of what his nature holds, and what his character may possibly become. He is indeed worthy of his place as one in whom all the kingdoms of this world are gathered up into a wise subordination, and who seems well-fitted to be the link by which all lower worlds shall lay their homage at the feet of God. The stream of life which flows through Nature's veins becomes etherealised in man, and floats up to heaven in the Godward breathings of his soul. He is the last link in the chain by which God is all in all.
CHAPTER III.

MAN'S PRIMITIVE MORAL STATE.

Theologians have, for the most part, been accustomed to recognise an ethical in addition to a physical side, in the image of God in man. Believing that the Scripture narrative is concerned mainly with the creation of man's essence and personal form, we think it well to exclude the ethical conception altogether from the sacred expression, and to treat the first man's character as the development of his own free activities in the position where God placed him. It may be well, however, that we should glance at what the leading theological schools have taught concerning Adam's moral state.

The Roman Catholic view has been that in addition to a natural goodness which the primitive man possessed, and which disposed him to religion, God of His grace added certain spiritual gifts, in order to enable him to overcome a conscious want of harmony between the higher and lower departments of his nature. Calvinists are substantially agreed in investing
Adam with a native righteousness and holiness so exalted and complete that we almost wonder he was not immaculate under any measure of temptation. To Calvin himself the Divine image was mainly realised in a spiritual perfection identical with that which Christ imparts to men. The Pelagian school, to which on this question the Socinians belong, regard man as by nature neither holy nor sinful, but much as man is still by nature; able to follow either his sensuous tastes, or to listen to the dictates of his reason. Arminians have, as a rule, differed little from the Calvinian estimate of the proplast. Wesley says that he was pure, perfect, and upright, holy, full of love to God, and happy in the consciousness that all his ways were good and acceptable to God. Arminius speaks more temperately, but implies that Adam possessed that spiritual perfection to which we now attain through Christ’s redemption.

The Pelagian estimate we must reckon unnecessarily low; the others unnecessarily high. It is a noticeable feature in the Scriptures, that they are so reticent of praise to unfallen

1 *Institutes*, I. XV., 3, 4.
2 *Christian Theology*, p. 188-9.
3 *Works*, II., 151, 153, (Nichol’s Ed.)
man. Nowhere is there a word of laudation either as to his gifts or character. Only in one book, written perhaps 200 years before the time of Christ, is there the simplest approach to the utterance of encomium, and its moderate statement is that God made man "upright." We cannot help feeling that there is much unwisdom in the extreme and even fulsome compliments which have been showered upon the father of the race. What reason have we for accrediting him with such high gifts as have been invented by the florid imagination of Dr. South:—"He came into the world a philosopher; . . . he could view essences in themselves; . . . his conjectures were the certainties of predictions. . . . An Aristotle was but the rubbish of an Adam, and Athens but the ruins of Paradise." Yet this extravagant eulogium was once the fashion of divines, and as now it is almost universally condemned, so ere long will be the exaggerated estimate which makes Adam, in the very moment of creation, equal to the angels in devotion, wisdom, and heavenly-mindedness of character.¹

¹ The Church would do well to return to the sober estimate of such early Christian Fathers as Irenæus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, &c. Not a few of our
The Scriptures themselves give us the true keynote of the Adamic character; and it is most reasonable in the moderation of its pitch. God looked upon His handiwork, and pronounced it "very good"—i.e., sufficient for his place, morally upright, and worthy of his nature's dignity. This very modest representation of the first man's state gives verisimilitude to the narrative of the fall. If we make man weakly in his higher faculties, and load him with a vigorous animalism, which is clamorously self-assertive, then sin and a moral fall become impossible; and if, rushing to an opposite extreme, we invest him with a concreated perfectness of holy character, we make the flagrant disobedience by which he speedily fell almost inconceivable. The truth seems to lie, as it does so often, in the golden mean. We can easily conceive of a perfectly-balanced physical constitution coming from the hand of God. Instinct is complete at once, and goes infallibly to its destination. It is otherwise with the reasonable, the moral and religious soul. We most trustworthy Continental divines have led the way to a more reasonable conception of unfallen man, and as their names are becoming well-known in our British churches, their influence will increasingly prevail. Amongst these are Julius Müller, Oehler, Delitzsch, Martensen, &c.
know nothing of mind being furnished with innate ideas, or with phantoms that flash out into light independently of sensation, cognition, or experience. "In regard to all intellectual beliefs and judgments, there must always be an experience on which they proceed." And as all knowledge is inductive in this sense, so all virtue is experimental. We cannot conceive of love to God preceding the actual recognition of God's being and the knowledge of His character; nor love to goodness anticipating the actual apprehension of many concrete things as good or evil. At the most, we may say that, as in some children, there is an instinctive goodness before an experimental knowledge of good and evil, and the formation of their character; so, in all probability, there would be an inherent fitness and momentum for the attainment of the good in Adam from the day of his creation. But just as this initial disposition in childhood is known to have no permanency until it is qualified by the mature intelligence and adopted by the will, neither can we look on Adam as worthy of a moral judgment until, by the deliberate exercise of his voluntary powers of thought and will, he has formed a character for himself.

1 M'Cosh, Intuitions of the Mind, p. 344.
While, then, we are to regard the first man as relatively perfect in his faculties, and suitably fitted for his place as the acmé of creation, we may still say with Plato that the Creator, though "delighted with the workmanship of His hands, proceeded to consider how He might make it still more to resemble its Prototype." This first man is not created in knowledge, but for it, and its accumulation must be the work of his own observant faculties; not created in holiness, but for it, and its possession must be the appropriation of his own will; not created in an ideally perfect state, but for its attainment, that he may feel that he consents to what he is in his completed destiny; not created in God's service, but for it, in order that he may not have the feeling of a slave, but, through the voluntary choice of the Divine will as his own, the conscious dignity of a son. The ethical image of God in man is, therefore, wanting by the first creation; cannot be given in physical creation except in germ, in that "living beginning," as it is called by Martensen; that seed of spirit-life inbreathed and quickened by the power of God, which must unfold itself, as it were, from its own self-centred power if ever it is to attain the ultimate glorification for which God has des-
tined it. To give emphasis to this important truth, we shall quote the words of an eloquent writer who sees it from a somewhat different view-point. "To conceive of a spirit as originally perfect is a contradiction. A spirit is a power, and its law is to realise itself through its own acts, to grow and become perfect. Perfection realised at once, which we do not find even in Nature as a matter of fact, is inconceivable in theory in the spiritual world; for a spirit perfect from its origin would not be self-realising ('ne se serait pas fait lui-même'), and thenceforth would no more be spirit, that is to say, power. The primitive state is, then, a free will not in a state of perfection, but in a state of innocence. The paradise of innocence must be not only guarded, but also cultivated by the created will, to become the celestial Eden, the plan of which is revealed to the conscience of the free creature as the true law of its destiny. The golden age is the golden dream of innocence contemplating in a vision of marvellous beauty the end proposed to its efforts by eternal love." As time proceeds we shall see how Plato's idea is to be realised, and man become the ethical image of his Maker. Since the spirit-clay is

1Naville's *Problem of Evil*, p. 149.
PERSONALITY, it may, however, become marred in the potter's hands.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BEGINNING OF HISTORY.

The first man was not by any means the realisation of Heaven's ideal as he came from the creative hand. He was, indeed, "a living soul," intelligent, passionate, affectionate; but not yet master of himself, nor quite prepared to stand in his supremest relationship to his Maker. The natural must precede the spiritual. The Divine work is, therefore, not yet finished. Man must be taught the right use of himself, and learn from the fount of wisdom what his true self is. Accordingly, the Bible proceeds to treat of man's education chiefly in its moral and religious aspects. By the law of uses, the Divine interest must concern itself with that which is the best and highest in the creature. The animal life of man is almost competent for its own unaided maintenance, and is merely the platform on which the higher life of intellect is paraded. Intellect, again, is subordinate to the ethical and religious; and it is
upon these interests that the Divine care is concentrated. Body, mind, and soul, are the enlisted servants of the spirit, and in this light we would have our readers study the beginnings of human history in Gen. ii.

All true education is the educing of the powers that slumber in the mind. Every man is an involution of wondrous capabilities, which require the stimulus of the external world to call them into play, and to coax them to unfold to their fullest stretch. Even the moral and religious consciousnesses are radically incomplete until excited and developed by contact with the facts and experiences of daily life. Adam, then, is placed by his Creator in suitable conditions for the evolution of his various faculties and the attainment of a proper self-control, in order that he may grow up into a self-realising holy manhood, masterful in knowledge, power, and virtue—the crown of Nature's edifice and the vehicle of Nature's homage to its God.

1. Man finds himself impelled to be a student and a worker. He is appointed master in the earth, especial keeper of one sacred portion. Labour is his destined lot; but labour that brings him face to face with the beauties and sublimities of God's handiwork. The scene of
his abode is filled with every requisite for the nourishment of his body, the enlargement and culture of his mind. Plants and trees of tropic richness grow in endless variety; rivers water every valley in his little world; all forms of animated life are there to interest and to minister to his wants; and under his feet the soil is rich with gold and bdellium and the onyx stone, while above his head are the lustrous constellations of Eastern night. Here man begins to observe the facts of Nature, to classify them, to reduce them to their laws, to refer them to their creative cause, and to speculate upon the final ends which they subserve in the Divine economy. To one whose faculties were strong and clear, and to whom all things were invested with the freshness of life's first morning, Nature must have been full of loveliness and almost overpoweringly attractive in all of its departments.

"The meanest floweret of the vale,
The simplest note that swells the gale,
The common sun, the air, the skies,
To him are opening Paradise."

Thus man comes to have an ever-increasing insight into Nature's mysteries, and a feeling of command over her resources. He learns wherein he himself is Nature, and contains all
her continents, yet is more than Nature, even Nature's master and final cause. Let us not suppose that his closer contact with the sensuous world may not have slightly tinged his moral tone with feelings and fancies that afterwards produced bitter fruit. As we grow increasingly conscious of our superiority to Nature, Nature may be increasingly weaving a fatal fascination about our minds; and is, unless we rise above dead nature, and consciously attach ourselves to God. My dominion over Nature, my proclaimed superiority, my freedom amongst her chains of unrelenting law, how precious is the thought! My heart bounds, my breast expands, I walk erect and God-like under its genial but fascinating spell! Is not this freedom the secret of my greatness and my future joy? Is not Nature bounteous for my sake, and does she not seem to beckon me to unbounded efforts, that I may become enriched with all her goods? Why else does she grow beautiful, and pour her fruits upon me with increasing plenty, in response to my interest in and care for her? And thus Nature, whose laws should lead us up to Nature's God, may entice us to lie down upon her lap, and to forget in present joys the golden path of faith and hope which leads us to the stars.
2. Man must be taught to have dominion in the moral world as well as in the physical and intellectual. Conscience is as truly a native factor of the mind as reason; and, indeed, is more concerned with human happiness and prosperity. Adam, then, must necessarily be incomplete until his conscience has developed its contents, and he has attained some positive knowledge of moral good and moral evil in their concrete forms. But how can a solitary being, who is supposed, as yet, to be in a state of innocence, as it were transcend himself and attain the knowledge necessary to his becoming moral in an actual sense? An answer which would be indorsed by various schools of thought is very clearly put by an expounder of Hegelian ethics, and we may state it here:—"To know moral good and evil without willing them is simply impossible. Those ideas are not ideas of anything external, nor of anything that can by any process of analogy be gathered from the external: their originals are in the subject, and, if he does not know them there first, he will never know them at all. Knowledge of morality is knowledge of specific forms of the will, and just as will can be known only because we know our will, so these forms of will demand
personal and immediate knowledge. Hatred of evil means feeling of evil, and you cannot be brought to feel what is not inside you, or has nothing analogous within you. Moral perception must rest on moral experience."\(^1\) The simple English of this theory is, that sin is a necessary element in personality; and must exist as a concrete thing even before it has been conceived by the mind. We shall endeavour to show that every needful moral concept might easily arise in Adam's mind in harmony with his moral innocence. No doubt the concept of evil is involved in the concept of the good, as the straight involves the crooked, as the infinite implies the finite; and therefore there was speedily in Adam's mind a clear and effective apprehension of obedience to Divine law as a good, and of disobedience as an evil. This, however, is but a scanty furnishing for an adult mind, and we have still to ask—What is to awake and crystallise within the first man's mind the notions of kindness, truth, patience, gentleness, love, fidelity, generosity, courage, self-control, without which any abstract idea of right would be bodiless, impalpable, and almost powerless as a rule of life; and especially, where was he to find the opposing

\(^1\) Bradley's Ethical Studies, p. 266.
hideous forms which vice assumes, and without which, as a deterrent, evil can scarcely be regarded with abhorrence? What were our children if furnished only with abstract doctrines of morality without the images which enliven them? What better would they be though taught to define like Aristotle, or to analyse like Hamilton and Mill? Ideas to be real to them must have a visible embodiment, and it is only from the intercourse of life that they can learn the sentiments of gratitude, love, justice, and fidelity, and their ungainly opposites. We find this true also for ourselves, that abstract thoughts are comparatively worthless as principles of action until they find embodiment in suitable forms. What is passion without its starting eyes, or purity without its marble chaste severity, or joy without its sparkling eye and elevating smile? Where, then, will Adam find suggestion and embodiment for that large range of thought and sentiment without which we can scarcely call him moral? God will be his Monitor, and the world beneath him and around him will be at once the index of his thoughts and the alphabet of the language in which his thoughts will find embodiment.

Dr. Bushnell has powerfully worked out the
argument, that all the physical deformities and defects of nature, all "the strife of tooth and claw," were deliberately set there by the Creator as "types of obliquity that shall match and faithfully figure to man the obliquity and deformity of his sin." ¹ We prefer the less dogmatic and more scientific view, that Nature is *man by anticipation*, man Nature crowned with the coronet of divinity. This truth is at any rate as old as Philo and Aristotle; we claim it, with the reader's leave, for Moses. He were a dull Adam if he did not see on the very face of things a kind of apery of himself, in all his passions, moods, and fancy-flights. Certainly, he did not fail to find a human meaning in the animal creation, when brought to the standpoint favourable to the interpretation of its significance.² Perhaps prior to this special animal study he had noted the striking fact that the animal world was very much a world of disorder. Innocent and beautiful creatures were before him, but were there not also creatures hideous and misshapen? Sportive gambols fill the day of many a harmless life; aggressive warfare against innocence is the work of others. At last, one end happens

² *Genesis* ii. 19, 20.
unti all alike. Death is their monarch, the grave their terminus. With painful surprise he learns that the earth is an altar where all life is sacrificed. Perhaps he comes to understand that this mutual slaughter and extermination, or this fatal paralysis of life, is the necessary outcome of mere animalism—the law of such flesh and blood as he finds within himself, when not held in check by the bridle of a higher nature. Meditation upon these grim facts might well help him to the key by which he unlocked the natural symbolism of the animals. Each creature was seen to have its own essential life and nature, and to carry in itself not merely natural good or evil, but unquestionable reflexions of the moral qualities that he was beginning to discover in himself. Language universally testifies that to the human mind the lion suggests courage, the hart timidity; the tiger ferocity, the lamb innocence; the serpent cunning, the dove simplicity; the ass stolidity, the horse intelligence; the hog gluttony, the peacock vanity, &c. The observant mind of Adam would quicken with these perceptions, and as he pondered on the question why such thoughts should come to be associated with certain definite forms of life, he must have discovered that these quali-
ties display the nature that is in himself in its good and evil capabilities. The remark of the historian that Adam found no complete identity between himself and any other creature, appears at the same time to suggest that he found many partial resemblances to himself in everyone of them. Profit and enjoyment he could find among these creatures, as White of Selborne with his swallows, Huber with his bees, Lubbock with his ants; but no society. Inferiors he had found; no equals—fragments of himself—his animal and emotional nature disintegrated, but not one creature in whom all was combined as in himself. Hence would arise a sense of his superiority—his headship over all—relations of providence and destruction upon his part, and of dependence and servitude upon theirs. His evident rights of dominion over them would suggest the need of dominion over the same qualities in himself. His failure to exercise dominion would be the confession of his equality with them, and the subjection of his life to the conditions under which theirs was spent, and it might also be to their death.  

1 Pascal has the apt remark:—‘It is dangerous to make too apparent to man how much he is on a level with the brutes, without showing him his greatness. It is more
That all men have in them the whole range of animality, and can sink into the grades of life that are represented in the various animal types, when they cease as men to exercise due self-control, is witnessed by the literature of all nations. The Hindoo sees the souls of men living in beastly forms, into which they have appropriately passed by the retributive law of transmigration. The ancient world believed that Circe, by her debaucheries, turned men into wolves and tigers and other noxious beasts; and heathen literature swarms with apt allusions to the identity of certain types of human character with well-known types of the animal creation. Certain it is, that the continuous entertainment of particular dispositions will bring out into the human physiognomy something like the features of the animal of which it is a characteristic. Every day we can see faces which are being subtly moulded into the resemblance of the ox, the tiger, the hog, and other fierce or unclean beasts; and all of us feel that it is in the strictest accordance with truth; that our fellows are apportioned dangerous to make him see his greatness without his baseness. It is still more dangerous to leave him ignorant of both. But it is most advantageous to show him both."—Ed. Faugère, ii. 85.
out according to their animal affinities. We actually have human asses, geese, pigs, monkeys, peacocks; and natures of a nobler cast we call lions, lambs, and doves, according to their qualities. It is not for the sake of piquancy that we describe men by these animal epithets, but because they cover the truth as no other words can. Readers of Horace want no paraphrastic substitute for "that bug Pantilius," nor does any sensible reader of Christ's words wish any wire-drawn elaboration for "that fox Herod!" The lesson is, that when man falls below himself, he is welcomed by the beasts, and becomes one of them; it may be to sink slowly down through many lower types until, like the serpent, he walks upon his belly and eats dust.

Such, we think, are the moral perceptions which came to Adam's mind in discerning the true nature of the animals which he had to guide and govern. We cannot pretend to do justice to his perceptions, for the mind of the primitive races was peculiarly analogical and fitted to discern the mystic sense of things with a subtler tact and fuller grasp than now; but we do not err in saying that the meaning of the animal study to which Jehovah set the first man for his education
was to school him in the animal passions and emotions, and the moral ideas which they represent. When he had learned these needful lessons about himself and his relation to inferior things, and had formed a language in which to embody the whole range of thought in the gamut of moral truth, he was fit for a superior relationship and its more delightful tasks. Eve, fairest of earth's daughters, came upon the scene. She is the softened reflexion of himself,—his image, and his equal. Now man is made capable of love, and of the duties of morality. Society is constituted. The principle of dominion is now limited by the principle of equality. Fresh influence will be brought to bear upon his development, and new tests will be applied to his character. The result of her advent will certainly be that man will become more human, whether by rising above the sensuous and external, or by losing something of his interest in the Divine; either way HUMANITY will necessarily be more to man, since his selfhood has been doubled, or rather, let us say, enlarged by an addition which has the twofold charm of being still himself and yet another.
CHAPTER V.

MAN'S FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD.

Beyond and above the morality which is constituted by society, is religion. Religion is the consciousness of God, His reflexion in the mirror of the mind. God being always immanent to the spirit of man, religion is an attribute of human nature, a universal fact. The minds of certain degraded races may be so dimmed as to reflect God's presence with painful faintness; but as the mirror to the mouth of the dead will betray faint traces of expiration when all noticeable signs of life are gone, so diligent and appreciative search will find among the dying races of mankind the tokens of reverence and fear of unseen powers long after the active manifestations of worship have perished from their midst. Men live as they know God, and begin to die as they refuse to keep Him in their minds; and thus it is that wherever you find living men, there also are the signs of a God who is not far off, and after whom men seek.

And yet it would be an unpardonable mis-
take were we to imagine that the idea of God comes full-born into the minds of men, leaving no room for the exercise of conscience, imagination, reason, and taking nothing of its shape from the peculiar genius and previous discipline of the mind to which it comes. The study of comparative mythology has of late led to the conclusion that by very diverse courses have the Turanian, Semitic, and Aryan races reached the goal of the Infinite and Divine. In the dawn of history we nowhere find a civilisation built up out of a Monotheistic faith, any more than we find an Atheistic world groping its way through dreams, divination, and sorcery to a beastly Fetichism on its upward way to a purer faith. Man, standing everywhere face to face with nature, for the most part unreflective, and mainly influenced by his native instincts and his vigorous imagination, saw in the mighty forces of the earth and sky the tokens of an ever-present Deity. From the sun and his splendid powers, the storm-cloud and its terrors, the sea and its fitful moods, from every impressive feature of heaven and earth, the early dwellers on the earth borrowed something of the garb in which they clothed at last the God of gods, in whom they satisfied their deathless craving for the Infinite.
Are we to believe that Adam was exempted from the search for God, which for all his sons has been a pre-requisite to their finding of Him? Did God stand naked before him in the first moment of his existence, to overwhelm him with evidences of His glory and His power, and compel him to reverence and obedience? We fear that the Bible narrative is too commonly understood after this manner. It needs no argument to prove that such a revelation of the Deity was impossible. The apprehension of the Infinite by Adam must have been progressive. Clear as was the eye of reason, unsullied as was his soul, we have to consider the immaturity of his faculties, the paucity of his knowledge, the rudimentary state of his language; and acknowledge that with all his unique advantages, he had still to think his way to a worthy conception of his Creator in His person, attributes, and works. Doubtless he found in nature many of his sublimest symbols for the Power whence he himself had sprung. Nature to the unsullied heart is vocal with God's praise; and never does the innocent, even if untutored mind, find itself in some grand solitude without discovering that the heart is touched and melted by His inspirations. Scarcely other-
wise could it be with Adam amid the splendours of the virgin world, and his lips might well have spoken what our greatest nature-poet says he felt:—

"A Presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things."

Still, great is God, incomprehensible to man is the person, the powers and operations of the infinite Jehovah; therefore let us not hastily suppose that Adam can transcend such mysteries, that no ignorance can perplex him, no false judgment lead astray. We are aware that beyond "the light of nature," as it is sometimes proudly, sometimes contemptuously called, Adam was favoured with Divine revelations. Whatever the anthropomorphological language of the Hebrew narrative may really mean when it tells us that God did such and such with the man, and spake such and such words, it implies direct supernatural interposition. We can conceive of three methods only by which this intercourse could be accom-
plished—by inward impulse, by audible voice, or by a visible theophany, such as was given to Abraham and Moses. The last appears to be the conception in the mind of the narrator; but we must not interpret his narrative too literally. "No man hath seen God at any time." The first covenant was ordained by the hand of angels, and Jehovah's message was spoken by an angelic-human form, in whom the Lord was mediatorially present, and whose glory was tempered to the state of those with whom he had to do. Whether Adam attained to very lofty conceptions of the Deity through converse with his angelic instructor is not told. In all probability the communications given were of the simplest and most practical character. All higher knowledge of God's transcendent nature and spiritual character we believe had to be attained as it were by the sweat of Adam's brow, and the slowly unfolding perceptions which grow with our growth and ripen with our years. Such at least, is the progressive order of revelation throughout the course of sacred history. The common designations for the Supreme Being in the earliest times express only natural attributes. The sacred name Jehovah is inserted in Genesis from a later period by the author of the book.
El, Elohim, El Shaddai are the names by which God was known to the early patriarchs. These names simply express the Power which makes and subdues Nature to itself. We have not in Genesis any passage which speaks of God as holy, though Abraham recognised His justice. Only under the Mosaic Covenant is the revelation given that God is gracious, merciful, and long-suffering; it is still later before we read that He is the Lord of Hosts and the most wise God. It is therefore to be presumed that the first man's knowledge of God was not of that high and elaborate cast which is too frequently imputed to him. High spiritual attainments were not within his reach while still in the infancy of his days; and are not in keeping with the natural or psychical character in which Adam is described by the pen of Paul.¹ It is enough that he knew sufficient, and more than sufficient, to make him responsible to Heaven's will. Was he not a creature? Was it not evident that his being had had a supernatural beginning? Were not his preternatural experiences sufficient to show the comparative excellency of his nature, and that for that greatness he was indebted to that wondrous Being who daily cared for him?

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 45-47.
Was it not the case that he had plain instructions as to his duty, felt the obligations of obedience, knew something of moral evil in its various phases as well as moral good, and had distinctive warning of the fatal consequences of disobedience to the Divine command? And yet all these advantages are no guarantee for his orderly advancement in Divine knowledge, his willingness to take on a holy character, and to abide in implicit obedience to the Supreme Will? His ignorance may open up profitless fields of speculation; and he may neglect the meditation needed to carry his judgment and his heart along with the Divine commands. The greatness which he perceives belongs to him alone among so many creatures may possibly foster vain and proudful feeling. His interest in the beauties of his home, and his ardent affection for his wife, may be suffered to absorb the interest with which he should seek to understand and reverence God. The very regularity with which the earth brings forth her fruits, his immunity from sickness and pain and every species of misfortune, may arouse surmises that his cup never can be fuller of happiness, and is never likely to be less. Even the very orderliness of his outward life may awake in him the
festering spirit of self-righteousness, and bring him into the presence of his God with too keen a sense of his own meritoriousness, as if of himself, and apart from the Divine indwelling Spirit, he could accomplish any good or noble thing.

"For merit lives from man to man,
But not from man, O Lord, to Thee."

To err is human. Everywhere the line of duty is as straight and narrow as the hair which Mahomet says bridges the gulf between hell and heaven. Along that hair we all must pass. It is not the natural imperfections which necessarily attach themselves to created minds, not our little knowledge, our imperfect grasp of God, our weakness in the pursuit of high ideals; it is not these that hurl us into the gulf below—it is the wayward conscious breaking with the will of God, the refusal of dependence and obedience, and so the voluntary separation of our future life from that course of ever-unfolding progress in all good to which God himself would ever lead us.
PART II.—THE ORIGIN OF EVIL.

CHAPTER I.

WHAT IS SIN?

Outside of Revelation we scarcely meet with what inside that sphere is known as Sin. In savage religions good and evil carry little more than a physical signification, and happiness or misfortune are the only poles between which life alternates. The great historic religions of India, Persia, and Greece rise to a more human point of view; but all of them carry the taint of evil into the system of the world, and make man its victim rather than its author. Hinduism makes existence evil in itself, and the only remedy is return into the great unconscious All. Zoroastrianism meets the problem by teaching that there is an Evil Spirit who is co-eternal with the Good, and the Kosmos is the progeny at once of their opposition and agreement. Moral good and evil are one at root with the physical good and evil of the material world. Man
ought to be with the good against the evil; but the appeal is necessarily weak which divides a man against himself, and asks his service for one god against another whose rights are equal, and whose power if anything seems greater. Greek religion in its later forms came much nearer to the Bible estimate of Sin. Indeed, as we read the plays of Sophocles and Euripides, we might easily forget at moments that we are not in contact with the inspired Hebrew mind. But when we turn a more critical eye upon the page, and master the ethical system they expound, we become conscious of pantheistic and materialistic elements which make God so mythical and unreal, and the human soul so impersonal in its good or evil acts, that immediately we feel transported into a totally different atmosphere. Plato, however, lifts the ethical conception of Greek tragedy to a purer height. For the first time we meet with a conception of the Divine which is not unworthy of God; man is crowned with liberty, endowed with a personality which is immortal; and his moral responsibility is asserted with impressive emphasis. Here we reach the culmination of Greek religious thought; and even here we are only at the
portals of those grand ethical conceptions with which the earliest of the Hebrew Scriptures start. Let us see what these Hebrew notions are.

It has been well said that three great thoughts govern the religious life of the Jewish people. The first is God—personal, extranatural, yet present in all things by His Spirit, holy, just, and good in His government of man; the second, Sin, as a constant accompaniment of human life; the third is, Coming Deliverance, the Messianic hope of spiritual and political regeneration.¹ The first of these is the explanation of the second, for the knowledge of God is a material factor in the concept of Sin; and the last is the condition of its acknowledgment and its deepening influence upon the national life, for without hope of help man refuses to confess its presence, and at last denies its existence. What, then, is Sin to that people who have been its great exponents to the world?

The common word for sin is Chattath, from a verb whose primary meaning is to miss the mark. We read that the archers of Benjamin "could sling stones at a hair breadth, and not miss."² Literally, then, Chattath denotes

¹ Luthardt's Fundamental Truths, Lec. viii.
² Jud. xx. 16
missing, by deviation, falling short, or over-reaching some distinctly marked out goal. The first instance of its use is in the case of Cain, and there it carries the full meaning of a deviation from the law of God, as written on the heart of man.\(^1\) There is no weakness in the term, such as might designate an indifferent failure. When man fails to reach the goal appointed for him, he is not simply an erring sheep, but a guilty soul, responsible for unintentional as surely as for intentional trespass. Such is the high moral import of the commonest word for sin.

_Avon_ is a word of intense moral significance, for it is _crookedness, perversion_, by turning out of the straight course. It is Cain’s word for his crime of murder, and Judah’s for his injury of Joseph. It also covers the general conception of evil conduct as wickedness and guilt, because it is deliberate perversity or departure from the right. Of similar force is the word _Evel_—the perversity of justice,\(^2\) the dishonesty of a merchant.\(^3\) Both these terms are laden with reproach, and stamp wrong conduct as altogether inexcusable and wicked.

Still stronger than the above is _Pesha_, which

\(^1\) Gen. iv. 7. \(^2\) Lev. xix. 15. \(^3\) Ezek. xxviii. 13.
implies the rupture of a covenant, or of a friendship. Hence it is often translated transgression, and sometimes rebellion. Here there is the clearest recognition of Divine authority, and the strongest expression of man's wilful culpability. The violation of God's law is equivalent to a breach with God, apostacy, rebellion.

Other terms are in frequent use implying blame or guilt, and presenting evil in more general aspects, but they add no light on the theme we are pursuing. Certainly there is an utter absence of any term that would suggest that sin is a trifling thing for which men may readily be excused; much less is there any indication that sin is the normal condition of humanity, or even unavoidable to fallen man. Doubtless there are occasional recognitions of human weakness, working by ignorance or negligence, as an incidental cause of sin; but in no case is the evil recognised as unavoidable, either from external pressure or from the dominance of a sinful or imperfect nature. To sin is always culpably to miss the mark, or to turn aside abruptly from the true and upright way. Tendencies to evil inherent in man's nature are also frankly recognised; but positive sin is always represented as a thing
which can be fought against and overcome by the freedom of man. To "miss the mark," to "pervert and twist" one's sense of right, to break with the recognised rule or law, or it may be with God Himself, is a course of action which ought not to have been, and might easily have been otherwise. And so we read of the very first act which is distinctively called sin:—"Why art thou wroth, and why has thy countenance fallen? Is it not so, if thou doest well thy countenance is lifted up; but if thou doest not well, sin is before the door as a lier in wait; his desire (sin's) is towards thee, but thou shouldst rule over him." A most emphatic testimony to the possibility and the duty of restraining the tendency to sin. In later times the claims of the law upon the national obedience are based upon this presupposition: "See, I have set before thee this day life and good, death and evil."\(^1\) The liability and even inclination of man to sin is present to the speaker, but so also is the truth that God is man's helper against all his lusts, and that in love to God man is able to do good and prosper. Hence the possibility of a godly life in the midst of sin is asserted on every page of Scripture, and no generation is to be found

\(^1\) Deut. xxx. 15.
without its distinction of *teaddikim* and *r'shaim*, the righteous and the wicked.

The notion of sin is, however, by no means to be limited to outward and palpable acts of transgression against definite law. The Mosaic ritual, with its elaborate provisions for the removal of sins against the theocratic order of the nation, must indeed, as Kuenen shows,¹ have had a tendency to heal the surface of the sore of sin too rapidly, and leave men unconscious of the evil root from which transgression springs. The nation must have had its moral life almost utterly divorced from the standpoint of Revelation, and have fallen into a grossly immoral conception both of the law and ritual when the prophet Jeremiah uttered those scathing words which are sometimes taken to be a denial of the Divine institution of sacrifice.² All this superficial formalism is, however, but the dark background which gives relief to the deeper and more spiritual views of sacrifice and sin which were taught by the more spiritually-minded poets and inspired prophets, through whom God kept alive His truth as a testimony for His holy name. In many a precious Psalm and elevated prophecy, Israel

² Jer. vi. 20; vii. 22.
is brought face to face with a God who searches the hearts and tries the reins of man, who cannot be satisfied unless truth be in the inward parts, and to whom sacrifice is acceptable only when it is the offerer's expression of a heartfelt sense of sin and a holy longing to attain a closer fellowship with his God. Even in the dispensation of the law, righteousness was faith in God, and sin at its core was a heart that forgot God. To worship was not to offer the blood of bulls and the fat of rams; but to love mercy in one's dealings with his fellowmen, and to walk in humble dependence upon God.

The New Testament view of sin is scarcely to be distinguished from the Old, except that here it assumes a more awful form. The heart is more cunningly searched as by the candle of the Lord, and greater and more numerous evils are found slumbering in its depths. The field on which evil has displayed itself becomes almost co-extensive with the universe; and we stand aghast as we read of demons infesting men, a hostile kingdom laying siege to the heart and will of man, and apparently invading heaven itself. But the material contents of sin are in no way changed. The words which represent it are almost exact equivalents
of the Hebrew words which we have briefly sketched. Its formal definitions or descriptions of sin run thus:—"Sin is the transgression of the law"—"Whatever is not of faith is sin"—"To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." Thus write the noble trio of apostles, John, Paul, and James. Sin is the wilful violation of God's law—disobedience, self-will. It is besides untrueness to the light that is in man, the contradiction of his own best beliefs, and the denial of his highest views of good. It is at once the negation of God, and of man's own true self as God's image; self-destruction as surely as it is guilt. As overt action, it may be done in ignorance of its bearings; yet no less is man a sinner, as involved in a state of heart and mind which is alien to the light and love of God. Here indeed is the root of all man's evil; his alienation from the Divine fountain of his life. God is love, man is selfishness; God is righteous, man unjust; God is pure, man is given to lust. This alone is evil, the renunciation of God from his life. All his evil acts spring from this state of death, this evil temper into which he has passed. And yet no man is victimised by sin. This evil is his own, his
choice, his lust. Even when impressed by an evil world without, and led captive to do Satan's will, there is still responsibility and guilt, because, by the grace of God, there is the possibility of a better choice, a nearer approach to God's will.

These then are the essential facts of sin according to the Word:—

(1.) It is, considered as live sin, a wilful act, a purely self-originated disobedience to the will or law of God. Conditions causative of sin, or mitigating the sinner's guilt, are unrecognised. It is a purely personal and moral thing. Sinners are not only to be pitied, but to be blamed; not only unfortunate, but culpable.

(2.) Considered as a state, it is alienation of the life from God; the creature separated in his faith and love from that truth and good in which his life subsists.

(3.) It is in substance antagonism to the Divine, therefore a state of death. In form the sin may be committed against society, or against the sinner's nature; but in its root it is against God alone, and it is from its Divine relation that it takes the character of sin.
CHAPTER II.

THE EDENIC TEMPTATION.

The narrative of the fall, from its dogmatic value to the theologian, has been bitterly assailed by every school of free-thinking. Foolish and ludicrous are the blunders which such critics perpetrate in their blind unfitness for the task of interpreting the sacred symbols; and when they have done their best they have not succeeded in making Moses ridiculous and contemptible. The verdict of good sense is always favourable, often highly eulogistic. The following criticism may be accepted as fairly representative of the most competent opinion out of orthodox circles. "The narrative is a profound theory, with noble features worthy of the subject. Its verisimilitude is apparent. It shows a thoughtful contemplation of human nature, a fine sense of its capacities and weakness, of its aspirations and needs. Its lines are drawn with great discernment. The problem need expect no better solution in this life; for its depths cannot be fathomed by the sounding-line of a finite
understanding. . . . The more the narrative is examined, the more clearly will it appear the result of enlightened reason."¹ We may, therefore, expect to be amply repaid by any honest effort we shall make to understand its leading incidents, so pregnant with momentous issues to the human race.

The peculiar style in which the narrative is couched makes it somewhat difficult of interpretation. Gesenius has divided the different modes of interpretation into four—the historical, the figurative, the allegorical, and the mythical. We cannot rank ourselves with any of these schools. We take the narrative to be in the main historical, but with its more spiritual elements shrouded in the veils of symbol. In Semitic thought the supersensual and the metaphysical are almost of necessity expressed by metaphor; and if the narrative of the fall is invested with mystery or wonder, it arises from the sheer necessities of primitive thought, and the hieroglyphic forms in which early history was inscribed. Picture-symbol was the written language of the world’s childhood; and we have no reason to believe that it was otherwise with the aborigines of the Hebrew stock.

The story of the first temptation opens with the promulgation of a law which claims an explicit and positive obedience from man's will. This, as we have seen, is a preliminary condition to the existence of all sin. Where there is no law there is no transgression. Sin implies God known and recognised in His authority by means of law, and disobeyed. And precisely here arises the preliminary difficulty of this narrative. Why should God have imposed a law which man might transgress, and thus give rise to sin? We have already seen that inseparable from manhood is the law of right and wrong written in the heart and recognised in its obligatoriness by the faculty of conscience. On the supposition that this law speaks with trumpet-tongue within his soul, is it to be known by our first father as simply the automatic action of his own spirit—the voice of his own nature—so that he shall be to himself as God—a Comptist before the time, himself both priest and deity? No; he must be taught to recognise God as his life's supremest law, otherwise he cannot lift himself into union with that infinite Love and Truth in whom alone man is blessed. If, on the other hand, man loses hold upon God, and his sense of right becomes
degraded into some fickle rule of policy of which he is master, then the majesty of law must be asserted with the greater emphasis, in order that he may, if possible, be roused from the animal egoism into which he tends to sink, and be restored to a loyal recognition of God. In either state man must be made to acknowledge the positive and objective character of that "ought" and "ought not" which he feels within himself. Without this law he cannot be so much as moral; and without seeing it as the holy law of God he cannot be spiritual in character.

We must not imagine, therefore, that the Edenic law "thou shalt" and "thou shalt not," is some fortuitous and merely arbitrary law from which Adam, without spiritual detriment, might have been relieved, and without which "sin and all its woes" would never have entered upon this world. Great as is the fall into the sinful and debased state in which conscience becomes a hated law and God's face a fear, still more woeful were the semi-brutalised state in which conscience has ceased to speak and God's name become a myth. "Divine law does not create the evil in which man, by his dislike of Divine control, becomes involved; it simply reveals to man
the alienation into which his heart and will have sunk. Therefore, if Adam obey the voice of God, it is because he loves God's law, and wills to seek his supremest good in the Divine; and if he disobey, it is because he has trained his inclinations to that which is hostile to God's wish, and has no true desire to keep God in his thoughts.

The test by which Adam's tendencies are tried is, "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil," which he is most absolutely forbidden as an article of food. Against this Divine arrangement we often hear the specious complaint of Byron's Cain:

"The tree was planted, and why not for him?
If not, why place him near it where it grew,
The fairest in the centre?"

The objection has no ground but in the still too common exposition, which surely is a gross mistake, that God fixed upon an ordinary tree, "singled out for the purpose from many others around it," and, without any reason beyond a wish to test the obedience of His creature, prohibited its use; that is, in plainer speech, the tree was set as a trap to catch the man, and the entire race in him! The notion is both arbitrary and artificial, like the
theology which is based upon it, and has been a highly prolific source of unbelief and opposition to revealed truth. The very title of this tree explains its moral reference, and shows that the prohibition of its fruit was in no "certain sense arbitrary," as certain theologians say. Would man be man if the possibilities of good and evil lay not at the very centre of his nature, and his destiny were independent of their fruits? Is he to be a mere automatic thing, mechanically fulfilling an appointed destiny; or a moral libertine, knowing good and evil in his life, but equally indifferent to both? No; it is of the very essence of his manhood to find this tree in the centre of the garden of his life. All men are necessarily cognisant of two planes in which good and evil are experienced. Lowest down, there is the good and evil of happiness and pain, resulting chiefly from our own wise or unwise management of the circumstances of our life. On the upper branches of this tree, within reach of man's outstretched hand, there is also the good and evil of morality—the two poles of which are duty and interest, love and selfishness. Destroy these boundaries and you destroy man himself, for the knowledge of this tree with its
twofold fruit is an absolute element in human life.

It is not forbidden to man to know good and evil in their various concrete forms, for it is possible to know them without sin. The gods themselves are said "to know good and evil." This knowledge, then, is not likely to have been forbidden to Adam; and if the eating of a certain tree would issue in evident enlightenment, why should it be placed under ban? Let it be marked at once, then, that it is not knowledge which is prohibited—no more the knowledge of evil than of good. It is the eating of this knowledge which is vetoed. It is well for Adam to know good and evil; but he is inhibited from imagining that he can live by any knowledge which he may practically attain and call his own. No fallacy is more plausible than the fancy that man lives by what he knows, and knows of evil quite as much as of what is good. Vast multitudes around us have placed all their springs of life in what they know will be injurious to their neighbour's interests, and promotive of their own. Self-interest is the fruit on which they live, even in the face of their consciousness of its evil to other men. Not even in
our natural perception of what is good for us in life, will we find the true food of our souls. Human impressions of good are finite, fallible, oftentimes mistaken. He that trusts in himself will find that he is a law of death, and not life, to himself. He will grow conceited of his wisdom and increasing power, eager after unlimited possessions, in the belief that his life consists in the abundance of the things which he possesses. He will say to himself, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry;" but, as in the first man's sad experience, in that hour God shall say to him, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee!"

And wherein lies the fatality of this man's sin? He "lays up treasure for himself." "In my goods, and in my goodness of truth and honour, and in the goodwill of my fellow men, I have my life, and my soul prospereth exceedingly!" But no—God's sentence has gone forth, "The day thou dost begin to live from thine own judgment of what is good and evil, in that day thou shalt surely die." When it is the treasure of physical good, he dies as the sensualist dies; when it is moral good, and he says, "I am rich and increased
with goods, and have need of nothing," then ensues the fall of pride, and the "shame of his nakedness" is brought to light.¹ The tree of life is not identical, as men are too apt to suppose, with their knowledge of what is good and evil. Man lives not by the sweat of his brow alone, whether he toil at the forge, in the market or the study; but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Most High. Our life is hid in God. Our safety is in the continual recognition of our dependence upon His guidance and the bounties of His love. Whenever we become self-poised, self-satisfied, we have cut ourselves off from the upper springs from whence our true life comes. We have the sentence of death within us, that we may not trust in ourselves, but lean wholly upon God.

CHAPTER III.

THE FALL.

We follow now the fortune of our first parents. For a time they live in the wholesome enjoy-

ment of the good things which their Creator has provided for them; but at length there comes the fatal day when the robes of guilt and fear displace the pure white robes of innocence and peace. The sense of sin is reached, the consciousness of having come into the very mind and state of life against which they have so explicitly been warned.

The particulars of this fall are for the most part given in symbols that need to be carefully interpreted. A serpent with its artful tongue is said to tempt the woman to her undoing. The belief that Satan entered into this serpent and used its vocal powers as the medium of his delusive reasonings, is both ancient and widely spread; and is not without apparent support in the New Testament, as when Satan is called that "old serpent, the devil." Such incidental epithets are, however, altogether insufficient to establish a conclusion so grotesque in its effects, and so little in harmony with the utter silence of the Jewish Scriptures.\(^1\) Satanic influence and temptation will be noticed in an after portion of the book. Meanwhile we refuse to have anything

\(^1\) The first identification of Satan with the fall is in the apocryphal Book of Wisdom, ii. 24:—"Through envy of the Devil death came into the world."
foisted upon the narrative which its author did not intend us to see there, believing that the more foreign matter we import we are almost certain to detract proportionally from the significance of the various factors which actually play their part in the event.

The serpent has been a favourite implement of mythology in all ages. In the Hindoo worship of to-day, as in antique times, it is the symbol of reproduction or regeneration. It also represents the allied notion of desire or love; and several modern scholars, such as Dr. Donaldson, the learned author of the Book of Jasher, would give it this reference in the case before us. A still wider interpretation of the figure makes it stand for wisdom, either human or divine; and this clearly seems to be the meaning which it carries here. "The serpent is more subtle than any beast of the field"—fit symbol, therefore; of the highest carnal wisdom, the fleshly mind—inferior to that royal mind which is man's true self; superior to any form of understanding which is found among the beasts; and therefore, a form of wisdom to be found only in man himself.  

1 "Saint Augustin nous apprend qu'il y a dans chaque homme un serpent. . . Le serpent sont les sens et notre nature. . . La nature nous tente continuellement." *Pascal*, Ed. Faugère, I., p. 34.
Here, then, is the simple but most reasonable genesis of sin. The human mind, in its careless ignorance, instead of trusting implicitly in God, allows itself, first of all in woman, its less rational form, to be drawn away to trust in its own perceptions and surmises. How natural, we may say, that the woman, in pondering on the mystery of things, should come to reason thus—"Why should desires have been planted in us that we are not allowed to gratify; and why should we have a wisdom in which we may not rejoice? Must there not be some mistake? Is not Elohim prohibiting us just to pique our curiosity, and make us the more anxious to partake? Can wisdom ever be undesirable? By what else can we be guided? Is it not an attribute of God Himself; and might it not be true that if we should only acquire this wisdom we too would be as God?" Thus the woman's mind stoops to the level of an earthly prudence which is sufficient for itself. Her good grows to be less in God, and more in the things of sense and the satisfactions of the sensuous life. She is, alas, too open to the attraction of what seems good for food, and pleasant to the eye, and likely to promote her personal independence by the increase of her
wisdom. At length her temptations become her fixed choice, and she falls before "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." ¹

"Adam was not deceived" as was the woman. Doubtless the same soft whispers were breathed into his ear, although he could not welcome them with a simplicity like hers. Yet there was a spell, a glamour of enchantment, in the suggested possibilities which rose before his mind, which, under the impressment of his manly love, seduced him from his allegiance, and precipitated the fatal crisis of his life. "She gave unto her husband with her, and he did eat." "Lovely in their lives, in their death they were not divided."

"So they loved, as love in twain
    Had the essence but in one;
    Two distincts, division none:
    Number there in love was slain."

Such is the touchingly human account which the Bible gives of sin's beginning in this world. Our interest is concentrated on the man. The woman is the field on which the battle of temptation is fought out; but in this case, as so often, she is just the more spontaneous

¹ 1 John ii. 16.
and impulsive man, the quicker ripening of what the man will come to in the end. We must therefore take the woman as a revelation of the more hidden tendencies of Adam's mind. Temptation only brings out to the surface what is the cherished disposition of the soul. Sin is no inherent attribute of human nature, though man's limitations are the grounds of its possibility; no misfortune into which man is dragged by external tempters of which he was not warned; is not, as Müller is disposed to think, "a germ lying concealed in man,"¹ which experience must necessarily develop into active strife with the Divine; but, in fact, the voluntary choice of man to bring himself into a state of mind which he has been beforehand warned is evil.

The fall betrays the failure of the first man to lay to heart the religious lessons which his fellowship with the Divine Spirit had been teaching him. Before the climax of his sin his mind had been waning in its reverence for the Divine; his intercourse with nature had possibly weakened his feeling of dependence; his consciousness of ignorance and of difficulty in the attainment of knowledge, his necessity for daily toil, his perception of higher

¹ II., p. 389, 1st Ed.
and more glorious states of being than his own, may have begot some measure of disaffection in his mind, some want of faith in the goodness of the Supreme; and certainly he must have come to doubt that he was made in the image of God, therefore already destined to the highest good, when he could entertain the thought that he might become like God by a process of self-elevation which was not only absolutely forbidden, but declared to be the path of death. Most wisely this impulse to trust in his own wisdom, and to find his happiness in his own endowments, is represented as coming from beneath. As flattery of his own acquirements, it will seem as life to him; and even when death has intervened, it may almost be impossible to persuade him that death is real. Delusion is the irony of fate for the soul that has ceased to link its life with God's, and to find its destiny in eternal union with His Spirit.

Such always and everywhere is the sin which brings forth death.
CHAPTER IV.

MAN AS A FALLEN CREATURE.

The fall was man's refusal to achieve his
destiny as God would lead him, and his choice
to follow it in a way commendable to himself.
He was determined to live by his knowledge
of what was good and evil. This open breach
of his natural relationship to God as a depen-
dent recipient of life, could not but be followed
by most serious, if not fatal results. The
course of things consistent with the orderly
development of man's nature by continuous
trust in God, could not possibly subsist along-
side so radical a change as man's determination
to follow where his own lights led him. To
break with God is also to break with His
appointed order, and to precipitate disorder
where before everything was "very good."

Accordingly, to come in upon the garden
after man has become conscious of transgres-
sion is like our advent into another world.
All is changed. Man's lot is burdened with
unceasing toil and nature's grudging service:
woman's with inevitable pain and humiliation.
His character of innocence and peace is de-
graded into guilty shame and fear; and the nature that seemed to be impassive, has been smitten with the stroke of death, and is now destined to return unto the dust, having no pre-eminence above the beast's. We must pause and ponder upon this scene of wreckage and confusion; as it contains the moral of all that has gone before. At present we shall confine ourselves to the effects of sin on Adam's character.

"The eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked." "I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid myself." Here we see that conscious transgression ushers man into a state of self-humiliation, shame, and fear of God. Müller, in his great work, says of this awakened shame,—"It points rather to a consciousness of a previously existing want and deficiency, than to the entrance of a perversion into the sphere of an absolutely pure existence." So think we. If, however, it is to be taken as indicating a merely physical nakedness, we must suppose that lust has come to be superinduced upon the natural passion, and thus "make the Devil the first inventor of modesty"—conclusions which we utterly dislike.

1 Kingsley's Yeast, p. 28.
Surely we should take the incident as the symbol of a mental state. Adam and Eve were as naked, as insufficient for themselves before the fall as after; but while as yet they were habitually trusting in the Lord, they had no sense of nakedness. When, however, they had suffered the sensuous understanding to mislead them into the evil experiment of becoming gods by reliance upon its wisdom, and found themselves betrayed, then they came to discover their nakedness of good, to feel ashamed, as if their dependent state were a humiliation; perhaps to cherish secret reflections against their Creator on account of their deficiency, and then to tremble at the thought of meeting Him whose law they had disobeyed. The scene is one which has often been repeated in the course of human history. When we become very wise in our own conceits, and, instead of finding life in our fancied wisdom, discover that we have fallen into sin and guilt, very awful is the sense of nakedness with which we are overcome, and bitter beyond human language are the tears which our misfortune and shame wring from our hearts. Every conscious fall is a lapse from the peace of innocence and the enjoyment of God, to a state of turmoil and sorrow in our-
selves. Happily, as the experience of our fallen parents shows, the Divine goodness does not turn utterly away from us; for while the radical effects of sin must take their course, God draws near to proffer needful consolation for our griefs, lest the inadequacy of our own resources should make the bitterness of our sin more than we could bear.¹

The question, so much discussed, as to whether Adam lost the image of God by the fall, we have already answered. We have taken the image of God to consist mainly in man’s spiritual personality, and that could not be lost and man remain himself. The ethical identity of man with his Creator, we argued, was possible to man only by a personal appropriation. To this end God was educating the creature into the knowledge of and sympathy with Himself; and the likeness of God “in knowledge and true holiness,” which would at length have resulted from man’s acceptance of the truth, was sacrificed for a smaller apparent good while his spiritual education was scarcely well begun. In this sense, man lost the image of his Maker—that spiritual conformity which can now be attained only through the redemption that is in Christ.

¹ Cf. Gen. iii. 7 and 21.
The Scriptures nowhere hint that the Divine image was lost to man by Adam's fall, and it is safer to avoid such language. Nevertheless, it may still be argued that there is a positive infliction of depravity, a fatal deterioration of Adam's character in consequence of his sin. We tread on dangerous ground when we impute to God any immediate hand in the degradation of His creature's character. The apparent necessity for doing so arises from a false conception of the origin of sin. That Adam's character became deteriorated we cannot doubt, if we are to admit that there was sin; but the deterioration was not the consequence of the sin so much as it was its cause. Evil acts not only defile a man, they as well reveal a defilement which gives them birth. The act is only the encouragement of the passion, and the fixing of the mental habit of transgression. Whatever deficiency is found in fallen Adam is not to be regarded as solely the infliction of his sin, but in part the previously-cherished disposition out of which it sprang. His wilful transgression may confirm the depravity of his character, but it cannot totally create it.

The same consideration makes the theory of Dr. Payne impossible. He asserts that when Adam sinned "God withdrew His Holy
Spirit from him. He did this as a penal act, as the execution of the threatening; . . . as a public and strong expression of His displeasure against his unprovoked and wicked rebellion." The doctor thinks he can avoid the imputation that God made Adam depraved in punishment of his sin, by holding that the withdrawal of the Spirit was not the infliction of the depravity, "but the occasion of it." To all who hold this opinion we commend the ready and effective answer of the Cen- tines,—"In that case the Spirit sinned along with him, and how can he escape peril who says this?" It is little better than a sophism to inveigh against theories which assert a direct instillation of depravity into Adam's soul, and then, with subtle and elaborate argumentation, enforce a theory which still makes God the direct and responsible occasion of plunging the whole human race into un-avoidable wickedness and depravity.

Apart from the utter immorality of this hypothesis, it is, as we have already said, an impossibility. It is only tenable on a supposition which, as Payne admits, has been the crux crucis of speculative theologians in all

1 *Original Sin*, p. 115, 2nd Ed.
2 *Clem. Hom.*, ch. xvii. 3.
times, that Adam's "wrong volition originated in a perfectly holy mind:" that one moment he was a perfect saint, the next a totally depraved sinner! The Scriptures nowhere teach that unfallen Adam was a holy man, and a reasonable interpretation of his case has shown us that he was only on his way to be holy, but missed the mark, or turned aside to a frame of mind incompatible with holiness. His overt sins were simply the outcome of his alienated mind; and the punishment of his sin could not possibly be the withdrawal of the Holy Spirit from him and the race, since his sin consisted in its essence of his personal refusal to be led by the Holy Spirit, and the wilful exclusion of Divine influence from his heart. Had Adam been habitually appropriating the Divine light and leading, he could not have fallen into that real indifference to the Divine, in which his self-love and his disobedience took their rise. Therefore, the loss of the Spirit was not a penal infliction for his sin, but the essence of the sin itself on its purely spiritual side. Possibly Adam was at first, in a measure, unaware of his growing alienation. It is one of the fatalities of indifference that we may

1 *Ut supra*, p. 121.
drift unconsciously until we are in the sweep of the rapids, and the roar of Niagara is in our ear. The penalty at last is much the same, however we are drawn into the current. But it is much more reasonable to think that Adam fell gradually into his sinful state, and was in a measure overtaken in his fault, than that with his eyes open, and in a holy frame of mind, he shot the precipice of disobedience into the gulf of death.

The truth, then, seems to be that Adam's sin is not so much the cause as the equivalent of his personal deterioration. What the moral effects of his awakening may have been we cannot say, as his spiritual biography is not recorded. It is sin's lurid history the author is concerned with, not the man's. This much, however, is implied, that he had come into a state out of which even penitence could not restore him to the enjoyment of the advantages he had so recklessly cast away. The record of the past is irreversible. The future must be unlike to what it might have been. Nature must be more with him, God less. The way of happiness will be lost among many devious paths; and even his domestic joys will be marred with discords which sin's hands will strike upon the strings of love. The worst
of all is now that evil's shadow ever haunts his steps, and its presence grows the darker in the nearer light of God's most holy face. His coming now begets no cheerful sense of safety, but a fresh remembrance of his fall and guilt. So close the gates of Paradise on man.

An attempt has been made to reverse the common reading of the fall, and interpret it as a fall upwards. The writer of the article in the *Encyclopaedia Brit.*, to which we have already referred, would have us read the fall "as one of the most fortunate facts in man's history, as it was also one of the saddest." We cannot exactly solve this paradox. Bolder and more consistent ground is taken by certain Continental writers. "Nothing is said of a fall, but only of progress."¹ "The object of the writer seems rather to have been the elevation of the human race towards the Deity."² Such is the meaning which unlimited audacity extracts from the saying: "Behold, the man has become as one of us to know good and evil;" and the inference is even drawn that the gods are envious at man's advance to such desirable knowledge!

¹ *The Bible for Young People*, by Dutch Divines, I., p. 61.
² Von Bohlen's *Hist. and Crit. Illustrations*, II., p. 54.
Who does not see that the words are spoken in gentle irony from the man's own point of view? The man has reached his goal, has acted as if he were God, as if his wisdom were infallible, himself were his own God, his own will his only law.

The grain of truth which this opinion represents is that man attained to wider knowledge by his fall—passed from the state of childlike naïveté to a larger vision of his life and its significance. But inasmuch as it was knowledge immaturely gained, and consequently knowledge mixed with deadly error, and purchased with the price of guilt, the new experience was a moral fall, especially a religious lapse, which no possible advantages could atone for, in this life at least. Far happier for himself and for the world, if his heart had confirmed itself in its affections for the spiritual and its obedience to the will of God. And so far from sin being a necessary factor of human development, or accidentally a contribution to the world's advancement, the whole course of Bible revelation is one emphatic protest against its existence as a baneful element in man's life, and a guilty violation of that diviner order by which God would have led the race into eternal fellowship with Himself,
CHAPTER V.

DEATH AS THE PENALTY OF SIN.

Death is the ominous word which gathers into focus all the miserable outcome of the fall. "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," is the threatening in which man was warned of the fatal consequences of his sin. Endless controversy has been excited by these words, and the discussion of ages has not yet ushered in a unanimous verdict by the Church. We have therefore to pause and ask, What is the true sense of these words? According to the Westminster Standards, they include temporal, spiritual, and eternal death. By temporal death is meant the sickness, pain, and dissolution of the body; by spiritual, to be "utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually;" by eternal death, "separation from the comfortable presence of God, and most grievous torments in soul and body, without intermission, in hell-fire for ever."¹

That these penalties were actually experienced

¹ Larger Catechism, Q. 25, 29.
in their intensity by Adam, perhaps no divine ever has asserted; that they were threatened is still largely credited. The Scriptures give no countenance whatever to the dreadful conception that Adam was sentenced to an eternity of punishment, of which, in all certainty, he was entirely ignorant. The modern hell cannot with any show of historical truth be made a doctrine of the primitive ages; and we cannot imagine that the sentence would contain an element of penalty, and that by far the most important, of which the subject of the threatening was kept in utter ignorance. At the same time, we have no difficulty in conceiving that while Adam gave a physical interpretation to the threatened penalty, he was not altogether oblivious to the possibility of his personality surviving the extinction of his bodily form. We cannot think that he was favoured with any positive assurance that his spirit would survive the grave. In the circumstances, it was perhaps better that he should feel uncertain of prolonged existence in the case of his bodily dissolution. Naturally it would make him more careful of that one life of which he was certain, and enhance the value of that tree on access to which his corporeal existence was dependent.
Nevertheless, there were many things in his experience that might well be provocative of a strong impression in favour of a spiritual immortality. God is a Spirit, and the knowledge that he was created in God's image must almost necessarily have suggested that even if he lost what was distinctive of him as an earthly being, he might survive in that superior essence of which his better self was formed. If this truth was too metaphysical for his apprehension, he was still liable to have his immortality suggested by his contact with angelic intelligences. That Adam had such open communication every believer in the truth of the Biblical record must admit; and while the unvarying concomitant of such communion with the unseen in all ages is the belief in immortality, it is not reasonable to think that Adam shut his eyes to the possibilities suggested thereby for himself—viz., that he, too, was capable of existing as a spirit in that spirit-world out of which his visitants arrived, and into which they returned again. The threatening, then, we cannot say would appear to Adam as either ominous with an eternity of hell-suffering, or with the "immediate destruction" "of his being as a man."\(^1\)

\(^1\) White's *Life in Christ*, p. 102.
In all probability, what most would influence Adam in the contents of the penalty would be what was nearest and most visible, that bodily death with which he was painfully familiar, implying in his case old age, sickness, suffering, as well as final dissolution, while its terrors would be perceptibly enhanced for him by the fact that the eternal future was left shrouded in impenetrable mystery.

With regard to spiritual death, the same strong objections do not rise. Still, we are indisposed to give it any prominent place as a penalty of the fall. It certainly is an accompaniment of Adam's sin, though not to the extent imagined by the Westminster divines. Doubtless, the first sinner felt the remorseful accusations of an awakened conscience, and took his conscience as the reflex of Heaven's judgment on his sin. Doubtless, also, his actual transgressions tended to confirm him in the erroneous thoughts and ungodly passions which he had come to entertain. But he was neither judicially shut out of the comfortable presence of God, nor was he spiritually disposed to all evil. The story gives us indications that the inward and life-giving presence of God's Spirit in the heart was seriously diminished; but it also shows us that in the very
midst of his wilful dereliction God met man with mercy as surely as with judgment; and that in spite of sin's depravity our first parents were not incapable of recognising the hand of God in their children's birth, and of giving to these children such a religious education as enabled them to serve God in faith, and to offer acceptable sacrifice.

The standpoint of the Biblical historian gives no great prominence to this element in the penalty of sin. It is present, playing a most important part; but not as in itself the death which threatened Adam, so much as the moral ground on which a death more visible, and, therefore, to most men more terrible, passes judicially upon the sinner. It is not included in the legal threat—did not need to be. Adam must have known that to disobey and lapse into independent moods of mind was to displease God, and to become subject to His anger. It is therefore a serious exegetical mistake to exhaust the threat in spiritual death; and construe bodily death "with its concomitant evils, as part of a new arrangement of circumstances necessitated by the altered moral condition of man as an

1 Gen. iii. 21,  
2 Gen. iv. 1-4,
inhabitant of this world."¹ Not only does this involve the injustice of a second penalty of which the offender was not warned; it transforms the threat into a meaningless tautology which might as well have been left unuttered, except upon the impossible assumption that Adam was expressly informed that it doomed him to eternal banishment and misery.

It seems unwise to us, in determining the primitive penalty of sin, to pass beyond the Scriptures in which the circumstances are narrated. Opening our Bibles, we find upon the very face of the narrative that the penalty which was threatened was immediately and completely executed. The very day of sin was the very day of judgment. He who threatened Adam with the dying that would be death, came to implement His threat, and to teach the guilty pair the infallibility of His word. One of the most effective refutations of all exaggerated notions of this death-penalty is, that they require the visible interposition of Divine mercy to stave off what Divine justice had awarded Adam as the penalty of his sin. The Calvinist dare not

¹ Dr. Alexander's Connexion and Harmony, 1st. Ed., p. 132.
say that Adam ever suffers the pains of eternal death. The Annihilationist is confuted by the simple facts of the narrative. It is instructive to watch Mr. White's dramatic management of this crucial point:—

"The judge descends; but not to inflict the penalty! What cause has suspended the thunderbolt? What is it that arrests the course of law? The soul that sinneth it shall die. What miracle of mercy unfolds itself before the astonished sinners, who stand in momentary expectation of their doom—the doom of death eternal?"¹

The threat then is not executed! The serpent, it seems, is right in saying that God will certainly not fulfil His threat as He has sworn. The first time that God's law falls to be enforced, He relents. He has threatened either what He dares not, or never meant to execute; and man is taught, on the very threshold of his life, that Divine threatening has no meaning, except it be as a foil to the exhibition of a superabounding mercy!

Much emphasis is rightly laid upon the promise of a Redeemer.² But we must not overlook the important fact that it is not given as a promise to the human race, nor so

² *Gen. iii. 15.*
much as spoken to our first parents. It enters into the narrative as a punishment of the serpent, and thereby no hope is held out to Adam that he is to escape the penalty pronounced against his sin. We know that Christ will reconstitute us in the future life; but the death-penalty of the Adamic sin is still carried out against the race in its Adamitic nature. We are saved, not from the Edenic penalty, but in spite of it. And as we stand in Eden, and look upon the Judge and culprit, we are most impressively invited to see sin smitten with its curse, the majesty of the law upheld, the Divine word made effective against the serpent's lie. The life forfeited is taken from the guilty pair; and as the law decreed, they die.

The narrative is careful to explain how the punishment was enforced. In brief, but with largest comprehension, the life taken is the Paradisaic life which they have hitherto enjoyed. Spiritual death as distinguished from eternal death is, indeed, an element in the case, but is not to be dissociated from the loss of this happy Paradisaic life. The Old Testament scarcely distinguishes between righteousness and physical prosperity. "In the way of righteousness is life, and the pathway
thereof is immortality." Therefore Adam's outward state is the exact reflex of his spiritual relations: his misfortunes the Divine judgment of his inner life. The punishment of sin is not spiritual death, which rather is the state man voluntarily chooses as his life; but that outer disorganisation and visible mischance which blight a human life when it is alienated from the life of God.

The various elements in this lost life must now be glanced at in succession. A life of ease and plenty is exchanged for poorly remunerated toil. Nature, the beneficent to man in innocence, becomes Nature the niggard to man when he has fallen out of order, and is neither at peace with himself nor with the Infinite.

Strife is to arise between the serpent-nature and what is distinctively human in the race. It will be man's inseparable plague, the viler and more venomous because of its temporary triumph; and yet it will be ultimately cast down from its high imaginings; sickness, disease, and toil are to be fetters on its activity; and in its mean and envious instincts it is to be repudiated and hated by what is noblest in man.

1 Prov. xii. 28.
Livor, inera vitium, mores non exit in altos,
Utque latens, imá vipera serpit humo.

Envy, the lowest of vices, rises not into exalted minds,
But creeps like a hidden serpent on the ground.

The prophecy points broadly to the continuous temptation of man by his sensuous mind, even while his sensuous nature, as the penalty of sin, is to be humbled to the dust; but there can be little doubt that it contains also a covert reference to a distant illustrious scion of the stock, whom it may sting in the mere outworks of His personality, but by whom its power in man will be finally overcome.

Associated with this curse is a disruption of the harmoniously constituted nature of the sexual life. The degradation of the sensuous involves some disharmony in the physical constitution, and affects the female more than man. She is more influenced from that side of things; therefore suffers most, and comes into an increasing measure of subjection to the stronger mental powers of man.

Finally, as the crowning humiliation, the bodily form of man is to suffer disintegration and return to dust. Not only is Paradise no longer to be man's home, but the way is to
be barred to the tree of life, lest man should eat of it and escape his appointed fate.

This, then, is the life which man forfeits by his fall, the death which he inherits. Bright, beautiful, and harmonious without sin, his life becomes clouded, inharmonious, fragile, doomed to vanish: God's commentary on man's disposition to be as God by his knowledge of good and evil.

Difficulties of a serious nature no doubt beset the view that the death of Adam was the consequence of his sin. Science has demonstrated that death was in the world previous to man's fall, and that decay is the law of organism. We cannot doubt that Adam in his innocence was a spectator of the struggle by which animal life is now maintained, and the pains by which it is now dissolved. It appears requisite to his education, almost necessary as a deterrent from the misuse of his powers, that he should be familiar with this darker side of things, and understand that he himself as dust was not beyond the cares and fears which were shadowed in their fate.

It does not follow, however, that Adam held the tenure of his life exactly on the same footing as the inferior creation. He was possessed
of a life as far above the animal as animal life is above the properties of matter; and as vital laws dominate the inorganic, so might that higher life, basking in the beams of the central all-quickening Sun, be fitted to dominate the ordinary laws of animal vitality, and in course of time evolve therefrom a body no longer subject in itself to physical dissolution. Adam lived at first because God breathed into him the breath of lives; and was intended to live in an intimacy with the Divine corresponding to the greatness of his origin. What more reasonable than that this Divine intimacy, if perpetuated, should have sublimed his form as surely as his disposition, and by a process of glorification lifted him above death into the privilege of immortality. If Enoch was not, and if Elijah was transformed, why not a sinless Adam and his sinless sons?

The second Adam, God's realised intention in humanity, is the demonstration of how a life supremely spiritual can master matter, disease, and death, even when inflicted by a brutal violence. All His mighty works were "signs" of the redemptive virtue of that life which dwelt in Him. Why should not the first Adam, who was psychical in his origin, therefore liable to death, have risen by an
orderly progression into that fulness of vitality which would have made death as it now exists impossible and unnecessary?

The apostle Paul not only teaches that death entered by the fall, but also seems to indicate that such an excarnation without death as we have suggested, is within the range of fallen man. He tells the Romans that it falls within the possibilities of spiritual dynamics that Christ may “quicken their mortal bodies by His Holy Spirit dwelling in them,”¹ and apparently himself cherished the hope that he might not be unclothed, but “clothed upon with his house which is from heaven.”²

Altogether the Scriptures look as if clearly committed to the view that apart from human sin man would have put off his earthly organism in a way less disorderly than that which we call death. We should never have been familiar with the pains and groans which are the heralds of his coming—never have looked upon the symbols of a broken and ruined nature—never have known the anxious fears and dread forebodings with which all men sometimes look upon the final change. To the inferior tribes that share this lot with man, dying is not unnatural. They have no

¹ Rom. viii. 11. ² 2 Cor. v. 1-4.
dread of what is to come. Their outlook is not always for "the shadow cloaked from head to foot;" and their care is not continually to stave off an evil day that comes and will not stay. The immortal on the earth is the only being who lives in fear of death. Nothing can reconcile him to its coming; and with all the hopes which religion can extend, he clings with mightiest solicitude to the life which flows red within his veins.

"The weariest and most loathed worldly life
That age, ache, penury, imprisonment,
Can lay on nature, is a paradise
To what we fear of death."

So speaks the world's greatest dramatist; and the world responds with a deeper and a heartier "Amen" than to the almost inhuman tender-ness which decks the skeleton with meretricious flowers, and calls us to stretch out the hand of welcome to

"The kind and gentle servant who unlocks,
With noiseless hand, life's flower-encircled door,
To show us those we love."

By the universal feeling of mankind, the accompaniments of our departure from this life are best translated as "a curse," the synonym of sin. This instinctive hatred of
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the grave is in harmony with the word of God. "The sting of death is sin." The curse of death is not alone its "farewell" to the world, but its pain, uncertainty, and violence, amid which this world of substance disappears, and not even a phantom-land looms up upon the sight to take its place. Had sin never found a place in human history, in all probability the transition would have been effected without a pang, without a fear, and without a moment's intermission of the consciousness of a departing and a coming world. The change would have been more a sublimation of the physical than as now a precipitation; and though we cannot prove this as a fact, there are no valid arguments against such a possibility so long as the unimpeachable facts of Christ's supernatural transformation are available for their refutation.

That Adam did not die immediately and totally upon the commission of his sin, has no weight as an objection. The original terms do not imply the absolute and immediate cessation of existence; but the immediate cessation of the law which hitherto had been operative for continued life. Adam must have seen that the sentence did not imply that he
should in a moment cease to breathe and the human race be denied existence. When we remember that he is represented as having access to perpetuated life by unbroken fidelity to God, that all that stands between his nature and the grip of death is immediate spiritual association with the fountain of his being, we can see how literally he dies the moment he commits himself to sin. He breaks the connecting line by which his physical transfiguration is secured; the powers of Eternity cease to operate; and in his isolation he becomes subject to the sway of death. "In the day thou eatest, dying [from henceforth], thou shalt die."

Hence, in the lively figures of the Bible drama, the day of sin is the day of exclusion from the tree of life. The cherubim, symbols of vital laws, fiery forms of celestial and super-celestial magnetism, intervene between man and the tree; his access to the immortal state becomes impossible. Continuous imperishable life to a sinful creature in the first man's circumstances would simply have been the corroboration of his infidelity and the serpent's lie. It was meet that he should learn that life does consist in obedience to God, death in disobeying Him; and thus have brought
home to him, by sad and painful evidence, his utter dependence upon a power superior to himself. The infliction of some striking tangible penalty is the first step in the sinner's redemption. Physical dissolution seems to be the fittest instrument for impressing upon the human heart that conviction of its evil state which is the necessary ground of a true repentance. We intuitively interpret death as a sign of man's near or more remote complicity in sin; and thus our captivity in the bonds of death, like Israel's bondage in the vision of Hosea, is the needful valley of Achor, in which, amid many tears and pains, we are to find "a door of hope."

CHAPTER VI.

THE DIVINE RELATION TO SIN: FALSE TheORIES.

The relation of God's providence to the origin of sin is one of the most subtle and perplexing questions which the theologian is called upon to disentangle. Theology teaches that God is a Being of infinite power and wisdom. Hence the problem at once arises, could not such a
Being have secured the world against the possibility of sin? Why did He not secure it, and prevent the human race from being desolated by the ravages of evil? This deep problem has in all ages agitated and disturbed the human mind, and been a prolific source of atheistic doubt and matured scepticism. Even to faith's eye it is often a dark and painful enigma.

We have recently had issued from the press two representative contributions to Scotch theology, both of which decline to discuss this question as either insoluble\(^1\) or as "the beating out of the straw of old controversies which have lost, or nearly lost, all meaning."\(^2\) We do not think it needful to search for the identical *rationale* of sin in the proplasts, because there is an element of unreason in all sin; but we think it needful that the subject should be so clear as to establish the voluntary origin of evil on man's side, and to vindicate the Divine character from all complicity in its origin. We can well believe that Calvinism has said its last word on this subject, and finds it prudent to be silent.

To solve this difficulty, or at least to miti-

\(^1\) *Cunningham Lectures, 1878.*  \(^2\) *Croall Lectures, 1876.*
gate its mysterious darkness, various theories have been employed.

First, There is the hypothesis of the soul's pre-existence and sin in a previous state. Upon a fancy of this sort Plato and other ancients fell back in their effort to explain evil in this world. Man was supposed to be born into this world for his punishment and reformation. In the times of the Christian fathers it was upheld by Origen; in the Middle Ages by Scotus Erigena; and of late it found an able advocate in Dr. Edward Beecher of America. Philosophy, too, supports this theory with the well-known names of Kant and Schelling, and Schopenhauer, who declares this world to be no better than a place of punishment, the worst possible of worlds, and, like the Buddhists, makes life's quietus to be the most desirable of consummations. This theory of a pre-existent act, which makes life what it is, while it might explain the universal prevalence of sin, offers no explanation of sin's origin. Like the scientist's suggestion that life was originated in this planet by some stray meteoric visitor, it simply carries the difficulty back into another world, and the puzzle still remains: how sin can exist anywhere under the administration of a perfect God?
Secondly, That evil is involved in the very nature of the creature. The coarsest form which this theory assumes is that known as Manichæism. It teaches that there are two eternal principles, one good the other evil, which exist in essential conflict, and reflect their antagonism in the dualism of matter and mind, body and spirit. Sin is thus essentially a physical defilement, and evil a necessity in all men's experience. Bayle, in his celebrated dictionary, wonders that the heathen world could offer no better theory; and yet J. S. Mill tells us that his strong-minded father was disposed to look with favour on the theory, and that a Manichæan taint would have made Christianity more acceptable to his mind. It is the most abortive of all theories of evil; but it is the symbol of man's utter unwillingness to believe that evil in any form can proceed from the Father of Lights.

Lying near to this strong dualism is the milder theory that evil is necessarily connected with the limitation of the creature, and, in fact, essential to man's moral development. It may be questioned if Augustine, with all his opposition to Manichæism, is not partially,
through his privative theory, implicated in some such notion. Certainly the illustrious Leibnitz makes sin a necessary element in his best possible world; and the honoured Schleiermacher explains sin as the subjective apprehension of an inevitable struggle between man's sensuous consciousness and his God-consciousness. All these illustrious names would strenuously assert man's freedom in the production of his evil; but with all of them (least with Augustine), it is the essential outcome of his nature, and a factor in his ethical development. With all of them evil is more or less relative. It subserves the harmony of the whole, although from a lower point of view it is a discord. Darkness is needed to set off the light; ugliness to give relief to beauty; so evil is a necessary counterfoil to good.

1 The Rev. J. Cook asserts, against Dr. Hodge of Princeton, that Leibnitz makes evil only possible, and not necessary, from the limitation of the creature, and claims Müller as giving the same judgment. (Transcendentalism, Lec. vii.) Müller's exposition, however, agrees with Dr. Hodge. He finds Leibnitz contradictory on this point; but from a survey of the whole Théodicée decides that Leibnitz makes evil necessary from the creature's limitation, and the universe to be less perfect without sin. See Doctrine of Sin, 1st Ed., pp. 297, 298.
Such a conception is, however, thoroughly destructive of all Christian ethics. It makes evil as necessary as good; and therefore in relation to the universe, and with Schleiermacher to the individual as well, a kind of good—undeveloped good, good in the making, but certainly not a thing which might not and should not have been. At the best this theory is only an apology for evil, not its solution. It throws suspicion on the ways of God, and makes the thought of evil tolerable by changing it into a lesser good. Against all this, man's reason and his moral sense revolt. Conscience demands an explanation which will brand sin with its merited opprobrium, and entirely exonerate the character of God, all wise, all mighty, and all good.

Thirdly, That the relation of God to sin is that of cause to effect. That God, as well as man and Satan, is related to sin as a producing cause is the doctrine of all high-toned and self-consistent Calvinism. The "I will" of Jehovah is the moving spring of all the action which transpires in the universe. He has decreed whatsoever comes to pass. He sees to the execution of His decrees by an ever-present Providence; and the primitive sin, just as little as all subsequent, is by no means to be ex-
cluded from the Divine causation. Of course, we are to understand that God's part in the causation of sin does not exclude the action of the human will concerned; and, while no will is so much concerned as His in the production of sin, we are to exonerate Him entirely, and lay all the guilt upon His erring creatures. Willingly would we do so, if the reason and the sense of justice God Himself has given us would permit us; but they will not. For what is the Calvinistic theory of the case? It posits freedom as an attribute of un Fallen man, and tells us that man sinned freely. Yet what it grants in form it substantially denies. Adam came into this world with a dark fatality lowering over him; he is foreordained to sin. That this was no decree simply to bring about or to permit what God foresaw Adam in his freedom would produce, may be settled for two sufficient reasons: first, that given in the Confession, that God ordains nothing because it has been foreseen; and, secondly, that if Adam would have sinned freely of himself, there had been no need for the promulgation of a Divine decree for sin's production. Thus the very fundamental dogma of this system destroys at the very outset the pretended liberty with which it invests un fallen man.
Again, if man sinned freely, as says Calvinism, what does it say as to the Divine concurrence in the production of his sin? Did God simply refuse to interfere, and leave man in such absolute freedom that it was as easy for him to stand as it was to fall? No! Calvinism has looked with favour upon the doctrine of psychological determinism. Man accordingly is the creature of the strongest motive. His nature dominates his acts. In every circumstance there is but one line of action possible. Make any motive strong enough, and once it comes within the sphere of consciousness the man must choose accordingly. In Eden advantage is taken of this mental law, and Satan's temptation to evil is presented so much more powerfully than God's motives to good, that there is but one possibility to Eve—namely, to allow herself to be seduced, and to bring sin into the world. Such is the delusive freedom which the higher Calvinism ascribes to man; and indeed, as an able divine has said, this philosophical necessity is not inconsistent with such limited freedom as the Confession allows to man.¹

There are, however, many of the Calvinistic

¹ Cunningham's *Historical Theology*, L., p. 625.
school who heartily repudiate this doctrine of philosophical necessity. Can such divines consistently ascribe to Adam such a freedom as that considered by himself he was as able to stand as he was to fall? We are bound to answer: No. Though Adam is regarded by them as being psychologically free, yet there is a hidden sphere where the finger of Omnipotence is put upon his will, and they are compelled to say—"The certainty of the event or result is in some way provided for and secured." ¹

In fact, it is only a question of dogmatic consistency and courage, as to whether God will not be directly implicated in the fall of man. We have but to hear the great master of the system speak, and there is no dubiety. Mark the sweep of these bold utterances: "Events are produced by the will of God, though they have the appearance of being fortuitous." ² "Men do nothing save at the secret instigation of God, and do not discuss and deliberate on anything but what He has previously decreed with Himself and brings to pass by His secret direction." ³ "Satan himself performs his part just as he is impelled

¹ Ibid., p. 584. ² Institutes, I. 16, 9. ³ Ibid., I. 18, 1.
(ut ejus impulsu)."¹ After this there is nothing to startle us in the naked statement: "The first man fell because God so ordered it to happen. . . . Man therefore fell, God's providence having so ordained it."²

The fearless Beza shrinks even less than Calvin from the implication of the Divine will in sin's causation. He acknowledges that Adam was not able to resist the Divine decree, nor able to wish otherwise than he wished.³ Man sinned necessarily, yet freely; as we think with the freedom only of the billiard ball which is impelled by the stroke of the player's cue; man's will the ball, God's will the cue which sent it to its fatal terminus.

It may interest the reader to see how it is put by one of our own old Scotch divines, the tender Rutherford. God, he tells us, wishes to reveal the glory of His mercy. "Whoever wishes the end, wishes too the means, both near and remote. . . . Sin, that is God's means to an end that we could not otherwise

¹ Institutes, I. 18, 2.
² Ibid., III. 23, 8. We give the Latin of this important passage: "Lapsus est enim primus homo, quia Dominus ita expedire censuerat, cur censuerit nos latet. . . . Cadit igitur homo, Dei providentia sic ordinante: sed suo vitio cadit."
accomplish." How then is sin to be brought about? With Divine assistance Adam would always be obedient; and this assistance is withdrawn. "Did Adam refuse that assistance? Did he thrust it away from him? No; God took it from him, and he fell as a stone falls from the hand that lets it go from the house-top or from the sheer precipice."¹

This then is the Calvinian theory. Sin is a necessity, it may be metaphysically, for certain theologically. God desired a field in which He might display His contrary attributes of justice and of mercy; and so ordained from eternity that the father of the human race should sin, and beget a sinful race, who would be fit objects for either wrath or mercy, as His sovereignty might choose. Sin was wanted; God said, "Let there be sin," and sin was.

Such a theory is beset with insuperable difficulties.

(1.) Are we not told that God dwelleth in the Holy of Holies; that He is absolutely good; that He is light, and in Him is no darkness at all; that He tempteth no man to evil; that He abhors it and all who cleave to it? How then can we maintain, on the ground of a few isolated texts of dubious meaning, that

¹ Walker's *Scottish Theology and Theologians*, p. 76.
sin is the fruit of His own decrees, and that without His personal instigation no sin could be?

(2.) And if, after all, sin does exist by His absolute decree, it thereby changes its ethical character and becomes an actual good. When we sin we are as truly the executive organs of His will as when we do good. It is true that sin is formally forbidden; yet the secret will of God, by which we are impelled, may have more effectually forbidden us to do good. Whatever is is right. Nothing that forms an inherent part of God's world-plan ought to be rejected or abhorred by us. We must try to view all things in God's light, and for God sin does not exist. He knows that His real will never was and never can be transgressed.

(3.) And how, again, can sin be serviceable to God in demonstration of His justice and mercy? What justice is there in punishing with eternal pains sin which God Himself originates, which the creature does by an invincible necessity? Even such mercy is indeed, as Müller says, a "cruel trifling" with men; for where is the mercy of deliberately involving men in misery for the mere sake of delivering them? Is it not rather like the cruel caprice of the boy that throws a dog into a pond, and then magnifies himself into a hero
because in a moment of repentance he lifts the creature out again? Indeed, a more immoral conception of God's character is almost inconceivable; and if men were to let themselves believe it, it would silence the conscience and destroy all sense of sin. It would lower our sense of personal dignity to hold ourselves mere automatons that God has perhaps made simply to destroy eternally, and also utterly annihilate all faith in God as a God of love.

Fourthly, That God did not decree man's sin, but permitted it when it was possible to prevent it. This view, the product of an emasculated Calvinism, comes nearer to a solution of the difficulty; but it does not clear the Divine character of implication in sin's production. It repudiates the notion of any action on God's part for its production; but asserts, in company with the highest Calvinism, that God was undoubtedly able to prevent all sinful actions if He so willed without infringing on the moral agency of Adam. This is the doctrinal position of such divines as Drs. Ridgeley, Dwight, Dick, and Payne. The lookout is clearly stated by one who is well able to represent the moderate Calvinistic theologians of America, for whom he speaks:—
"Go to Andover and ask these questions, and you will find them answered in this way:

1. "Can God prevent sin in a moral system?" — "Yes." — "How do you know?" — "Because he that can create can do anything that is an object of power. God can do anything that does not involve self-contradiction. We must suppose that a system of living beings, all with free will, might be so influenced by motives as to retain their free will, and yet not sin. God can prevent sin in a moral system."

2. "Can God prevent sin in the best moral system?" — "No." — "How do you know?" — "Because He has not prevented it." 

Why then, when prevention was so easy, did God not intervene and save the world from such infinite misery, and hell from such a splendid triumph? The only possible answer is, that a world of sin was better than a holy world, because of the future good results which were to spring from sin. Well then may we exclaim, O felix culpa! But it is at the fearful expense of making evil a necessity to the achievement of the highest good, and thereby of absolutely destroying the ethical character of sin, and of enthroning Satan as a scarcely

\[\text{\textit{Transcendentalism, Lec. vii.}}\]
less inferior deity. Fortunately, this necessity for sin in order to the best is altogether illegitimate on Calvinistic principles. God, according to that system, can accomplish whatever results He pleases by one method as easily as by another. Nothing is too hard for Him. He is not conditioned by His creature's will; Omnipotence is unlimited, except by the unthinkable. Therefore, we say, Calvinists cannot argue that the Divine Being was shut up to the unwilling permission of sin in order to the best. This is a weapon forged in the Arminian armoury, and a Calvinistic use of it is unlawful. Without sin God could have built up the world into a race of seraphs; and therefore it is a contradiction to assert that He had need of sin to help Him to a splendid moral universe.

Thus the question still remains unsolved: If God could easily have kept man holy, why did he suffer so evil and distressing a thing as sin? To those who think this view of the Divine position tenable, we commend the higher morality of Seneca's maxim: *Qui non vetat peccare cum possit, jubet* (who does not prevent sin when he is able, commands it). This is, indeed, the least objectionable view of the Divine relation to sin which it is in the
power of Calvinism to present, and yet it is loaded with insuperable difficulties, which clearly indicate that as a system it has no solution for this grand enigma. It is not without significance that the latest representative of Scottish Calvinistic thought should sail serenely past the problem under cover of the rhapsodical and somewhat meaningless utterances of Rabbi Duncan: "God is not the author of sin, because sin has no author . . . It is causeless and irrational. It is a monstrosity, a thing horrible in a God-made universe, just because it is causeless."

CHAPTER VII.

THE DIVINE RELATION TO SIN: THE TRUE THEORY.

The true solution of this great enigma is, we believe, that which we now present and advocate, that God put every reasonable barrier in the way of sin, and viewed its entrance as a hindrance rather than as a furtherance of His plans.

The first difficulty which usually arises in
the popular mind, is the inconceivableness of a creature holy and perfect, as Adam is supposed to have been, committing sin when the Divine providence was seeking to restrain him. We have anticipated this objection to some extent in presenting a reasonable estimate of Adam's character and attainments. Apart from that, if Adam was too wise and good to sin of his own account, what shall we say of his infinitely wise and perfect Maker? Could He either instigate the sin, or let His creature fall blindly into the snare? Surely, since sin must have an efficient cause, that cause must be found somewhere else than in God; and where else than in the creature who commits it?

Let it be particularly noticed, that the very existence of such a creature as man involves the possibility of sin. A being whose end is the knowledge and love of God as his Father, must necessarily receive the most decided selfhood, the most finished personality consistent with the sphere that he is to fill. Personality implies conscious separation from all that is not Self, whether it be nature beneath, or men around, or God above. Unless the soul possessed this self-consciousness it were impossible for it to know itself as a personal Ego,
and to feel itself to be distinct from God, or indeed from anything around it; and consequently would be unable to love God or nature as other than part of itself. Unless man had been created this self-poised, self-centred creature, he would have had no ability to distinguish himself as an inherent power, a bounded personality. His consciousness would necessarily have had a somewhat flowing character if he were not sharply separated from nature upon the one side and from God upon the other; and he would be incapable of any sense of dignity or responsibility, did he not possess the power, as a willing agent, to determine himself of himself, and thereby set a boundary of resistance to every process of being determined from without.

These are the inalienable conditions of individuality, of voluntary action, of reciprocal love, of willing identity with another—the factors of a moral and spiritual life. Man must be conscious of his separation from God, unconscious of his dependency on continuous creative influx; he must feel as if he lived only from himself, in order that he may, as a matter of spontaneous choice, enter into fellowship with God. It is altogether an exaggeration to say, that "without the temporary opposition of sin
we could not have the feeling of individuality.”¹
If sin be needful to individuality, angels cannot have remained unfallen; but it is enough in man’s case that his little life has its conscious limitations, and that he has no forced consciousness of living daily by dependence either upon nature or upon God. He knows, then, that he is himself, and neither a bit of nature’s baggage nor God’s fellow.

See now what may possibly result from this. Man is necessarily created with two inherent factors, a sense of independency and a sense of power. If he fail to exercise those cognitive faculties by which God is apprehended in His vital relations and His moral law, this sense of independency will assert itself against the claims of God, and his power of self-determination be ultimately exercised in opposition to the Divine will. So far can this abuse be carried in a man, that it is possible for him to cease believing in any law beyond himself, and to assert an absolute right to know “ni Dieu ni Maitre.”

It follows also that man must be created characterless, and must shape his character for himself. Character cannot be created for another. In a being of human limits all moral

¹ *Hamartia*, p. 19.
or characteristic action constitutionally involves a process of elimination or rejection between the opposing poles of good and evil, truth and falsity. No man is good save by refusing evil; no man is wise save by conquering ignorance. In short, I can have no personal character until I have made my choice between the opposites that lie around me; no merit until I have with deliberation determined for the good, and no demerit until I have chosen to abide by evil. Adam cannot have been exempted from this universal law. His faculties and native tastes were no doubt such as to point him to the path of uprightness; but the practical attainment of eminent and permanent godliness of mind is only possible by a process of drill for which time and experience are needful, and which unhappily may lead to quite a different state of character. Piety is a holy act which requires the consent of the will; but other objects may usurp that interest and reverence which are not yet intelligently fixed on God. In Adam we must therefore see a being who was limited in knowledge as to God, the world, and himself, to whom duty at first was largely theoretical, whose moral habits were for a time unformed. All these circumstances prepared him for being
led astray into bye-paths which no foot had
trod before him; and his very desire of know-
ledge, the curiosity inseparable from ignorance,
prompted him to go where peculiar knowledge
was likely to be found. The tree was desired
to make one wise.

It is not difficult in these circumstances to
detect the possibilities of sin. With his
necessary feeling of independence and freedom,
with his ignorance; with his natural passions
bringing him into contact with a world which
almost unavoidably was a competitor for his
attention with the higher world of the unseen,
with his character yet to form, it is not to be
denied that the possibility of erring was neces-
sarily involved in his being what he was.
And how may the possible be developed into
the actual transgression? A human act can
never find a perfect explanation, but this much
it may be lawful to suppose: Man, in his
eyarly days, would comport himself much as a
child, in happy contentment with his know-
ledge of God and of the needful arts of life.
As his mind developed in its powers, it would
proceed to master the elements of scientific
lore, and seek less and less the inner light of
inspiration. With widening knowledge he
comes to understand the immense range of
power that is mastered by his will, and it may be grows ambitious of hasty and ill-considered acquirements. Perhaps he grows envious of the theophanies in which El Shaddai shows Himself, puts on airs of self-conceit, and throws himself upon his own experience. Instead of rising into holiness through trust in the wisdom and love of God, he asserts his own sufficiency, exalts his own judgment and personal taste into a law of life, and thus falls into intenser selfishness and deeper bondage to the false principles he has exalted to the throne of law. Such is the genesis of sin, and we think the way is now prepared for such an exhibition of God's relationship to sin as shall entirely exonerate His name from all the dark suspicions which are falsely attached to it.

For instance, the objection has been started, why did God not prevent man's sin since He must have had the power? The difficulty is raised by a common superficial fallacy—viz., that God has power to do everything. Even within the strictly physical, it is not a truth; much less in the sphere of things purely moral. Force has no relation to the movements of the mind. Intellect cannot be put in chains. Free will stands clear of all causation. Force is the natural government of a stone, but is in-
applicable to the production of virtue. Virtue is the free forthgoing of the will in obedience to God. It is voluntary or it is nothing; compulsion is annihilation. Virtue that is unavoidable because of extraneous circumstances is a misnomer. Man can be virtuous only by the free concurrence of his nature in what is good at the moment that he feels that he is able to choose the bad. It is thus impossible for God to use compulsion in determining the character of man. As a moral being he must be left finally to his own determination, and the Divine management of his destiny must respect his freedom and work in harmony with the established laws of his constitution.

Is it urged that God might have lessened man's temptation, or taken it entirely out of the way? Does it seem that "the scope for sin was too wide, that the inducement to sin was too strong, the charm and recompense of virtue either nothing or insignificant?" ¹ Such objections are based upon the opinion that the Edenic prohibition was of an arbitrary character, a temptation quite beyond the ordinary requirements of a human life, as if

God had sought and found an occasion to entrap man to his fall. We have already shown the falseness of this reading. There was no temptation put before the first man that could have been withheld. It may be pardonable to say that the Edenic temptation might have been abated; it is inexcusable to say that it might have been prevented "at that moment, and through the whole course of man's existence."  

The tree of knowledge exists within the reach of all angels and of all men by the very necessities of being. Temptation of some degree is unavoidable to every limited mind; it is the condition in virtue of which man becomes morally good or bad. What sort of world would it be were there nothing in it by which man could get an experimental knowledge of good and evil as he conceives them in their concrete forms? In fact, such a world is impossible, even to Omnipotence. The creaturely mind may devise a bad experience out of the best of things, because it may abuse them; and it is the corruption of the best that makes the worst, and allows the possibility of the deepest fall. For our part, we fail to see how the

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1 Dr. Young's *Creator and Creation*, p. 231, Edition 1870.
Edenic temptation could have been rendered less innocuous. If ever man sinned against the light it was this first man. No temptation befell him, but what is common to men; and he too had his door of escape. All that faithful instruction, encouraging promise, and solemn warning could effect was done. Man sinned, but God stands justified.

Lastly, The objection will occur, why did God create a being whom He knew would sin? We cannot admit the lawfulness of the question, because the true answer is almost certain to transcend human knowledge. It may, however, be possible to hit upon a good and reasonable suggestion. The power to sin attaches necessarily to every moral creature that comes into being. God cannot communicate an infinite selfhood, an infallible will, a goodness absolute. These belong only to His own infinite perfection. All His creatures must have their limitations, and therefore be all liable to err. It is, therefore, reasonable to suppose that no other possible creature could fill man’s place with less likelihood of falling. Is the world on this account to be left vacant of a reasonable being? Is the Creator not to carry on His work to its legitimate consummation? Is He to own Himself defeated because
it is foreseen that the opening experiences of the new race will be sinful? Is the existence of sin, to Him who sees the end from the beginning, a sufficient drawback upon the eternal glories of the human race, redeemed and recreated by His love, to arrest His creative hand in disappointed impotence? Sin may be a heavy mortgage upon the Divine estate; but who can say that it is any more?

We ought also to consider that this world has its relations to every portion of the universe, and may be needful to the proper working of the whole. Had God withheld the human race from being, it is possible that this might have entailed an alteration upon some other portion of the universe, or have marred the orderly development of its peoples in their aggregate history; and thus have issued in an infinitely greater evil to the whole. The universe as it is, though man has sinned, may after all be a better universe than it could have been if mankind had been uncreated. Indeed, we must suppose that it is, for Infinite Wisdom must always prefer that which is the best. And still the best of all worlds might well have been an unfallen human race.

If the principles unfolded in this chapter hold good, the providence of God in relation to
sin is delivered from every shadow of suspicion, and we can address our readers in the words of Rousseau:—“Inquire no longer, man, who is the author of evil; behold him in yourself. Take away everything that is the work of man, and all the rest is good.” Or we may hear the same truth in the sterner tones of the aged sage of Chelsea:—“Always there is a black spot in our sunshine; it is even, as I said, the Shadow of Ourselves.”

No time need be spent in justifying this view of the Divine freedom from the causality of sin against certain passages of Scripture which may seem to teach the opposite. These passages are but few in number; and, as a matter of fact, are rooted in the idiosyncrasies of Old Testament thought, even when found in the New. That God hardens Pharaoh’s heart, sends evil spirits upon men, makes peace and creates evil—these are only incidental utterances against the clamorous testimony of both the Old and New Testaments, that sin is opposition to the will of God, and is utterly abhorred and condemned by His Holy Spirit. Of course, sin being in the world as an active principle counter-working the orderly development of God’s purposes, He must be represented as dealing with it,
almost handling it, using it for His purposes in man's punishment, and as a means of rewarding goodness. The Divine conduct may, in Pharaoh's case, be the occasion of the impious monarch hardening himself against the deliverance of the Israelitish people; and the language of history, to a people who believe in the Divine management of events, will therefore be "God hardened Pharaoh's heart;" but the intelligent reader will perceive that this was, as is said at other times, really Pharaoh's voluntary response to the various respite which Jehovah gave him in answer to his supplications and promises of amendment. So with other cases. Providentially, God enters into judgment with sinful men; allows them scope to bring their wickedness sooner to an end; brings physical evil, such as wars, famines, plagues, in the wake of crime for its avengement; but nowhere do the Scriptures say that God initiates sin, or instigates men to evil which is not already within their hearts. Whatever be the difficulties of any special passage in the ancient Scriptures, we are bound to form our judgment of God's conduct from the clearer utterances of the Christian revelation. God is light; incapable of temptation to evil, as incapable of tempting man to
evil; and every man when he is tempted is so by his own inordinate desires.¹ To him that understandeth, sin is everywhere in Scripture branded as a contradiction of God's will, which has no origin but in the creature's heart. "This idea," says a recent writer on this subject, and most heartily do we welcome and endorse his judgment, "is stamped on every page of the Old Testament, and no concrete figures of prophetic rhetoric can be allowed to efface so clear and deep an impression."²

¹ James i. 13-14
² Tulloch's Christian Doctrine of Sin, p. 97.
PART III.—THE SINFULNESS OF
THE RACE.

CHAPTER I.

THE UNIVERSAL PREVALENCE OF SIN.

Sin is a universal fact of human experience. The evidences of this are so patent that one may well marvel at the fact that even sophistry can blind its eyes to its existence. The early history of the race, as written on the page of Scripture, is simply the record of sin's triumph, in the intensification of its power over the hearts and wills of men, until vice becomes, as it were, a second nature. Thus, it is said of man before the flood: "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is evil continually;" and after it again: "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." The world starts afresh with a stock of better blood in the family of Noah, but again the stream of evil flows on in ever widening and deepening channel, until the whole earth is covered with iniquity, and
“there is no man that doeth good and sinneth not.”

No abatement of this pestiferous flood is seen when the new light of the Gospel dawns upon the world. Men are still “without God in the world;” “loving the creature more than the Creator;” unthankful for God’s gifts, even where His goodness is known; disobedient where His law is revealed; hateful and hating each other in all malice and uncharitableness; so that by the works of the law no flesh is justified, and such men as are righteous on the earth are so because their iniquities have been forgiven and their transgressions covered. Every mouth is stopped, and all the world is become guilty before God.

Nor is the verdict of heathen antiquity one whit more favourable. Hesiod and Horace tell us that the golden age of innocence and honour lay away in a far back time of which only the faintest memories remained; and the morals detailed in the ancient heathen authors, without exception, reveal a state of society of which Ovid well might say—

“Jove would be soon disarmed if he should send
His thunderbolts as oft as men offend.”

The conscience of man universally responds to
these accusations of Scripture and of history. Man is not only a sinner, but stands self-conscious and accused in the sight of Heaven. If occasionally men have seemed to protest their innocence, it has simply been as a reaction against dogmas which have exaggerated their guilt, and placed too much emphasis on what is termed "innate tendencies to sin and wickedness."

It is not in human nature to stand meekly by and hear itself foully bespattered in its fairest deeds; to have its finest instincts and its richest culture degraded and vilified, as if they were so much corruption and depravity. But go to men in willingness to do justice to their virtues, the lingering nobleness of their nature, and ask them if, like the ancient Roman, they do not often choose the worse when they see the better and approve; ask them if, in the presence of the Great Unseen, there has not been, at least, a silent recognition of their guilt; ask them if, in their happiest flights of genius, or in their most benevolent hours, they have not been conscious of an opposing power seeking to drag them down into bondage to meaner thoughts and more selfish aims; ask them if they could take the inner life of one single day, and in the
presence of the virtuous and good spread out all those crowding thoughts and fancies without any sense of shame or guilt; ask them to look at life—at trade with its dishonesties, at diplomacy with its falsehoods, at war with its butcheries, at religion with its hypocrisies and superstitions, at society with its flatteries, its intrigues, its spites and its revenges, its love of money and of power, its prevalent and unscrupulous sensuousness; ask them to look at the condition of the race—the nations with their mutual hostilities and jealousies, their internal inequalities and discords, at the multiplicity of tribes into which the race has been broken, and to mark the barbarisms and moral malformations which enter into the very essence of their life, until the man is almost lost and the brute is almost lifted to his old supremacy in the retreating brow and the protuberant jaw, the curved back and the bowed limbs, and the whole figure carries the disgusting image of the lowest appetites and the most tigerish passions; and when they have calmly surveyed this widespread scene of dislocation and death, they will not deny that personally they have sinned and are members of an apostate race.

This, then, is the condition of things for
which we have to find a cause. How is this vast preponderance of evil to be explained?

1. We have the theory that every man is good by nature, and contains within himself the conditions of a paradisiacal life, if only he could find the appropriate circumstances for its development. The fall of Adam, as carrying with it any bias of a constitutional nature, is denied. Life is pure at the fountain, it is only the stream that is defiled. The early ages of the race were golden; childhood comes with "trailing clouds of glory from God who is our home," and for years, in blissful innocence, it "worships at the temple's inner shrine." Evil is indeed inherited, but only along the outer lines of history, culture, custom; and if only we could break with the false traditions of the past and return to Nature, all would again be well.

Unhappily, Nature is a lost art, and we have not even found the condition which makes its rediscovery hopeful. The nearer we go to Nature, we seem to get the more unnatural. No man is so inhuman as the child of the forest; none more depraved than the inhabitants of those "happy isles" where culture has not carried its refinements, where society with its artificial laws is at its minimum, and every
man is a law unto himself, to work out whatever good is in him untrammeled by the traditions of the past. Nowhere more than where man is most individual is there a louder call to—

"Arise and fly
The reeling Faun, the sensual feast;
Move upward working out the beast,
And let the ape and tiger die."

Here we may leave Rousseau, and listen to the calm-natured monk Pelagius. Now we have not even to return to Nature; we have only to do our duty. We carry no evil stain from the ancient past; we are loaded with no incapacities by our acquired habits; we "cut the thread of history from behind us every hour;" and at any moment may start upon a new departure. The evil that we do is largely the evil of society. Our environments are pregnant with temptation—our education is incomplete—example is polluting; but even as things are, we may choose the good, and grow up without sin. Of course, Pelagius has seen some truth, and can say something in its defence. Have we not all, as well as Pelagius, become conscious that society in many things is worse than the individual nature? Has it
not seemed to us that much of our evil is to be attributed to the associations of our childhood, the falseness or insufficiency of our education, the debased tone of morals prevalent in our social circle, the political or religious institutions amid which we have been reared? And in seeking opportunities of reformation, do we not instinctively demand new circumstances as an indispensable condition of our betterness? Judging by such data, it is easy to forget other factors in the problem, and rush to the conclusion that a new environment would give us a new character, and that sin is, in the main, the creation of disharmonies which exist between the man and his environment.

This theory, however, leaves the evil unexplained, and is in fact a better explanation of what is good in man. Sin as a universal fact is the potent refutation of every theory which says that virtue is easy; and consciousness is ready to start up, whenever men will demand its evidence, and testify to a dark foul stream of evil running in silence in the underground chambers of the soul, like the sewage of some city of the dead, exhaling its poisonous miasmas through the loftiest chambers of our life, even in the most fortunate of temperaments and the most happily circumstanced of men.
9. Sin, it is said again, is universal, because man's true selfhood is the development of a conflict between good and evil, in which, at the first, evil must necessarily overcome. Sin, therefore, comes to be only a defect or limitation, and the condition which makes progress possible. Time conquers all; and in the end wisdom and culture, by a law of inevitable progression which is in the universe, will overcome ignorance and barbarism, and introduce such a golden age as the world has never seen. Certainly, such a theory explains the universality of evil, but at the same time it destroys it. The sin which is necessary is no longer to be felt as sin, nor to be recognised as an offence against Heaven's will. Man is the victim of his nature; and while he may indeed mourn his fate, it is unreasonable in him to blame himself as if he were his own creator. In short, sin is natural; and whatever is purely natural cannot miss the mark or turn aside, or involve itself in any of those self-originated perversities which are essential to the very concept of sin.

3. The only theory which really illuminates the facts is that which is given in Scripture, and so passes beyond theory, and becomes a fact in the science of theology. The race is a
fallen race: our common nature suffers from inherited depravity. Sin is not alone a fact in human experience, but a principle in human nature, an active potency which impels every man with a felt momentum in the direction of what is evil. It is one of God's great inexplicable laws that sin, whether it be or be not a completely spiritual act, is capable of inducing a positive taint upon the blood, and of ultimating itself in the most terrible diseases and the most painful death. The Hebrew king that would usurp the office of the priesthood, and was smitten with leprosy where he stood, is only a striking type of the slow yet certain Nemesis which dogs the step of evil along the line of physical causation. Nor are disease and death the only or the worst of sin's dreadful consequences. We know by the facts of experience and history that states of mind and states of blood are transmissible through successive generations. Not only bodily tendencies, like drunkenness and lust, but mental temperaments, choleric or sanguine; mental tastes and aptitudes, such as those for the sciences and arts; mental vices, such as pride, ambition, lying—all these, as fixed and habitual states, pass on as a legacy for good or evil to coming generations.
In every man who is born into the world there is that which is strictly personal; but there is also a nature which is impersonal, and on it there would seem to be stamped, in fixed characters, the personal impressions of his immediate ancestry. The race lives in the man; and thus there is a law of mental and moral continuity in the constitution of mankind which makes each generation the reflection of its forerunner, and the creator of that which is to come. Hence, without over-mastering the personal element which is in us all, we are invested with powers that now impel us upward into ever-increasing light, and others that drag us down into that fathomless deterioration which slopes through darkness into death.

These being the undeniable facts of human life, nothing is more reasonable than the Scripture doctrine that "by one man," and that the father of the race, "sin entered into the world, and death by sin."\(^1\) He whose privilege it was to give the first formative bias to our nature, whose it might have been to have fixed it in the habit of obedience and faith, turned away from God to find his life in the world, and so debased his nature as to

\(^1\) Rom. v. 12.
make God more distant, sin more contiguous to his children and their descendants. From that fatal perversion has issued a bias to evil, which, deepening and intensifying with each generation's adoption of its predecessor's sins, nothing has been able to stem effectually but the marvellous condescension of God himself to come down into our evil, and stand in the breach for our deliverance.

CHAPTER II.

THE SEAT AND ORGAN OF SIN.

Sin is universal in the human race. No human being has lived the measure of his days without falling into sin and becoming conscious of guilt. Perhaps no man has been sinful in every action and affection of his life, but admittedly all men have in many things become guilty before God. Sin so widely spread, so unvarying in its outbreak, must have some common cause, and that cause we have already said is to a large extent to be found in the nature which man brings with him into this world. Our next inquiry must
therefore be after an adequate knowledge of sin's seat, and the secret of its power. Since the Scriptures teach that there is a law of sin, by which tendencies to lawlessness pass along from sire to son, we may expect to find traces of the line of causation along which it proceeds. To the Scriptures we must therefore turn.

Very early in the Old Testament, man is recognised as having a double sphere of life. Flesh (basar) and heart (leb) comprehend the entire constituents of man's nature. The flesh is the man in his sensuous and temporal relations; the heart, in its higher significance, is the inner seat where man knows himself, chooses good or evil, loves God or hardens himself against the Most-High. When man is charged with anything like depravity, its seat is usually, though not always, in the heart. It is "evil," "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked," "uncircumcised;" and when man is to be renewed, it is at the heart that the work of grace begins. When, however, we seek to trace the first beginnings of moral evil, we leave the inner region to travel outwards to the flesh. Every man may indeed corrupt himself, and imagine evil from his youth; but we also find weakness and vanity attributed to the inherent constitution
of the flesh, and at times the taint of evil is traced back to the birth-inheritance:—"How can he be clean that is born of a woman?"\(^1\) "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."\(^2\)

It is, moreover, to the New Testament that we must turn in the hope of finding definite information on this perplexing subject. Here, again, man’s nature is represented as a strictly antithetical dichotomy of flesh (\textit{sarx}) and spirit (\textit{pneuma}). This distinction is especially emphasised in the epistles of St. Paul; and, indeed nowhere else need we look for any definite teaching on the subject of our quest. Turning to his epistles, we find that men are ethically divided into two classes—those who are after the flesh, and those who are after the spirit.\(^3\) The flesh is the mortal body with its lusts.\(^4\) To live after the flesh is to mind the things of the flesh.\(^5\) Then the man becomes identified with the element in which he finds his life. His mind is the mind of the flesh; his will is the will of the flesh; his thoughts the thoughts of the flesh; his desires the desires of the flesh; and even when, because of a pretentious worship, he thinks himself most

\(^1\) Job xxv. 4. \(^2\) Psalm li. 5. \(^3\) Rom. viii. 5, 6. \(^4\) Rom. vi. 12. \(^5\) Rom. viii. 5.
spiritual, he is "vainly puffed up by the mind of the flesh." When, again, the regenerative process is described, the Christian is called upon to crucify the flesh, to abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the soul, to make dead his members that are upon the earth, to keep under his body, and bring it into subjection; and, in more positive terms, to glorify God in his body by presenting it a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God. In short, it will be found that, in Pauline phraseology, the flesh represents that in man which is the occasion of his opposition to the mind and will of God—the visible source of all his impulses to violate the moral law of God; and, conversely, that the subjection and mastery of the flesh by the inner mind and will of man, invigorated by the Holy Spirit, is substantially identical with the life of godliness.

The important question which we have now to solve is,—What does the apostle mean by "the body" and "the flesh"? That the two expressions are identical, while explanatory of each other, cannot be doubted for a moment; and we might, therefore, fancy that there can be no room for divergence of opinion as to the significance of "flesh" and "fleshly" in

1 Col. ii. 18.
such passages as the above. As a matter of fact, however, that divergence does exist. Hodge says,—"'Flesh' means the fallen nature of man, his nature as it now is; ... human nature as apostate from God." ¹ Principal Tulloch, somewhat contradictorily, tells us that, as distinguished from "the spirit," "the flesh represents the whole of human nature in its estrangement from the Divine—all the activities of body and of mind with which fallen man is capable of opposing the Divine;" but shortly afterwards refutes himself by adding: "But the 'mind,' reason, or higher thought, may also set itself against the flesh, and may enter into conflict with it in its own strength, and fight it with its native weapons,"² as if he had not just said that this "mind" is necessarily included in the "flesh"! Another able writer, with greater keenness of discrimination, and therefore well aware of the insufficiency of such explanations, following closely in the steps of Delitzsch, offers us a modified interpretation of the phrase: "Flesh may be appropriately used for the principle of corrupt nature in the individual man, for the obvious reason that it is in the course

¹ Systematic Theology, II., pp. 143, 144.
of the flesh, or of the ordinary production of human nature, that the evil principle invariably originates and comes to light."¹ Laying aside, for a moment, the question of its validity from an exegetical point of view, it seems to us that it either involves the author in a Traducean view of human origin, and implies the corruption of the spirit through its derivation from an evil source; or it excludes the spirit from this derived corrupt nature, and implies the author's dissent from the ordinary Calvinistic doctrine, that the spirit of man is created in a depraved condition by its Maker.

Our objection to all those interpretations of the term which make it cover "human nature," or "human nature as fallen," is that it is thereby made to include what is expressly excluded by its natural import—makes flesh equivalent to man, whereas flesh is simply, in the Pauline psychology, one element in his life, and becomes "the flesh of sin" because it usurps the interest and life of a higher nature than its own. Pfleiderer's statement of this argument seems to be unanswerable: "How could Paul, in that case, draw so marked a distinction between the self and the flesh

¹ Laidlaw's Bible Doctrine of Man, p. 84.
as the real abode of sin as he does in Rom. vii. 18? How could the 'in my flesh' of this verse be replaced by 'in my members' in verse 23, if he understood by it the whole human being as it is by nature? The νοῦς (mind), though it also belongs to the whole human being, is here exactly opposed to the 'members' as the opposite to the abode of sin, as the abode of the law of God. How could he, moreover, connect the 'body of death' with 'flesh' as requiring deliverance, if 'flesh' were not just the material of this body—if it were, in fact, something entirely different from it—namely, the whole nature of man?"¹

We are, therefore, altogether indisposed to divorce "flesh" from its natural signification, and read it with that theological meaning which is so often foisted on the term. By "flesh" Paul does not mean the whole fallen man, but the outer sensuous animal life by which man is connected with all that is visible and perishing in this world, and is veiled off from the great unseen world of angels and of God. The fleshly life is the apostle's "outer man" finding his good things in the material and phenomenal; the spiritual life is the Godward activity of that same self, as it seeks

¹ Paulinism, I., p. 87.
to realise its good in the eternal world. Hence the apostle is not involved in any Manichaean dualism of good and evil, or of matter and mind. The flesh, even as it exists in man, is not an essentially evil thing; its lusts and appetites are not in themselves opposed to God; it is not corrupt, except in the sense that it is physically liable to dissolution. The flesh becomes the vehicle of sin only when the superior mind sinks so far down into sympathy with the animal passions as to identify its life with bodily enjoyments, or to limit its sphere of vision by the boundaries which the flesh presents, and, in short, consents to know no law but what is in the nature of the flesh. Then man's life becomes corrupt and damnable in Heaven's sight. The life of a lion in the forest is a carnal life, but it is not sinful, because it is not the perversion of a higher nature to forbidden uses. When, however, a man's life sinks into a mere impulse after enjoyment of a sensuous kind, let it be wealth or lust, or the honours of society, or the pleasures of science and art, he averts himself from a higher world for which he was made, and his life becomes exclusively a life in the flesh, which is destructive of his better nature and displeasing to God.
It is maintained that "flesh" must include the whole of man's sinful nature, because certain sins which are not sensual are charged to the flesh. An apostolic church is rent by strife, division, etc.; and it is asked, "Are ye not carnal?" \(^1\) Again, we are instructed that "hatred, variance, emulations, heresies," are "works of the flesh." \(^2\) Certainly these sins are not purely sensual, for no sin can be since it is the action of a moral agent. Nevertheless, such sins are of "the flesh," because they are the result of an earthly tone of mind, the outcome of a judgment enslaved by the external and phenomenal, and instigated by that jealous and selfish spirit which is natural to brute beasts. "Emulations, variances, strifes"—are not such like passions seen actively at work over the whole field of the animal creation; and when found in men, are they not invariably the result of the mind being led by the senses and the sensitivity, and having its aim in the world of appearances without consideration of the unseen?

Even Phariseeism in its most offensive forms, blind self-complacency and religious pride, is an essentially sensuous condition of the mind. It is the fleshly understanding

\(^1\) 1 Cor. iii. 1-3.  
\(^2\) Gal. v. 20.
judging of things spiritual from its own point of view, and confounding religion with asceticism or morality, the spirit with the letter, the kingdom of heaven with material prosperity and happiness, and treating God as if He was simply an illustrious member of its own society. True, these sins are in the mind, where alone any sin can originate, but in the mind as sunk in the unmoral atmosphere of the flesh, risen into power through sin. The moral turpitude and guilt belong not to the flesh, but to that spiritual personality which voluntarily abnegates its own superior functions to grovel in the coarse and ready-to-hand delights which the flesh supplies.

The question now arises for discussion, How comes it that "the flesh" so universally dominates in the mind as to be the almost only occasion of sin in man? We seem to be shut up to the conclusion that the explanation is, to a large extent, to be found in the hereditary or birth-condition of the human race. Every individual carries in himself some disturbance of his nature as an inheritance from the life and conduct of his ancestry. It is certainly not the case that any foreign substance has been introduced either into the body or the soul of man. Reason demands our assent to
what Martensen has put with admirable condensation:—"Original sin is neither a substance nor an accident; it is a false relation of existence." We cannot conceive of any corruption of the spiritual substance of the human soul. In the sphere of flesh we can imagine a physiological change upon the blood, affecting the balance of the apparatus of the body, and determining, therefore, what is known as the temperament. Such a change for the worse from the ideal temperament of Adam may have become a fact through the physical corruption incident to the invasion of human nature by sin, and vice, and death.

The action and reaction of mind and matter within the empirical life of man is now a universally acknowledged fact. The body can be degraded as to its form by the viciousness of the spirit which inhabits it. Particular sins, long cherished, will cause it to assume likeness to all the various orders of the inferior creation—revert to its primitive types, as an evolutionist might say; and conversely, but alas, how rarely, it can be exalted into a form so graceful and etherealised that it is a fit tabernacle for an angel. All this is suggestive of a very close relation between the spiritual or divine in man, and that nature
which allies him with the animal world below. Indeed, the basis of humanity is animalism. Instinct is the first form of our sentient life, then the platform on which rests our higher intellectual powers; and upon its fulness in its own sphere depends also the richness of the nature which can be superinduced upon it. Every form of action or emotion which belongs to spirit has something corresponding to it in the animal nature, without which it could neither be nor realise itself in man's experience. We are not disposed to deny that evolutionists do find in animals what looks like the germ of all the higher qualities of mind. Certain of our inferiors have a rudimentary reason; and a few have communion with us in certain moral capacities. Man is there, scattered among the beasts, whether he is found or not. That their rudimentary forms of intellect and moral judgment can develop into human faculties we deny. They are not vital forms, and all the hatching of fortunate environment never will evolve them into the completed faculty. Vitalisation can be imparted only as in man, by the higher principle of spirit being added from the creative breath of God; and then they become the sensuous form of a spiritual life, the organ
on which spiritual function is engraffed, and through which it finds its temporal manifestation.

And here we may obtain a glimpse of whatever disorganisation or depravity may exist in human nature as injured by the fall. If the animal nature be unbalanced, it will send up its disorders into the higher region of the soul. Perversion of instinct or taste must needs becloud the mind. Undue strength of certain animal proclivities may grip the mind too tightly, and lead to the imprisonment of its faculties. Depravity may, therefore, well be the saturation of the spiritual in the sensuous, the undue embodiment of the spirit within its organ; and the soul may therefore start on the voyage of life like a ship that leaves the port waterlogged and sunk below the loadline, with the prospect of a dangerous passage, and the possibility of sinking in ocean's depths before the voyage is half done.
CHAPTER III.

SATANIC TEMPTATION.

Over and above the hereditary disorganisation of man's nature, we are distinctly pointed to a cause of sin which lies outside of man, and has its basis in the supernatural. Willingly as we would pass by this mysterious and, in fact, repulsive subject, we feel compelled to notice it, not merely for the sake of symmetry or completeness of subject, but especially for the sake of truth. The Bible appears to us to be most emphatically committed to the existence of a world of evil spirits who have access to our human nature, and whose history is inevitably bound up with the genesis and development of evil in our race. To say as much is, doubtless, in the estimation of some, to encumber the Book with a doctrine which is quite intolerable to the rampant anti-supernaturalism of the age. We can conciliate no party at the expense of the supernatural element in the Scriptures and in history. It is the supernatural which gives the Bible every particle of its distinctive value; and
the faith which \* staggers at the existence of an evil angelhood, may as well stagger at the existence of a good, and as logically cease to believe in Christ and God. The best apologetics is a reasonable exhibition of the whole contents of the Scriptures in its organic unity. To drop one important truth is to leave many others in a fragmentary and disconnected state, and so prepare the way for the disintegration of the whole.

One noticeable feature with regard to evil spirits is the lateness at which the doctrine is developed in the Scriptures. The earlier books are entirely silent; and it is not until we come to the “lying spirit” of Micaiah,\(^1\) and the Satan of the Book of Job, that we have any distinctive indications of a spiritual agency which is inimical to man. Even here the full Satanic character is but imperfectly developed. He is indeed the enemy of man, but he still postures as the friend of God. His joy consists in sifting out the weaknesses of men, and by temptation at the vulnerable point bringing them to the committal of actual sin, that he may return to heaven to laugh and sneer at human virtue, and accuse human piety as a sycophantic flattery of God for the sake of the

\(^1\) 1 Kings xvii. 23.
THE DEMONS OF THE GOSPELS

blessings which He sends. As yet he is more the Mephistopheles of Faust, or the Lucifer of Festus, than the black and surly demon of theology; and the flood-tide of evil that rolls in upon the world is not so much from him as from the hosts of inferior spirits, for the most part spirits of the dead, unto whom men seek by divination and enchantment and such other aids as have been familiar to the demoniacal spiritualism of all ages.

Coming to the times of the New Testament, we meet with new and startling revelations of Satanic power. In earlier times, men had been seekers after spirits, but now evil spirits have invaded human territory in search of men; and the communion which once was difficult of attainment, has now grown to be a fear and oppression to men, from the obtrusive pertinacity of agencies which seem to feed and thrive upon their human intercourse, much as do parasites upon their victims. Now they have obtained a footing in the material system which is man's abode, and they dwell in the desert or the bowels of the earth, or swarm in aerial regions. With their increased propinquity, their venom is intensified. Almost all evil in the world is from them; they torment men with all sorts of sickness, and incessantly
drag men into sin. No longer is their action in any sense serviceable to God; as now they display a more malignant aspect to the human race, so now they are seen to rage in ceaseless wrath against the sovereignty of God. Evil is now organised into an empire governed by a head, with a graduated order of ranks intended to secure discipline among its hosts, and thus increased efficiency in its assaults against the kingdom of God. Satan is at once the generic name for the kingdom of evil activities, and the personal name of the authoritative head under which the hosts of evil are organised. Therefore Satan seems almost to be ubiquitous. Men universally are tempted through the imaginations of the mind and the passions of the flesh. So great is his power in the cosmic and sensuous elements that he is "the god of this world;" and so slavish is the submission of some men, that they are described as being "led captive at his will."

The methods by which this appalling power of Satan is obtained are revealed to us in the various demoniacal incidents of the Gospels. The immediate organs seized are the nervous centres, and by them the various functions of the animal-psychical nature are controlled.
Complete possession ultimates itself in physical collapse and partial mental idiocy; but a wiser and more discriminating use of man, in the Satanic interest, is, by magnetic influence, to inweave infernal impulse with the inferior and evil impulses of the man himself, whereby the will, unconsciously to itself, is strengthened in its evil by another will more wicked than itself.

Here, then, is an important factor in the explanation of man’s sin. If we accept the traditional view of Satan’s personality, to which, however, the Bible is not definitely committed—viz., that he was formerly an angelic dignitary of the highest rank—then evil was in the universe before it was in man. In that case his apostasy is not altogether disconnected with a much more serious schism, and to some extent his evil is a taint that wafts itself to earth from some unseen shore. But on such matters it becomes us to speak softly, since the Scriptures are so silent. The when and where and why of Satan’s fall are left for the future to reveal. The beginning of his incursions on the human domain are not a part of history. The Scriptures are not committed to his presence in the garden with our first parents; and it was not needed.
either to make Adam fallible, or to drag him into actual sin; for if Satan could absolutely originate sin, so could a feeble and less harmoniously constituted creature. So far as revelation carries us, Satanic influence may have had access to the sensuous mind of our first parents, and induced the fall; but it is quite as probable that their sinfulness was the door through which evil spirits broke into access to the spirito-physical sphere of man.

Whatever be the truth as to the advent of infernal influence upon man, it seems indubitable that its power was slowly but surely rising to ascendancy through pre-Christian ages, and had reached its highest mark when Christ came. As we have already seen, the remedy for man's evil state was historically coincident with the hour of man's greatest impotency. The revelation of man's Saviour is also the unveiling of his deadliest foe. On this matter we may rely, because we have the most authoritative testimony, that Satanic influence is an important momentum in the world's present sinful course. Every man has to resist, in the opposition which he gives to sin, not merely the imperfections of his nature, and the false attractions of an evil world, but the alluring magnetism of a host of evil wills that
seek to recruit their fallen ranks from the race of man.

This appalling fact does in a measure mitigate man's guilt, and may be an important element in man's recovery; but it never is set down as an exculpation of the least of his many sins. Man is not in every case responsible for the state to which demoniacal power may bring him. Through certain peculiarities of physical organisation, as it would seem, demons may dominate over a human personality to its utter subjugation. For such evils the victim is not held responsible. Fortunately, such cases always were exceptional, and have grown more rare as Christian regenerative agencies have attained greater potency in our nature. The power which is commonly wielded from the dark abodes is not a fate to which men must submit, but a tempting power against which they can watch and pray. Whilst there is an evil spirit intensifying man's self-will, and leading him to expend his strength in sensuous modes of life, there is also a Divine Spirit guarding man's moral freedom as a sacred thing, and making slavery possible only by the choice of his own deliberate will. Rarely in these times is any man tempted to evil except by inducements to which
he grants willing access to his mind; and there is in every man, with all his bias to the dust, the power to turn his soul to God, and to seek his inspiration from the pure and central spring of eternal life and joy.

CHAPTER IV.

THE EXTENT OF MAN'S DEPRAVITY.

In the history of dogmatics two theories as to the extent of man's depravity stand prominently before the church—the one represented by Pelagius, the other by Augustine—both of them notorious in virtue of the extreme positions they assume. With the Pelagian view the reader is already to some extent familiar. Unhappily we are dependent upon his opponents for our knowledge of his doctrine; and there can be little doubt that his position has been misrepresented and made more extreme than in fact it was. Still, his theory was extreme. Man, he says, is born without any sinful tendency. Adam has set a bad example; but his evil
influence extends no further. Man is free at any moment to do good or evil, and as a matter of fact may appear before God without sin. Ability limits obligation. "If I ought, I can" was the keynote of his moral system; and therefore under the regime of any religion a man may obey God's law and attain eternal life. There are valuable elements in his doctrines of freedom and of moral obligation, but from the unbalanced manner in which they are handled, we cannot give our unqualified assent, any more than we can to the equally unbalanced assertions of his rival theologian.

The Augustinian theory is that all mankind sinned and fell in Adam, and were at once involved in all the consequences of Adam's sin. Men are guilty and polluted from their birth, corrupt in all their nature; spiritually dead; indisposed and unable to all spiritual good. This evil state is said to be the punishment of our first sin in Adam, our original sin, and involves not only spiritual but eternal death. So fatal to the race is this first transgression, that infants dying unbaptized are eternally lost. Such, with some mitigation of the doctrine as to infant salvation, is substantially the present-day teaching of the churches known as Calvinistic. The language of the
Westminster Standards is that in virtue of this original corruption, men are "utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil." The uninitiated are liable to misunderstand these words. It is admitted that man can perform good moral acts. He can be kind and just, and obey the moral law, so as to win the approval of his conscience and of his fellow-men; but on such goodness God will not look with approbation. While such goodness is ascribed to the natural man, it seems that he is totally incompetent to seek any good in God, or to do anything "to convert himself or to prepare himself thereto." He is literally dead in spirit—in-capable of a thought or motion Godward, until supernatural power has planted a new life in his soul.

This theory of man's total corruption and inability is encumbered with most serious difficulties:—

1. It makes God punish sin by its voluntary and immediate creation in a race that, but for this penal arrangement, might have been sinless.

2. It asserts that positive moral corruption is in the soul of every man that comes into this world. If God is "the Father of spirits,"

"
who puts the moral corruption into the spirit? Will men lay it to His charge? or shall we fall back upon the Traducean theory of soul-origin, and involve ourselves in still more insoluble perplexities?

3. It postulates the voluntary and entire withdrawal of God from men as such. Nowhere do the Scriptures teach us that God withdraws Himself from the human race. Adam’s fall still found God helping and encouraging our first parents and their children to spiritual good. Even Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and was not driven. God’s Spirit strove with the evil generation that perished in the flood; and unless we are to hold that Christ preached to these same men as spirits in their Tartarean prison, we must believe that the Spirit strove with them during all those years that Noah was building the ark, and offering them shelter from impending judgment. The Divine face may be hidden from a man or nation, in the anthropomorphic sense that the sinner is immediately to experience judgment, and not a further extension of Divine mercy; but the entire tenor of Scripture teaching is, that God seeks the human race, witnessing of His power and goodness, if haply men will seek after Him.
Hence it follows that men are never at any time without some measure of Divine upholding and supernatural inspiration to do God's will. It seems altogether to be a fearful imputation against the character of Him who claims not only to be a faithful Creator, but .the pitiful Father of our spirits.

4. It makes men responsible for guilt which they have not contracted, and for the exercise of powers which they have never possessed. The conscience of a man never will respond to the charge of criminality for a sin committed thousands of years before he was born. It works utter confusion with our primitive conceptions of moral right and wrong. If we are not criminal, how can there be guilt; and if there be not actual criminality and guilt, how can there be justice in sentencing men on merely fictitious grounds to everlasting suffering? And if everlasting punishment be the just reward of Adam's sin, what is left to be the punishment of a man's own personal transgressions?

Or how, again, can man be held responsible for a goodness which is made impossible by the evil created in him, and to which he is made a slave. It has been well said that "one who is wholly evil cannot be guilty of
sin, since he fulfils the only law known to him—the law of his nature." As Coleridge asks, is it possible "to have the duties of a spirit with the wants and appetites of an animal?" God makes man insolvent, then demands tribute of His creature, and next remorselessly condemns him to eternal torments on account of his natural and inevitable insolvency. The semblance of justice is sometimes given to this imputedly Divine procedure by the criminal charge that man has no wish to be otherwise than he is created; but immediately, with fatal inconsistency, it is confessed that man has no power to wish otherwise than he does. In other words, then, God gives man his character, makes him incapable of changing it, and then condemns him to endless pain for what He Himself has made inevitable.

5. This theory makes it easier for man to believe and trust his fellow-men, and to do unselfish acts of kindness to his neighbour, than to search the Scriptures, or to believe the word of God. With all its dislike of Pelagianism Calvinism quite outstrips Pelagianism here. That much-maligned monk would say that men do such good deeds by the common grace of God; and we would much prefer to ascribe

\[\text{Hamartia, p. 21.}\]
such excellences to man's Creator than to fallen man considered by himself. Can the man who is wholly corrupt, and from whom God hides Himself, show kindness to his neighbour, deny himself, and be truthful and patriotic? If so, why cannot he pray to God, or search the Scriptures, or believe the truth that Christ died for him, or do any of those mental exercises which precede salvation? Indeed, this system cannot be consistent here without landing men in most absolute fatalism as to their personal salvation. Hence, it is not strange that some of its ablest exponents break through the iron ring of fatality at the expense of their consistency, and flatly contradict their standards and their system by admitting that the unsaved man has strength enough "to seek help out of himself . . . from the only source whence it can be obtained."¹ Let the reader ponder upon the self-humiliation, the knowledge of God, and the Christian faith implied in such a comprehensive exercise of soul, and then ask how this can be made to agree either with Dr. Hodge himself, or with the Confession's doctrine that the sinner can do nothing "to prepare himself for conversion"?

6. It maintains that man's character is not

¹ Hodge, Systematic Theology, II., p. 277.
formed by him, but for him before he comes into this world. All distinction is refused between a self-made and a fate-made character. Dr. Hodge, to whom we have with good reason already frequently referred, says, "A malignant being is an evil being, if endowed with reason, whether he was so made or so born. And a benevolent rational being is good in the universal judgment of men whether he was so created [by himself?] or so born."¹ Yes; malignant and evil as a tiger, a vulture, or a snake is such; good as a sheep, or dove, or ox is good; but as we never attribute merit to tame and useful animals, or blame to fierce and noxious animals, on the ground that their character is not self-determined, neither should we to men who are determined by their natures, and cannot make themselves otherwise than God wills them to be. Our theologians might have learned as much from the immortal Dante, in a passage which is well worth quotation, but which is not easily reproduced in our less flexible and mellifluous tongue:—

"As in a plant subsists
Life, not perceived but by the foliage green,
So from what source the apprehension springs
Of first ideas, vainly men inquire,
Or whence comes passion for the first-loved things.

² Ibid, II., p. 308.
They live in man, as instinct in the bee
   For making honey; and this first desire
Nor praise nor censure can infer to thee.
That every other wish round this may bend,
In you is placed a power, whose warning voice
Should still the threshold of the will defend.
This is the source whence praise or blame accrues,
   As good or bad affections are your choice—
Winnowed by each, who this or that pursues.
Those who the matter fully sifted knew
   This innate liberty, and felt its force;
Whence moral codes for after times they drew.
Hence lay we down, that from necessity
   Each love that in you springs derives its source;
But in yourselves the power to check it lies.”¹

If moral distinctions are created by the shere
necessity of natural inheritance, morals are
abolished, and right and wrong cease to be, so
far as God's human kingdom is concerned.
Martensen is right when he says that Augus-
tinianism “annihilates all individual and
personal responsibility.”²

7. As an estimate of our moral state, it is
utterly against the consciences and conscious-
ness of men. No man who will speak without
theological bias is able to deny that it presents
a strongly exaggerated picture of the disor-
ganisation of man’s nature. There is no man
living who is not conscious that he could be

¹ Purgatorio, xviii. 53-72, Wright's Translation.
² Ethics, p. 114.
worse than he has ever been. In some respects, certain men have fathomed the depths of Satan; but in others they have earned the praise of men. As Pascal wisely says,—"There are two natures in us, one good, the other bad;" two men, we might say, the one coming from the race, the other coming from the hand of God. We all betray our hereditary taint; yet there is in man, perhaps in the most abnormal case, a soul that turns often to the good and always loves it. Was the human spirit ever made that never prayed? that never loathed its evil self, and sighed after the spiritual good that seemed gone for ever? Evil dispositions may gather around this soul of goodness, and almost smother it under their stony encrustations; but we have only to go the deeper down to come at length upon a spot where God's voice is heard, and where His Spirit moves, and we find the ground and possibility of regeneration. Even the hardened criminal has his moments of repentance; the slimiest worldliness is tormented with longings after an ideal state; the most blatant infidelity has its moments when it sighs and cries for God. Yes; we cannot shut God off from His world of fallen men. The goodness that we see, though not so pure as that which
"accompanies salvation," is yet too far above the moral corruption which is said to wholly defile the faculties of man, to be the unaided production of God-forsaken men. Even the heathen world might well rise in protest against such depreciatory views of the state of man. Is not its character faithfully represented in Plato's black and white horses yoked to the chariot of the soul? Do we not see in ancient history instances of men in all respects worthy of our esteem, whom even Christians might envy for the gentle virtues which adorn their name, and who, as if inspired from heaven, have wrestled with their ignorance and sins, and by strenuous self-denial have been able to overcome? All this is the sign that no impassable and fatal wall is yet built between man and God, and that from the near or far unseen, across the swamps and fens of insensibility and sin, there still come glimmerings of light which call the spirit upwards to its primal home. Man may indeed be by nature far from God, but he still retains the capacity to know Him, and to love Him when He is known; indeed, his misery without God is a standing proof that much of his native greatness clings to him amid the ruins of his
fall. Best of all, God is with man in spite of man's forgetfulness of God.

8. This utter inability attributed to man is refuted by the entire strain of Scripture teaching. That man is too deeply involved in death to save himself, the Arminian will as readily grant as the sternest Calvinist. The question between these two schools of thought simply is, is man able to do anything previous to his regeneration to advance his change from a carnal to a spiritual state? The Calvinist answers "no," and while priding himself upon destroying every fragment of human merit, and thereby magnifying grace, destroys all human responsibility, and makes the number of the saved and unsaved at every moment in time and in eternity exactly what God wills it to be. The Arminian answers, "Yes, with God's help;" and while refusing to the sinner any merit in seeking to enjoy Heaven's favours, equally magnifies God's grace, and makes man alone responsible for his continuance in sin. The Scriptures accordingly constantly appeal to men in their unconverted states to seek the means of regeneration. "Hear," "Turn," "Seek ye My face," "Draw nigh to God," "Cleanse your hearts," are the Divine appeals to men under the ancient dispensation. Even
the heathen Ninevites can repent and worship God, and thereby avert His wrath.

While the New Testament is a richer unfolding of Divine grace, it is also an enlargement of man's responsibility. The deadness of the sinner is only the deadness of the man who is asleep and can awake to flee for refuge to the hope of the Gospel. If carnal, he cannot discern "spiritual things," it is because he lacks the rudimentary preparation. Ignorant of his letters, he cannot read the published book. But he can begin with the "milk" which is suitable to babes, and go on until able to receive the strong meat of spiritual wisdom. At the worst, he is not all "flesh." There is at the centre of his life a νοῦς in which dwells the "law of God," which itself as a faculty of his spirit is oftentimes warring with the flesh, and always able to take into itself the inspirations of the flesh and world, or to turn to God and receive from Him the inbreathings of His Holy Spirit. Such is the bearing of Paul's analysis of human nature into its contrary elements in Rom. vii. To this effect we shall cite the testimony of two eminent Continental scholars. Pfleiderer says—"In this well-weighed estimate of man's moral and religious nature, Paul is as far
removed from the Pelagian over-estimation as from Augustine's depreciation of man."¹ F. C. Baur expresses himself thus—"It appears, as from other considerations, so also from his doctrine of the sarx and nous, that Paul could not hold man to be sinful in the Augustinian sense. Since not only the sarx, but also the nous itself belongs to man's nature, and the activity of the nous always tends in the direction of the good, this is an essentially different view from the Augustinian."² This superior principle in man, supported and enforced by a continuous Divine presence which is most willing to succour every better impulse, keeps him in a state of freedom from the otherwise inevitable bondage of the flesh. It constitutes the element of responsibility in his nature; and is that in man to which the Gospel constantly appeals, and without which its appeals were little else than mockery.

9. It ignores the beneficent working of that very law by which depravity has invaded human nature. Not content with asserting that "our nature is so prolific in all kinds of evil that it can never be idle,"³ it seems to

¹ Paulinism, I., p. 64.
² Neuestamentliche Theologie, p. 143.
³ Calvin, Institutes, II. i. 8.
take pleasure in asserting that no redemption is possible to the nature of the race as such. The law of heredity is exclusively one-sided. Sin, as a spiritual act, can pour itself onward along the line of hereditary causation, as "a fountain without ceasing pours out water;" but holiness, it seems, is quite incompetent for exercising any propagative power. Hence, after eighteen centuries of Christian nurture, the same vile epithets are as applicable to human nature as in the ages of heathen blindness and stagnation; and while Adam could curse the race by divesting it of all good, our Lord himself is incapable of so far rehabilitating it as to make it capable of any good. Such one-sided teaching is against all reason. It is impossible to imagine, if we forget our theology, that God would invest evil with such unconquerable potency, and leave good so fearfully handicapped in the race for victory. But, as a matter of observation, the law of heredity is no respecter of principles. It hands on the blessing as surely as the bane. If sin degrades the human form, and gives vigour and precision of aim to the lower passions in the sinner's offspring; so also does the spirit of holiness refine and elevate the outer man, and prepare the way for still
greater excellence in the generations which follow.

Take the individual man, and mark the wholesome influence upon his temperament of the Christian virtues dwelling in his soul. Meekness and goodwill, hope, joy and prayer are better medicine than is in all the British Pharmacopeia. Look at the history of heathen nations which have been effectively Christianised. There is a change in the physical type after not many generations—a sweetness and enrichment of the very material forms, indicative of the certain resurrection which is going on in the more interior soul. Accordingly, the human race has risen since the time of Christ, and to mount and evermore to mount becomes the destiny of our nature in subjection to His quickening energy. The men of these times may individually be as needful of spiritual regeneration as the men of Athens or of Rome in the time of Paul; but society stands altogether upon a higher platform. Its downward tendencies have been powerfully arrested, and an upward movement has begun that never will be arrested. Satan is being cast out of the outer circumvallations of his fortress. The flesh is being won out of his grasp; it grows sweeter and purer; especi-
ally it grows kindlier in its dispositions; and all this natural regeneration is the preparation of coming victories in still higher spheres. "He that is cleansed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." When once man gets his feet entirely rid of those lower pollutions which defile him, his spiritual regeneration will virtually be an accomplished fact. Meanwhile, the Spirit of the Lord has access to the hearts of men as never before in human history. The men who stand immediately outside the circle of the regenerate are now less depraved—less unable to do good—nearer to the kingdom. The race marches onward to its redemption, and the earth to its deliverance from vanity. The second Adam has proved stronger than the first. The hereditary principle which has slain will also make alive.

Such then is the truth which we would oppose to the exaggerations and the falsities of Augustinianism. In taking this measured view of man's depravity we are following the best traditions of the church. It is the view of Irenæus, Tertullian, Cyprian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Athanasius, Basil, the two Gregories, the two Cyrils, Chrysostom, and even of Ambrose, the teacher of Augustine.
Not only can we claim the illustrious fathers of Christian antiquity, but the general concensus of opinion in the Greek and Latin churches of all ages, and of many of the most active sections of enlightened Protestantism. That the race is fallen from good, and seriously defective in its nature, we sorrowfully admit. Man, following his predominant instincts, is a man of the world, not a man of God. The sorceries and seductions of the world are so much to him, that God and immortality readily become mere fables and traditions of the olden time. But this is only half the truth. God still lives and works. Redemptive agencies lie alongside, and work in along with, all the flood of evils which has been let loose by sin. No man can be entirely free from sin; but no man need be its slave, and always sin. Especially, where the benignant influence of Christ has come, man is endowed with all the conditions of deliverance from the domination of the flesh. The contents of the Gospel present the weightiest motives to faith and holiness that we can well conceive of; and whoever has heard the name of Christ with an intelligent comprehension of its meaning, is especially conscious that he has power to shake off the spell of sin and become
Christ's freeman. It may, indeed, be true that in this man's breast there is the consciousness of a disordered and imperfect nature—an undue bias to lawlessness and self-indulgence—he may feel as if all the circumstances of his life were set for his temptation, and even at times discern, as it were, the magnetism of a personal presence in the attractions which lure him to the evil which he loves; and yet there is in him such a sense of his capacity for good, such a consciousness of masterful self-control, that when most infernally beset he knows that

"'Tis one thing to be tempted,
Another thing to fall."

And if such persons fall in spite of all the guardian care and strengthening inspiration of an ever-watchful Providence, they know that they cannot

"Justly accuse
Their Maker, or their making, or their fate."

Without the motives brought to bear upon the mind by an external and positive revelation such as the Gospel, we confess that man is most liable to err, to feed his mind upon the world, and pursue his own ideals without a
thought of God. But when this redemptive agency comes to man with its marvellous adaptations to the whole compass of his wants, appealing by its terrors to his fears, by its glories to his deeper instincts and most transcendent hopes, who will say that he is not able to overcome temptation, and to turn himself to God as to his soul's true Sun.

CHAPTER V.

THE IMPUTATION OF SIN.

We have now to turn the reader's attention to an inquiry of a very subtle order. How do the consequences of Adam's sin, as they are generated in the race, connect themselves with the idea of responsibility? Is the race morally implicated in the first sin? Does depravity imply the sinful guiltiness of those to whom it adheres, previous to all will, and even consciousness, upon their part?

In the earliest ages of the Church, the prevalent opinion was that the race has no moral responsibility for Adam's sinfulness, and has no sin nor guilt, though a measure of
physical depravity, attaching to it by its birth. On this point it were easy to cite trustworthy evidence; but one witness is enough. He says,—"All, or at least the greater part of the fathers of the Greek Church before Augustine, denied any real original sin." ¹ What the Greek-speaking Christians held on this important question is thus summarised by Shedd, himself a Calvinist:

1. Original sin is not voluntary, and, therefore, is not properly sin in the sense of guilt.
2. The Adamic connection relates only to the corporeal and sensuous nature, and not to the voluntary and rational.
3. The Adamic connection exerts no immediate effect upon the will; it affects it only mediatelty through the fleshly corruption.
4. Infants are guiltless, because they possess only a propagated physical corruption." ²

The spread of Traducian views of human origin in the Western church compelled its theologians to adopt a different view of original sin. Tertullian's maxim is unimpeachable in its logic:—"The propagation of the soul implies the propagation of sin." From this seed of error there came to be

¹ Wigger's Augustinianism and Pelagianism, p. 43.
² Shedd's Christian Doctrine, II., p. 42.
developed in the powerful mind of Augustine that theory of the fall which substantially, at the present day, is the doctrine of Calvinistic churches. Augustine held it thoroughly and consistently. All men were regarded as having been in Adam and sinned in Adam when he fell. His sin is theirs in the same sense as it is his, because it was their act as truly as it was his. The moral corruption which invaded Adam's soul was a penal infliction for his sin, and it is the same to all his children. While it is a Divine infliction, it is at the same time a new element of sin in man, and an additional cause of guilt and damnation.

The modern Protestant doctrine of imputation breaks in upon the hard compact unity of this conception, and in its desire to be more reasonable only manages to become less consistent. It keeps in view the organic unity of the race, but bases imputation not so much upon Adam's natural headship as upon a federal headship, which Divine sovereignty conferred upon him in order that the race without exception should either stand or fall in him. Adam fell, and all men shared his guilt. His depravity passes on to them, and they become truly sinful and blameworthy on account of this unavoidable inheritance; but
are not guilty of Adam's personal sin in the sense of criminality or demerit, although guilty in the sense that they are exposed to its "punishment—i.e., an evil inflicted in execution of the penalty of law and for the satisfaction of justice."¹

This theory has been projected to serve as a Theodicy. It is supposed to protect the Divine justice from any imputation of injustice; and yet the whole transaction is bereft of fairness, and carries on its face so palpable a stamp of Jesuitry, that we are not astonished to find even such admiring defenders as Drs. Hodge and Cunningham confess, the one that "the objections to this doctrine are many and serious," and the other that "it still leaves difficulties unsolved which we cannot fully fathom." As a matter of fact, it offers no real relief from the difficulties of the doctrine in its more scholastic form. The term guilt, in such a usage, is altogether unallowable, and is only so used by the technical theologian. It never can be properly divorced from the idea of demerit and consequent desert of punishment; and if theologians will maintain the applicability of the term in the above castrated sense, they should consistently ex-

¹ Hodge's Systematic Theology, II., p. 194.
tend the term to Christ, and say of Him also that He contracted guilt when the sins of the race were laid to His account. But after all, this limited use of "guilt" is more a piece of verbal fence than an actual factor in Calvinistic thought; for what does it matter that the actual demerit of Adam's act is not attributed to the race, when the penal sentence belonging to demerit, to the fullest possible extent, falls upon the unconsenting and unconscious soul—"death, sin, and corruption"—"the wrath of God," and "the pains of hell for ever." Surely it only makes the injustice more conspicuous to say that the soul is innocent, and, while recognised as innocent, is involved, without its own consent, in all the consequences of the deepest guiltiness. Even Dr. Hodge himself betrays the fact that human nature, in its depth, is never really reconciled to the morality of such transactions as he in this connection imputes to God. For, arguing against another theory, he forgets the artificial character of his own, and unconsciously refutes himself. Think of the significance of the following words: "Sins of which we know nothing; which were committed by us before we were born, which cannot be brought home to the conscience as our own sins, can never be the righteous
grounds of punishment, any more than the acts of an idiot."¹ And yet he will ask us to hold ourselves guilty on account of Adam’s sin, and justly punished with temporal, spiritual, eternal death! As in politics every atrocious tyranny perpetrated has worn the mask of liberty, so in theology the most offensive violations of our sense of righteousness are inflicted in the sacred name of Justice.

It is part of this doctrine of original sin that while we are not charged with the actual demerit of Adam’s act, our inborn depravity is nevertheless charged to us as actual sin. It is claimed that the Bible is a witness to the fact, that when we come to know ourselves we “appropriate a sense of guilt derived from the sinfulness of the race.”² The great proof-text is David’s passionate wail: “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.”³ The inherited evil of the Psalmist’s nature is not, it is said, made available for self-defence, but as “an aggravation of the case;” therefore, “inborn depravity entails guilt.”

We have already shown, on the soundest

¹ Systematic Theology, II., p. 216.
² Laidlaw’s Bible Doctrine of Man, p. 155.
³ Ps. li. 5.
grounds, that such doctrine is subversive of all morality, and we shall therefore narrow our remarks to an elucidation of the real significance of the text. The Psalmist certainly does not cite the fact of his native evil for the purpose of self-extenuation, for it is only pride that can excuse itself in the presence of God. As little, on the other hand, does he do so for the purpose of intensifying the criminality of his special sin. His reference to depravity is purely an act of self-abasement, a confession of the deep-seated nature of his evil; preparatory to a petition, not for pardon, but for the inward cleansing of the heart and spirit. The feeling which accompanies this confession of his inward defilement is not remorse, which is possible only in view of responsible wrong-doing; it is regret and self-loathing over inherent evil to which his will has guiltily yielded. It is absurd to suppose a man capable of remorsefully mourning over the inherited consequences of Adam's sin. His actual iniquities ought to leave him no spare time for the purely metaphysical satisfaction of repenting for natural evils which he neither brought into being nor can expel from it, let him do what he may. Responsibility always gathers round "I can, I ought;" and
the conscience will accuse a man only of his
wilful disobedience to a recognised law of
right. No man, save in deference to some
theoretic figment, feels himself responsible for
his nature in itself. The very existence of
morality is based upon a personal will, which
imputes good or evil to itself only on the
grounds of its freedom from external domination.
Guiltiness is the award of conscience only when
we have done ill; and we have done ill only
when we could have done better. Unworthi-
ness, helplessness, and misery are the outcome
of the wounded heart which perceives its
condition of estrangement from the life of
God; and such were David's feelings as he
cried: "Behold, Thou desirest truth in the
inward parts. . . Purge me with hyssop,
and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be
whiter than snow."

In order to further elucidate the truth, we
must examine for a little the only passage in
the Scriptures which directly treats of the
causal connection between the sin of Adam
and the sin of his descendants. In the writ-
ings of St. Paul we find special prominence
according to the father of the race as to some
extent the arbiter of its destinies. We read:
"By one man sin entered into the world, and
death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." It is easy to exaggerate, by a careless or a biased reading of this argument, the scope within which the influence of this prototype is exerted. Too often he is conceived of as if his sole person were the whole continent of our humanity, and he carried in his will the eternal misery or eternal glory of the human race. Such a view is utterly inconsistent with the Pauline presentation. Adam was only a psychical man, and contained only that which is psychical in his descendants. His representation of the race, arising not from any arbitrary will of God, but from his natural position as the root of psychical humanity, was therefore necessarily limited in extent to the field of that nature which he held in trust for all his children. He was our father as to the flesh, as Abraham was the father of the Jewish people. We have sprung from his loins, and to a large extent have been conditioned by him. But he was not "spiritual," nor a "life-giving spirit," and therefore not the root of that in us which is deepest and most enduring, and consequently most individual. God had a higher conception of manhood than was

1 Rom. v. 12.
realised in the created Adam, and therefore he was unfit to be the final arbiter of a race whose true type was yet to come. Christ alone is the ideal man; the true Adam of the race, the only giver of "spirit" to the sons of men. The mystery is unfolded by the doctrine of Christ's true divinity. He is the Eternal Word, by whom all things were made. Our terrestrial form and life are gathered from the living human dust which precedes us on the earth; but our spirits are the inbreathing of the eternal wisdom and love which were incarnated in Christ. He, more than Adam, is the "Root of David;" and hence our making and our destiny have ever stood in what He is and wills us to be, far more than in the hereditary swathing-clothes of animality which shut our spirits in, and whose death Christ will make redemptive to His people by means of His own risen and exalted life.

This being the Pauline conception of humanity in its ontological relations, we must understand that whatever comes upon the race by the first Adam, comes along that nature which is inherited, and which is destined at the last to pass away. If sin, as a power or principle of godlessness, enters into the world and affects the character of
all, it is by that lower nature which is transmissible—either by its disorganisation or its ascendancy over the spiritual instincts of the inner man. When we read that death has been transmitted to every son of Adam, we must understand, above all, the disintegration of that life of which Adam has been the visible source, though we may possibly be right in not entirely dissevering that state of alienation from the Divine into which the race had so terribly sunk in Apostolic times through its long-continued ignorance of God. The condemnation which has come upon all through one's offence is not that wrath of God which rests upon the Christ-rejecting soul, but that lesser wrath in which we spend all our days, and which says to all, "Return unto destruction, ye children of men." ¹ If it is said that we have all sinned, or been constituted sinners,² it is because we have been pre-judged in him who is the type of all his children, and are involved in the condemnation to vanity and death which he incurred and passes on to all who inherit that sensuous nature which he poisoned at its source. We truly suffer for Adam's sin. Let us say according to oriental metaphor: "His sin is

¹ Psalm xc. 7-9. ² Rom. v. 18, 19.
imputed to us; we sinned in him, for we were in him;" but we must take care not to be too prosaic in our interpretation of such words, nor forget that in this famous argument of St. Paul, "the solidarity of individuals with the head of the first humanity does not extend beyond the domain of natural life. What belongs to the higher life of man, his spiritual and eternal existence, is not a matter of species, but of the individual." ¹ To the same effect writes the judicious Martensen,—"Nothing can strictly speaking be pronounced regarding the condemnation of the individual, unless he himself has made a personal decision, exercising freedom of choice in relation to Divine grace, which will redeem him from the power of original sin." ²

Possibly some may feel as if there were a semblance of injustice even in this limited recognition of the solidarity of the race. The objection cannot be urged as against a doctrine of revelation, since imputative evil, the partial identity of the innocent with the guilty, is one of the inevitable facts of human history. While Hebrew wisdom had hardly as yet formulated any doctrine of corporate respon-

¹ Godet, Romane, I., p. 354.
² Dogmatics, p. 256.
sibility, one of the oldest of Greek poets had already observed its operation to be one of the commonest facts of experience.

"One sinner oft provokes the avenger's hand,  
And often one man's sins destroy the land."¹

Complaint is useless against a law which is inwoven into the very texture of humanity; indeed there is little occasion for complaint if the law is made two-sided, and operates as impartially for blessing as it does for evil. That it does so, from a social and moral point of view, is beyond all dispute. This law, like all that comes from God, is stamped with the hallmark of beneficence. It is particularly so in spiritual relations. Theologically, Christ is more than the counterpart of Adam. All through Paul's typological parallel there is a marked superiority of Christ to Adam, and a corresponding superabundance of benefit accruing to those who by faith derive their life from Christ. And in the final consequences, the second Adam will be high in ascendancy above the first. Life shall reign through the one, if death has reigned through the other. If sin has become a potency in human nature by the first man's fall, grace has become a

¹ Hesiod, Work and Days, 240.
mightier potency through the second Adam's perfect obedience until death. No man will ever perish by the mere accumulation of hereditary evils. Free will is never overborne. The good that comes from God as the primitive inheritance of the soul, when quickened and supported by the grace that comes to men in the saving work of Christ, is more than an adequate defence against the hereditary taint and damning power of sin. The cross fathoms man's deepest degradation, and gives the vilest access to the light and blessedness of Heaven. Such indeed is the destiny of man according to the desire of God, and upon man himself, under God, it depends whether this high destiny be attained, or his being's progress be eternally arrested by an inveterate attachment to his sin. Whatever darkness may rest upon the destiny of those who have lived and died in heathen night, or who have never had the Gospel faithfully preached to them on earth, we may rest assured that immortal souls are neither saved nor lost until they have been brought to the searching touchstone of Christ's redemptive work; for He alone is set for the final fall of man, as He alone is set for his final glorification.
CHAPTER VI.

RESUMÉ AND CONCLUSION.

And now our task is nearly done. We have found that as God is the pure untroubled Ideality, nothing that is evil can possibly come from Him. Sin falls only on the side of man. God and man, as presented in the Scriptures, stand over against each other in a relation of perfect freedom; and out of this freedom on man's side all moral evil springs. Sin is eminently a thing of conscience and of will; and for it and all its consequences, man must bear the responsibility. Even when, as a power or productive principle descending from sire to son, sin seems to have become a dominant law in human life, man is by no means sin's victim, and cannot shake off his guilt on the plea of a sinful nature. The "flesh," no doubt presents to man a sphere of thought and feeling which veils the Eternal, and strongly induces him to be exclusively carnal; but the flesh cannot prevail without the consent of the will, and its triumph therefore implies the
guilty connivance of the inner man, who is under obligation to seek the higher life.

Through hereditary entanglements we suffer from the primal sin. Our standing in relation to the natural life is that of sinners. The sentence of death is not, however, personal, and implies no disapprobation of the individual soul as such. We singly stand or fall from our chosen attitude to the will of God. And here let there be no mistake. As becomes the weakness of a fallen and Satanically tempted race, the Divine government of the world is not that of mere law and obedience, but supremely of grace and truth in Jesus Christ. The final judgment on our souls mercifully hinges rather on our attitude to the Saviour’s redemptive work, than on our detailed obedience to the circle of our moral obligations. "All manner of sin shall be forgiven to men;" that is, no particular transgression shall bear fatally on man’s destiny; but "the sin against the Holy Ghost shall never be forgiven," for God’s only answer to it shall be misery and darkness immeasurably prolonged. This one fatal sin is substantially the wilful resistance of God’s mercy as it comes to men through the mediation of His Son. In strict accordance with this truth is the teaching of the Bible,
that sin has death as its sequel; not, however, as we have been accustomed to hear, every single act of sin considered by itself, but only sin in its complete development, as the entire sinful course of a human life. "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." Individual transgressions, in this probation state, are partly punished, in still greater part forgiven; and the final state of sin is never reached, hell never is adjudged to any soul, until the measure of its iniquity is filled up by its persistent and final blasphemy of the Holy Ghost. Hence, we did not find the penalty of eternal death in the sentence passed on Adam's sin; much less did it pass over upon and imbrue the race in perdition. They alone are sentenced to suffer it who have personally and deliberately chosen evil as the final principle of their own life; after all redemptive agencies have failed to convince them that life and blessedness are to be found alone in God.

These evil investments of man's life make his duties twofold. For our own sakes, it becomes us to recognise our evil inheritance, to feel sin cleaving to our flesh and bones, in order that, being acquainted with its virulence, we may become its victors by the faithful recognition of Christ as the only Saviour from
its power. To the race we owe it that we strive to mitigate the tendencies to evil which we have inherited from the past. None of us can arrest the tide; all of us can lessen the volume with which it flows. If we cultivate the bad side of our nature, we leave an increased inheritance of misery for posterity; if we put down vice around us, check the upblazing of unhallowed lust, strengthen our purer tastes, and from the days of youth maintain a chastened and heaven-communing mind, we shall leave a splendid legacy to the generations that are to be.

Meanwhile, let us trust in God. As regards men’s destinies, God will do the right, which is the best for all. In the final issue of all things, we shall find that God’s eternal plan is a golden ring through which sin, with all its infernal subtlety, has never broken. Good will be victorious. The resources of God are inexhaustible. His wisdom is boundless, His patience is infinite, His love incomprehensibly glorious. These are the weapons which at last must prove victorious. In the light of Christian prophecy, we see the lengthening file of years become more radiant with the glory of Divine holiness. The kingdom of heaven will come with its perfect art, its
universal science, its large expansion of human faculties, its rich funds of learning and deep experience, its universal social sympathies, its liberal baptism of prophetic fire and spiritual light—a golden age surpassing in its glory all the dreams of the past. Then the dark ages of sin and death through which the race has passed will have shrunk into a narrow band of blackness lying on the far horizon of a world which is full of the glory of the Lord.

"Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

"Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be."

THE END.