

## PREFACE

The professors of our holy religion having unhappily strayed from the scriptures and true Christianity, there seemed to be no remedy in any thing but a return to original ground. This suggested itself to many, in different places, almost simultaneously, about the beginning of the present century, and numerous churches were formed about that time, both in Europe and America, resembling, more or less, the churches planted by the Apostles, or the church of Jerusalem instituted by the Lord Jesus himself.

These churches, with few exceptions, adopted the holy scriptures as their exclusive guide in religion, and rejected the dangerous creeds and confessions of Christendom, which have operated so fatally on the unity of the church. This formed the first positive step towards that return to original ground, for which the present century is distinguished.

In 1823 a plea for a particular ecclesiastical order was put forth publicly, by Brother Alexander Campbell. This for distinction's sake was called the ancient order. Others had, before this time, taken the scriptures alone; but this master-stroke gave a fresh impulse to religious inquiry, and, by a single expression, "Ancient Order," limited that inquiry to a very important branch of our religion as a first step.

Presiding, at that time, over a church which had already attained the ancient order, or at least as much of it as seems even now to be attained, the gospel, or rather a uniform authoritative plan of preaching it, became more the object of my attention, as may be seen from a few essays published in the C. Baptist, cut short, however, by the then limited knowledge of the extraordinary topic which had been selected; in 1827 the True Gospel was restored. For distinction's sake it was styled the Ancient Gospel.

The present century, then, is characterized by these three successive steps, which the lovers of our Lord Jesus have been enabled to make, in their return to the original institution. First the Bible was adopted as sole authority in our assemblies, to the exclusion of all other books. Next the Apostolic order was proposed. Finally the True Gospel was restored.

The above very general notice of the progress and order of the present reformation, is deemed sufficient to make the reader feel whither it is we desire to bring him by this discourse, namely, to the gospel; and

not to a plea for any particular order, or to any discussion of the previous question concerning the supreme and exclusive authority of the holy scriptures.

A volume of unbroken discourse of the true gospel is still a desideratum. Since 1827, it has floated through our periodicals in essays and fragments of essays very unlike the living orations in which it was then set forth to the public for acceptance. Those are scattered over a wide field, and necessarily apart from each other; so that when a disciple would invite a friend, or fellow professor, or relative, to a perusal of what has been learned and written of the gospel since that time, he must needs invite him to the review of numerous volumes, a task by no means acceptable to readers in general.

In the tenth number of the *Millennial Harbinger*, for 1831, the restoration of the true gospel is referred to, in the following manner: "Brother Walter Scott, who, in the fall of 1827, arranged the several items of faith, repentance, baptism, remission of sins, the Holy Spirit, and eternal life, restored them in this order to the church, under the title of ancient gospel, and preached it successfully to the world—has written a discourse," &c. In the *Evangelist* for 1832 the following paragraph, of the connection between the above elements and sin which they are intended to destroy, occurs. "In regard to sinners and sin, six things are to be considered—the love of it, the practice of it, the state of it, the guilt of it, the power of it, and the punishment of it. The first three relate to the sinner; the last three to sin. Now faith, repentance, and baptism, refer to the first three, the love, and practice, and state of sin; while remission, the Holy Spirit, and the resurrection relate to the last three, the guilt, and power, and punishment of sin. In other words, brethren, to make us see the beauty and perfection of the gospel theory as devised by God; faith is to destroy the love of sin, repentance to destroy the practice of it, baptism the state of it, remission the guilt of it, the Spirit the power of it, and the resurrection to destroy the punishment of sin; so that the last enemy, death, will be destroyed."

On the original arrangement of the elements of the gospel then and on the analysis of sin contained in the preceding paragraph, the present volume is built. It comprehends a connected discourse of the true gospel of Christ, and has been written by request of some of the most intelligent among our brethren. The task might have fallen upon some one more able to perform it; but as none has yet appeared to occupy this ground, we have yielded to the wishes of those who were perhaps better judges in the case than ourselves, and have done the best we could.—May the reader derive as much profit from reading it as the author has been gladdened while writing it.

A discourse on the elements of any science, admits of but little elegance, except so much as attaches to correctness of description and accuracy of definition. The reader, therefore, must not hope to meet with much of it in these elementary orations, which are of the didactic and demonstrative kind chiefly. With this monition to the reader, we commend the book to the protection of God, and to the patronage of the public and the brethren.

WALTER SCOTT

# A DISCOURSE OF THE TRUE GOSPEL

## SECTION FIRST—INTRODUCTORY

### CHAPTER I

#### *The Fall of Our First Parents and Their Expulsion from Paradise Considered*

The fall of man, and his recovery by Jesus Christ our Lord form a great drama, of which God is the author. The chief personage is the Messiah, and his mighty and subtle antagonist is an archangel in arms. The parties are demons and angels, the theatre is the universe, the stage the world, and its government the subject in debate. The plot lies in bringing good out of evil; happiness out of misery, almighty power from feminine weakness, light out of darkness, glory from the grave. The catastrophe consists of the seizure and perdition of the traitor angel with all his powers, and of the final triumph of the son of man with all his saints.

On this system of things, characterized by such splendid points and splendid personages, enriched by such an endless variety of under-plot and interlude, and played off on a stage boundless as the great globe itself, observations and reflections uninteresting would supercede apology, for they would admit of none. If, therefore, the present discourse has faults, and who can doubt it, they are to be attributed to the writer and not to his subject.—He confesses it, they are to be attributed to the writer.

### CHAPTER II

#### *Of the Three States of Man*

The Scriptures describe man as having existed in three states, a natural, a preternatural state, and a state of respite. The first is described as good, the second as evil, and the third as partaking of both good and evil. The good is that in which man existed before the fall; the evil, that into which he was plunged by the fall; and the state of respite is that in which he now exists.

The first was a natural state, because it was that in which he was created; and we style it the good, because it is so denominated in the scriptures,—thus, And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good.

The preternatural state is so named, because it lay beyond man's natural condition, and because in it every thing, guilt, condemnation, shame, fear, death, was wholly ulterior to his nature. We designate it the evil state, because all its points are evil and only evil.

The state of respite is so named, because in it man is vouchsafed a respite for life, the present life. It is of a mixed nature partaking of both good and evil; it is inferior to the first or natural state, and superior to the second or preternatural state; it possesses neither the goods of the former, nor the evils of the latter: it is a condition in which man may either improve, or abuse, the life which has been lent him by his good, and wise, and all-benevolent Creator. Revealed religion is the means by which he may improve life, and become what God would have him to be; and to contemn or reject this, is to insult God and abuse the life which he has lent us.

The first and the last of these states are of God, and on that account they may be styled divine. In the former man was admitted to personal and sensible intercourse with his Creator; in the latter this is denied him; in this, faith is substituted for knowledge; and in it, of man, when he has reached his highest attainment, it can only be said, he walks “as if seeing him that is invisible.” The second state originated with Satan, and may, therefore, well be styled the state of evil.

But let us inquire more particularly into the history of man in these three states. We shall begin with the first or natural, in which every thing was pronounced, by the Creator, to be very good.

### CHAPTER III

#### *Of the First State in General*

The great points, or prominent features in this original constitution of things, are our first parents themselves, their peculiar privileges, their innocence, their capacity for knowledge, duty, and happiness, their trial, and temptation, their fall, and expulsion, and the time they continued in Paradise. Though their temptation, fall, and expulsion may be deemed by the reader to belong more properly to the state of evil inasmuch as they were of Satan rather than of God. But the state of the case is this, they were tempted by Satan, they fell of themselves, and were expelled by God. The good and evil states seem here to run into each other; for the temptation, which was an evil, occurred in the good state, while the

expulsion, which was a real good, took place in the evil state, the fall being the point at which both states in reality touched one another.

## CHAPTER IV

### *Of the Superiority of the Religious Principle of the First State*

Man's mental acquisitions by his own experience is called knowledge, his acquisitions by the experience of others is styled faith, the total of his acquisitions, therefore, consists of knowledge and faith. What man knew of the existence of the Deity in his natural state, was knowledge; in the present state of respite, it is faith.

Faith may be increased indefinitely without being exalted to knowledge. A man may vouch to me the existence of an object, and his testimony may be confirmed by that of two, or two thousand more; and this, again, by that of an indefinite number of other witnesses; still my belief, however strengthened, is not exalted to knowledge; I am still compelled in the case to trust to the experience of others; and till I have a sensible experience of my own, of the existence of the object in question, my acquisition is not knowledge but faith. This continuous and indefinite approach of faith to knowledge, appears a little paradoxical; but it is certainly no less obvious than that in Mathematics one line may be made to approach another forever without the possibility of touching it. And this is absolutely true. It is so with knowledge and faith, which, however near they approach each other, are, notwithstanding, never the same.

In this point of view the revealed religion of the present state is inferior to the order of things in man's primitive condition, in which he was, on account of his innocence, admitted to sensible communion with the Deity. But this defectiveness in the principle of our religion, is to be done away at the return of the Messiah, when the pure in heart shall be permitted again to see God, and man once more be honoured with face to face intercourse with his Creator.

It was, therefore, a distinguished and exalted privilege of the natural state of man, that in it he was admitted to sensible communion with his Maker. The divine existence was, therefore, not a matter of faith to him, as it is to men now.—He enjoyed a sensible proof of this, the grand fundamental of all religion. We possess this only as faith. When, therefore, man fell from his natural condition, knowledge yielded to faith, and a state of things, in which man knew there was a God, was bartered away for that out of which he could be delivered only by the principle of believing that there is a God. Instead of enjoying his own experience on this point, he has now to trust to the experience of others, that is, he has to depend on particular revelations granted through the

ministrations of particular men, as Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah, Daniel, Malachi, John the Baptist, and Our Lord and Saviour, who declares, that he had seen the Father.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, faith is the only remaining organ of communion with God, found in the constitution of man; and hence the propriety of that saying of the Apostle. "Without faith it is impossible to please God;" because besides this, there is in us no other foundation for either knowledge or duty in relation to the Deity.

It is worthy of observation, that, in harmony with the preceding remarks, the scriptures never speak of Adam's faith. Samuel, and David, and Sampson, and Gideon, and Jephtha, and Moses, and Joseph, and Jacob, and Isaac, and Abraham, and Noah, and Enoch, and even Abel, Adam's son, are all celebrated in scripture for their faith, and for their noble deeds of righteousness rendered to God on this principle; but here the chain ends, or rather begins; and Adam who enjoyed knowledge of the divine existence, is, in regard to faith, passed over in profound silence.

## CHAPTER V

### *Of the Nature of Man in General*

Rational and animal life, like organic and animal life, are blended in man with such admirable felicity as perhaps to baffle the nicest sagacity to declare with indubitable certainty, where the one begins and the other ends. Not that they are inseparable, or absolutely incapable of a distinct existence, for in the vegetable world, we see organic life apart from animal life; in the purely animal tribes organic and animal life exists distinct from rational life; and in heavenly intelligences reason, doubtless exists apart from both the former modes of being. In man the whole three modes of existence, organic, animal, and rational unite and run into each other with such surprising subtilty as frequently to confound our reason.

It may be observed of them in general, that organic life is beheld in its most distinct form in the growth and development of the vegetable kingdom.

Animal life is distinguished for sensation, and it discerns tastes, smells, sounds, colors, motions, actions, heights, distances, expressions, and so forth; but here somewhere it ends and reason begins.

Rational life is characterized by its powers to perceive order, contrivance, design, cause and effect, the fitness, relations and uses of

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<sup>1</sup> John 6:46

things in the natural and moral worlds. While animal life is perfected in sensation, rational life enables us to perceive that all things throughout nature, are distributed according to certain vital, mechanical, and mathematical laws of proportion, fitness, correspondence, contrast, contrariety and so forth.

It will be perceived, therefore, that, if man were purely animal, he would have no moral conception of power, wisdom, order, and goodness; but only ideas of relation and design purely instinctive. The forms, colours, and attitudes of vegetables would be seen by him as they are, without ever suggesting to him a single idea of the vital and mechanical forces which combine for their development; he would drink of the stream and recline upon its banks without at all inquiring into the operation of those powers, which make the one run and the other stand still. Light and shade would be seen by him without reference to that system of optics by which they are separated and distributed through the universe: and like other animals he would grow, decline, and die, alike ignorant of nature and him who made it.

But though man is animal in sensation, and rational in thought, in his existence he is purely animal: and as that is the point in which we desire to look at him for the present, we shall submit the following short chapter on animal life as contra-distinguished from life eternal.

## CHAPTER VI

### *Of Human Life in Particular*

There are two kinds of life spoken of in the holy scriptures, eternal life and animal life. The former is essential and independent; the latter is, secondary and dependant on something without itself. All animals are possessed of this last species of life; and depend for their subsistence on the things of external nature, as air, and food. Eternal life is an essential attribute of God, and of his Son, and of the Holy Spirit. The holy angels also are gifted with the element of immortality in this manner, as is Satan too, who has been created with the same attribute and like good angels is of a never-dying nature. It is not so with man; who is both animal and mortal in his constitution. This, however, is as fortunate for him as it is admirably declarative of the wisdom of his Creator; for had Adam been constituted independent of external nature, and endowed with life in himself he would then, like the holy angels, have been immortal and could not have died. When he sinned, therefore, he would have been in a condition like that of Satan himself. But Satan is in a state of condemnation, and as he cannot die, has to be seized by a stratagem and punished for ever, a fact which gives origin to the scripture phrase, "eternal fire,"—the punishment prepared for never-dying beings, the devil and his angels, and not originally for man; who is



a creature of time and capable of death. The fire, however, in which Satan and his angels will be punished for ever, will also form the punishment of wicked men. "Depart from me you cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." This is called "the second death;" over those, who share in the first resurrection, and are gifted with the attribute of innate life or immortality, this dire ruin, the scriptures assure us, shall exert no influence. "Blessed and holy is he, who has part in the first resurrection, for over such the second death has no power."

The state only, and not the life of Adam then, was different in kind from our own: his life was animal, weak, and corruptible; ours is the same. We depend on external nature; so did he; he was susceptible of fatigue, and required sleep; we also require sleep, and are susceptible of fatigue; his life was conditional, and lent him for a time; our life also is a loan, and will be required of us, as his was required of him.

## CHAPTER VII

### *Of Man in Regard to Knowledge and Duty*

We now exist at an immense distance from the times of the primitive pair, and enjoy the exalted privilege of beholding human nature wonderfully developed, and of ascertaining what it is through the medium of its own doings, now spread forth before us in various tissues of natural, moral, and religious action, transpiring through a lapse of ages extending from Paradise to the present time.

It is an interesting truth in the inductive history of man, that he has been essentially the same in all ages. For instance, he has, every where, in all ages, and under all circumstances, been endowed with a capacity for knowledge, and a sense of duty. His physical and moral powers, for the perfection of these endowments, have ever been the same also.

Man's desire of knowledge is wonderful, he has ever made his sense, and consciousness, and reason, either in the form of experience or observation, in all places pay tribute to this master passion. In the gratification of it, he has left nothing untouched. His appetite for knowledge has prompted and spurred him on to investigate every thing. Conscious of the imperfection of his senses, he has whetted his genius to supply, by its inventions, their deficiency, and by his ingenuity has enlarged the sphere of their operation to the utmost limits of the system he inhabits. By means of instruments, of his own construction and invention, he descends into the microscopic world and examines the anatomy, actions, and instincts of beings so small, that millions of them can swim about in a drop of water with as much freedom as a whale in the ocean. And by means of the telescopic apparatus he bounds into the

other extreme of nature, and beholds vast worlds, suns, and planets and globes, hundreds of times larger than our own; but which must have continued forever unknown to his most active sense unless his inventions had aided him in their discovery.

He is a being of lofty ambition; he has invented science and reduced it to system; he has organized states and adorned them with the arts of peace or strengthened them with the munitions of war. He has by his divine art subdued the elements, and made the most subtle agents of nature bow to his designs. Having discovered the relation which the products of the soil bear to his life and happiness, he has in all ages availed himself of this discovery and so vexed and teased with spade and plough the earth, that her lawns and valleys, her plains and undulating hills have ever flourished with the blessings and ornaments of life. The ocean, the most wonderful of the creatures of God, he has subdued to subserve his lofty enterprise; he goes down to the sea in ships, and traces in the mighty waters the footsteps of the Eternal. He circumnavigates the globe, and by the exuberance and riches of foreign climes supplies the poverty and deficiencies of his own. He grasps the wind in his fist, and tames the tempestuous blast. Around the world he rides upon the storm: he flies upon the wings of the wind, and by his art draws down the lightning out of the clouds; he weighs the planets in a balance, and lays the measuring line around the sun himself; he understands tides, and calculates equinoxes, recessions, and eclipses for thousands of years to come.

But the wonder of all this is increased when his achievements are contemplated relatively to the small number of his mental powers; for notwithstanding his endless variety in art; his valour in war, and sublimity in science, notwithstanding the magnitude and boldness of his designs, all his powers and productions are resolvable ultimately into but two classes of positive ideas, namely, ideas of what is, and ideas of what ought to be; in other words, ideas of knowledge, and duty.

Is man then, with all his ambition and claims to distinction, a creature of merely two thoughts, of two positive classes of ideas? It is even so; with all his struggles of body and agonies of soul, his pretensions to mind, and talent, and genius, he possesses no more; and his other positive powers of speech and action are involved in this necessity; nor can all the men of an age, or of all ages, either in the things of science, society, or religion, by any power either of thought or word or deed, transcend this necessity. For what are the writings of Homer, and Virgil, and Xenophon, and Cicero, and Tacitus, and Demosthenes, what are the works of the ancient moralists, philosophers, and rhetoricians, and of the moderns, Bacon, Newton, Locke, Des Cartes and all the British and Continental sages, statesmen,

and orators, but their ideas of what is, and what ought to be—their ideas of knowledge and duty.

In this respect man differs supremely from his Maker, who, besides knowing what is and what ought to be, knows also what is not and what ought not to be, and speaks of things before they come into existence as “though they were.” All things exist in the divine mind originally and without a type, and not as they do in ours, reflected from nature and acquired by the actual exercise of our senses. This power of knowing things that are not, is an admirable endowment, and is not possessed but by the uncreated nature. The universe, with all its sentiments of power, wisdom, and goodness, is not a copy of any thing but the idea of itself in the mind of its great architect. All that has been and all that is to be, the resurrection, our glorification, and eternal life, are known and seen by him as though they had already occurred. In a word “He knows the end from the beginning;” and is not like men, all whose knowledge can be traced ultimately to the exercise of their senses.

## CHAPTER VIII

### *Of Man's Capacity for Happiness*

In conformity with his animal and rational nature man is gifted with a capacity for pain and pleasure, and happiness and misery; when things affect him by their properties, or relations, they produce what is called pleasure, or pain of body; when they affect him only by their ideas, they cause happiness, or misery of mind; and when they operate upon him by the double influence of their properties and the ideas of their properties, that is, when they affect us both physically and mentally they produce happiness or misery, and pain or pleasure according to their nature, and the relations which they bear to these feelings and sensations. The words pain and pleasure, therefore, are here made to have a physical signification and to relate to the body; while happiness and misery have a mental meaning and are applied to the mind.

The author of our being has instituted the following connections among these things. With the knowledge and use of a thing he has united pleasure, or pleasurable sensations of body; with the abuse of it pain, or painful sensations. Analogous to this are the things of our mental or moral nature in which the chain is as follows, Knowledge, duty, and happiness; and knowledge, disobedience, and misery.

In these connections the divine benevolence is very obvious; for the chain might not have been so extended by one link at least. We might have known, for instance, the articles proper to be selected for food and have attended to them with faultless scrupulosity, and all the purposes, which they are designed to fill, might have been attained by the very

same processes by which they now obtain, irrespective of the capacity, which we possess, of enjoying pleasure in the use of them; but the Creator, in addition to our capacity to use a thing, has graciously superadded the power of deriving a real pleasure from the use of it; for we not only eat, but by the sense of tasting, we eat with real pleasure. The abuse of things is just as certainly attended by pain, and the reasoning on the side of the divine benevolence, is here the same.

In mental or moral matters the reasoning is the same also.—We might have known duty, and attended to it without any of that enjoyment which now attaches to the performance of it; but here again we are met by the divine benevolence, and feel that, in every act of duty, we are made to taste a real happiness; hence that saying of our Lord and Saviour to his disciples, “Seeing you know these things, happy are you if you do them.” Disobedience is just as certainly followed by misery of mind.

When we look at man in his natural state we are compelled to regard him as being perfectly happy; violence and deceit had not entered his borders; pain of body and misery of mind were consequently far away, and equally unknown to him in that happy condition. He was full of knowledge; his duty was all before him; he attended to it, and was completely blest. Sin, guilt, misery, and pain were wholly preternatural and lay beyond his state of unstained obedience; nor could he purchase the fatal knowledge of those things but by a price almost too terrible to name,—disobedience.

Such, indeed, seems to have been the perfection of our First Parents in regard to happiness, that they do not appear to have even once thought of their own native defencelessness; nor does it seem to have occurred to them once, that they were naked, till the misery resulting from their shame for the past and fear of the future, flashed upon their minds the whole state of the case, and caused them with intolerable mortification, to feel that now they were wholly unprepared to meet their Creator as when in a state of conscious innocence. In brief, they felt they were naked; they felt they were in their persons defenceless, ignorant of death, afraid to meet it, and incapable of either resisting, or escaping it. “And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day; and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said to him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden and was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.”

Innocence, then, is a glorious feast; it is the feast of the soul; while misery, like an evil angel, is the inseparable companion of disobedience; misery, indeed, follows sin as the shadow follows the form of the hated

Hyena, when it roams in quest of prey at the sultry hours of noon amid the wretched cottages of the sun burnt Hagarenes; but righteousness is like the resurrection morn; it is full of hope; it is full of heaven. Happiness, mental moral happiness, therefore, is to be referred for its origin to obedience to God; while obedience itself is to be referred to law, law to authority, and authority to right, and right to his property in us by creation, by preservation, by purchase, by inheritance; for we belong to God and to the Son of God by all these obligations; and to acknowledge God and his Son is eternal life.

The fact that our minds are operated on chiefly by ideas of things, should teach us on all occasions to seek correct knowledge; and never to clothe things with fancied properties, and excellencies which they do not possess, if so our happiness will be ill-founded and false. On the other hand we are equally liable to err by clothing matters and things with imaginary evil, and so render ourselves miserable by the creative energies of our own doubtful fancy.

Knowledge, and happiness, with the authority granted to him, were doubtless the grand points in man, which constituted him an illustrious image of the Deity. "Let us make man in our own image, and after our likeness let him have dominion over" &c.

## CHAPTER IX

### *Concerning our First Parents in Paradise*

With the above observations on our general nature, let us look at our first parents as they existed in Paradise before the Fall. Like us they were endowed with the love of knowledge, and a sense of duty; and we shall see that they must have inhabited that blissful abode for a hundred years at least, sinless and wholly unconscious of the happiness which introduces to each other's acquaintance the sexes, enjoying undisturbed felicity with God and one another, tracing in heaven above and on the earth beneath all sensible indications of the divine power, wisdom, and goodness. Surely nothing can excel in innocence and happiness the ideas suggested to us of this youthful pair in Paradise; for they must, as they arose under the moulding fingers of their great Creator, have been of surpassing loveliness.

Two of far nobler shape, erect and tall.  
God-like erect, with native honor clad,  
In naked majesty, seem'd lords of all.  
For contemplation he and valour form'd,  
For softness she and sweet attractive grace,  
He for God only, she for God in him,  
His fair large front and eye sublime declared

Absolute rule, and hyacinthian locks  
 Round from his parted forelock manly locks  
 Clustering, but not beneath his shoulders broad,  
 She as a vail down to the slender waist  
 Her unadorned golden irises wore  
 Disheveled, but in wanton ringlets waived  
 As the vine curls her tendrils.—  
 Grace was in all her steps, heaven in her eye,  
 In every gesture dignity and love.  
 \_\_\_\_\_The loveliest pair  
 That ever since in love's embraces met.

Language and the knowledge of things, to a certain extent, were probably conferred on Adam by inspiration. Dr. Johnson thought it absolutely impossible for man to invent speech or even to discover that he was possessed of that power. But having attained these things by a gift from God, we may well suppose, that much of his time was spent in the company of the unrivaled beauty to whom God had espoused him, in the pursuit of knowledge, exercising their new-born senses on the qualities of things, and employing their reason in separating and distinguishing the various objects by which, in that happy state, they were surrounded; and as both were necessarily under the same state of pupilage, their bliss, in cultivating the understanding and affections of each other, must have been complete. The origin of this *chef d'oeuvre* of nature, Eve, the side of Adam from which she was taken—taught her that she was the keeper of his heart; while he could look upon her only as a second self—his lovelier and better part, or to give it in his own words when he first beheld her, This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh.—That our First Parents, during the long period of a hundred years, with all the facilities which they possessed for learning, in their intercourse with angels and with God himself, did not attain to very high degrees of knowledge, it would be difficult for us to imagine; on the contrary we are compelled to believe, that in that time they must have acquired prodigious stores of information on all terrestrial things. They watched no doubt earliest morn and dewy eve, and the changes of the slightly varied year as it passed over the gorgeous paradisiacal seat in which it had pleased their Creator to place them. They eyed with pleasing wonder the effects, in that happy abode, of the budding spring, and saw with delight when Taurus through the regions of Eden

In rosy hillocks rolled the summer day.

Then came golden autumn not unadmired and the crisped winter, scarcely felt in those temperate realms. No doubt the motions of the heavenly bodies, and of the earth, and all the phenomena of which they are the sources, were the objects of their constant investigation, as well as the sources of unfading delight.

While thus quaffing unmeasured draughts of pleasure in the society of each other, and drinking down fresh knowledge everyday from the pure and inexhaustible fountains by which they were everywhere surrounded in the new-born world, what remained but that they should next learn their duty to each other and to their God. This, indeed, as we have seen, was all of which their nature was capable; for beyond knowledge and duty their inexperienced thought was unqualified to extend.

## CHAPTER X

### *Of the Trial of Adam in Knowledge*

In respect to knowledge and duty, therefore, it pleased Almighty God to put their attainments to the test. But as knowledge must precede duty the intellectual trial very properly preceded the moral one. "And the Almighty caused all the beasts of the field and all the fowls of the air" to come to Paradise and pass in review before Adam their lord. His knowledge of them must have been as accurate as it was extensive; for it is added, that "Whatever Adam called every living thing that was the name thereof; and he gave names to all cattle and to the fowls of the air and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him." It is the will of God that all his rational creatures should both feel and acknowledge their dependence on him; and, therefore, the animals seem to have been brought before Adam that he might be made to feel that among them all "There was not a help meet for him." In this view of the matter Milton represents Adam as supplicating the Deity for a wife; but of this the holy scriptures are absolutely silent. From seeing the animals in pairs, Adam might be led to reason from their case to his own; but from the nature of the human mind which, in regard to the objects of its knowledge, limits itself, as we have seen, to the things that are, without ability to conceive of those things that are not, it was impossible for him to conceive of any thing beyond that which had come under the review of his senses. Moreover no being but God could have conceived originally the idea of so beautiful, lovely, and unrivaled a creature as is woman. It was enough that, in comparing the condition of the lower animals with his own, he saw himself to be solitary, felt that he was alone. In this manner he was prepared to set a proper estimate upon his beautiful partner the moment she was presented to him by God; and her peerless perfections enabled him also to see at a glance the infinite superiority of the divine mind above the human—to see what an inestimable endowment it is to be able to know things that are not, and to speak of them, and even form them as though they had already been in actual existence. Thus, Adam having gained, either by inspiration, or by actual experience, all necessary knowledge of things natural, the Creator bestowed on him a partner or second self, by whom and with whom he could enter upon

the consideration of things moral, the relations and obligations by which human beings are connected with one another. We shall see that our first parents, in a state of complete adolescence, must have spent the first century of their existence in Paradise. It is possible also, that their Creator saw good to allow them to spend the greater portion of that hundred years in acquiring a knowledge of nature and of their moral relations to each other, before he put their sense of duty to that religious test which eventuated in their fall. In the intellectual trial Adam was alone, and he acquitted himself well, and gave full proof of his competence to instruct his future partner, and of God's divine and provident benevolence, that as he had made man, so he had at once endowed him with the knowledge necessary for life, and had not left him to perish in the midst of abundance from ignorance of the uses of things.

## CHAPTER XI

### *Of the Trial of Our First Parents in Duty*

We now come to a part of our subject which relates to the moral trial of our first Parents, or to that part of God's economy which put to the test the sense of obligation and duty which our First Parents owed to their munificent and all-wise Creator.—Let us in a few words look at knowledge and duty as they now commend themselves to mankind generally. It is a curious fact that in almost all our colleges, universities, academies, and common schools, and even churches, the course of education is formed with a reference rather to the former than to the latter and inculcates knowledge rather than duty; there is no comparison between the intellects and morals of the scholars, in knowledge they are giants; in practical goodness they are dwarfs; they know every thing, and do nothing. Intellect among them, like the starry chestnut, mounts to the clouds; morality, practical morality, stunted and flowerless creeps along the ground.

Again, it is in religion as it is in society; for as we are accustomed to act and think in one department of life, so we are inclined to act and think in every other department. A man shall believe with his whole soul, that the author of Christianity is a heaven-sent messenger, feel perfectly convinced of the truth of the gospel, and even of his own duty to obey it, yet he does not, he will not obey it. Nevertheless he will greedily swallow down any amount of knowledge you choose to impart to him on these topics, and sit and listen, and reason and receive, and be still the same. He will believe, but he will not obey. He will receive knowledge and admire it, but repudiate duty and even abhor it. Yet duty is a pervading topic; everywhere there is duty to our parents, duty to our children, duty to husbands, duty to wives, duty to servants, duties to masters, duties to slaves, duties to relations immediate and remote, to



friends, fellow citizens, and to our fellow-men. Yet, the thing does not commend itself to the hearts of men, and win their kindest regard as does knowledge. How many attend our public assemblies to hear and learn! How few return from them determined to obey!

Now if this is man in his most experienced condition, if this is man in these latter ages on whom the ends of the world have come, if this is man with the teachings of practical life and all the observation and experience of nearly six thousand years, what was to be expected of him in his infantile state, a child in experience, tenderly educated in a Paradise of pleasure, and the darling of a kind God and all good angels? It was with him as it is with ourselves; he yielded to his love of knowledge, and offered, at the shrine of fancied wisdom, the sacrifice of duty which he owed to God.

It may be made a question, why we are fonder of knowledge than obedience; for knowledge abstract from purposes of utility, is an empty thing. The reason seems to be this, that man in pursuing knowledge feels more sovereignty and less dependence directly, than when acting in obedience to the calls of duty. Men desire to be gods, to be the sovereign arbiters of their own conduct, or to do as they choose;—they dread responsibility, because it implies dependence, and dependence weakness, and weakness misery “doing or suffering.” But this is inadmissible in the economy of God’s government; for as we are dependant on God for all that we are, and all that we know, so he wills that we shall be responsible to him for all that we do. He is the fountain of all authority even as he is the source of all power and goodness and wisdom; he gave us life and sustains us in it; and wills that we should account to him for the gracious loan of such an incomparable blessing.

But it does not follow that because God is good man will be grateful. He may be exceedingly bountiful, we may be exceedingly unthankful; he may be great and we may not acknowledge his greatness; he may be very good, we very ungrateful. It is proper, therefore, with such ambitious feelings for independence as we possess, that we should be tried, that it should be proved of what metal we are, and whether we be as good as we would affect to be great, whether we will prove as grateful to God as we are ready to partake of his bounties, whether we are as willing he should reign over our life as we are willing to enjoy that life at his hand.

It was proper, therefore, that Adam should be morally tried as well as intellectually; it was proper to ascertain whether he could be grateful when God was good; whether he chose to obey that authority whose divine power had given him all things richly to enjoy; whether he chose to be ruled by God as he chose to live by him; for man’s obligation to God and dependence on him is the cause of all duty.

If God had created man as he is, and had left him to pursue knowledge and the devices of his own heart, without inculcating dependence and a sense of moral obligation, then we might have judged that man was never made by God at all, but was the offspring of chance, or fate, or a diabolical power; and if the Scriptures had not inculcated these things on man, and shown that, from the beginning, God had held man responsible for his actions, we might have doubted their divinity, in as much as they would have been so defective, that men understanding the whole of human nature would have been unable to believe them.

But now the scriptures speak in perfect harmony with the most correct views which we have yet been able to obtain of human nature, and of the obligations we owe to him on whom we are altogether dependant for life and all the things which we enjoy; for they show that, as we are formed creatures of knowledge and duty, so God would deal with us according to this our proper nature, and be served and revered by us in subjecting both our love of knowledge and sense of duty to his authority.—To do this is righteousness; not to do this is sin.

In this view of things then it pleased the Almighty God to put the virtue, gratitude, or sense of duty of our first parents to the test, in the following manner.

*“And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, of every tree of the Garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat; for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”*

## CHAPTER XII

### *Of Law in General, and of the Law in Paradise in Particular*

Law means rule, and is intended to give direction to action, The force of law depends on the existence of previous authority in him who makes it, and on the condition and capability and reason of obedience of those for whom it is designed. If law comes to us unsupported unrecommended by these things, it is then either of no authority, or it is tyranny. If there is no authority in the law maker, there can and will be no authority in the law made. But supposing the authority to be perfect (though there can exist no authority for tyranny anywhere) but the law incongruous with the condition, capability, and reason of obedience in those for whom it was made, it would not be law but tyranny; it would be oppression and not safety, and would produce confusion and not good order. But where the right to make law exists and the rule adapts itself to the condition, capability, and reason of obedience of those for whom it is designed, personal safety and the security of property will be the result and the law will be admitted.

In the case before us no one will doubt God's right to make law; nor, indeed, will any person presume deny the obligation of Adam to obey it, for certainly all possible reason of obedience rested on him why he should honor the Ruler.

Moreover the law was in harmony, perfect harmony with his capabilities and opened for him a sphere of action commensurate with his active powers, so that his gratitude to God could play with a healthy freedom and in so doing would afford proof to himself, to angels, and to God, that it was alive, had a name, and a local habitation in his breast. His circumstances also were favorable to the keeping of the law. First, because the fruit of every other tree in the garden was given him on which to subsist, Second, because gratitude prompted him rather to obedience than to disobedience. Third, the tree of life was of free access to him; so that, if his ambition should aspire to any thing beyond his natural and present happy condition, he "could eat and live forever." And it stood full before him to guard his virtue and stimulate his perseverance.

## CHAPTER XIII

### *Of Trial and of Temptation*

It may not be improper in this place to make the necessary distinction which exists between a trial and a temptation. In a trial there is an injunction and inducement to abstain from evil, or practice some good, as the case may be: in a temptation there is an injunction and inducement either to practice evil or to abstain from some good, as the case may be. For instance Adam was tried, the Saviour was tempted; or our first parents were tried by God and tempted by the Devil, and so of other cases:—Trial is of God and is natural and necessary to the perfection of both our intellectual and moral nature; temptation is diabolical, degrading, insulting, and has Satan for its author. It was highly gracious in God to test the virtue of our first parents; but most diabolical in Satan to tempt our blessed Saviour with the government of the world, in order to cause him to do evil—to fall down and worship him instead of the Divine Father. We are to count it all for joy when we fall into divers trials, knowing that the trial of our faith worketh patience; the testing of our principles is the exaltation of our graces and virtues, and is of God; but as he cannot be tempted to evil, so neither does he tempt any man to evil: "but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed; and lust when it has conceived bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is perfected bringeth forth death."

Both the intellectual and moral trial of our first parents must have greatly enlarged their happiness, which is the end and perfection of both knowledge and duty; and no doubt it was to increase the amount of

their joys that their blessed Creator tried both their knowledge and their sense of duty. What indeed could fill our father Adam with more constant heart-felt satisfaction than to know, when his Creator put his understanding to the test, he had so acquitted himself as to secure his entire approbation? Adam had attained to a knowledge of some leading feature in the nature of each of the animals, as the test imports, and naming them according to this master passion, instinct, or external conformation, his judgment was admitted as correct, and his naming of them authority for the style by which they were to be known and spoken of in future times. *And whatever Adam called every living creature that was the name thereof.* It was an act of unmixed goodness then in the Divine Creator thus to put our father's knowledge to the test; for it had a direct tendency to increase his happiness by assuring him of his own attainments in knowledge, of the approbation of his Maker, and of his own authority over all inferior natures in the world of which he was the lord. On this occasion and subsequently Adam must have felt not merely like a man, but like a man clothed with authority and full of wisdom.

But was the trial of his moral nature, his goodness, less intended to increase his happiness than the trial of his intellectual nature or wisdom? Most assuredly no. Surely it was to amplify the joys of our first parents that God subjected to the test of obedience their grateful reverence for his authority. It can very easily be proved that Adam's happiness never could have been complete unless he had been put on trial. This may appear at first thought, somewhat paradoxical; but it is no less true on that account. In the first place, Adam, agreeably to his nature, must in the contemplation of all that God had done for him and given to him, in creating him, exalting him to the lordship of the world, and in bestowing upon him his last best gift, his lovely partner Eve, have felt gratitude, an excess, if I may so speak, of gratitude to God, his benefactor and Creator. But it would have been painful rather than pleasant, to have confined this gratitude to his bosom alone. When this virtue, so natural to man, is conceived in the heart, it necessarily seeks to discover itself by the overt powers of speech and action, and will not contentedly lie concealed in the breast of its possessor; it will issue in words or works. By putting Adam on trial, therefore, he created for him a sphere in which his gratitude could play with a freedom commensurate with his natural constitution as a being of moral action as well as of words and thoughts. If gratitude be good in feeling, it is still better for its owner when it is allowed to discover itself in words, and best of all when it is found in action.—The happiness of its possessor is then complete; for he has then given to his benefactor the most unequivocal testimony of moral reciprocity of which his nature is capable; for action good or evil is principle perfected, and as Milton says,

————— a grateful mind  
By owing owes not, but still pays, at once  
Indebted and discharged; what burden then?

Let the reader follow us in patience while with an humble reliance on the scriptures.

“We may assert Eternal Providence,  
And justify the ways of God to man.”

Thus the moral, like the intellectual trial of our first parents was not only in accordance with their nature as beings of knowledge and duty, but in perfect harmony with that happiness which it is the highest ambition of our nature to possess; and it was, as we have seen, most certainly intended by God to enlarge the sphere of their blessedness and increase its amount, that this probationary scheme was introduced.

To God, then, the maker of Heaven and Earth, to God the only wise, and the only good, the greatest and the best, be everlasting honor and praise. Amen.

## CHAPTER XIV

### *Of the Tree of Life and of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil*

In the fertile district of Eden and around the sources of the four celebrated rivers of Pison, Gihon, Heddekel, and Euphrates, God planted the garden which by way of eminence we call Paradise.

Now if He has distinguished for beauty many parts and portions of the habitable globe at large, if he has struck forth everywhere in all the earth such glorious landscape, so much of the beautiful, and picturesque, we may well suppose that the garden of the world planted by His own hand, was an abode of the highest beauty and adorned with every sentiment of order, grandeur, variety, and sublimity, “For out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; and the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden to dress and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou mayest not eat: for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”

Paradise, under the name of “The garden of God” is, several times in the scriptures made an object of comparison, and fertile and beautiful districts of country are likened to the garden of God. Where Eden was situate avails not to inquire. In it God was pleased to plant the garden in

which he placed the original ancestors of mankind; and in the midst of the garden two trees, the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, forming as it were a central crown to the wide-spreading landscape of the Paradise of God.

Of the one it was permitted man freely to eat. Of the other he was not to eat. It was to stand forever in his presence the untouched unstained symbol of his own obedience and gratitude to God. To him the one was an ordinance of life, the other of death, and both stood before him in the midst of his home inviting him to good and dissuading him from evil, like law and gospel before his innumerable descendants of latter times.

Had he partaken of the tree of life before the fall, and he was at perfect liberty by the word of the Lord God to do so, the other tree and the commandment respecting it would, doubtless, have been withdrawn, for he could not have died; the case of Satan, moreover, sufficiently demonstrates how unsafe it is to put immortal beings under law. So when he eat of the forbidden tree he was separated from both, lest he should "Eat of the tree of life also and live for ever." This would have been equally dangerous in his sinful state, as Satan's case again proves.

But the two trees being contiguous to each other in the centre of the landscape, and apart from all the rest; our first parents, by their reverence for the divine commandment and the delight they took in obeying the Lord God their Creator, practised so admirable a self denial, that they seem, from the narrative, never once during their long stay in Paradise to have approached either of them till the fatal day of the fall, a circumstance to be regarded by all their descendants as proof positive of the exceeding gravity and chasteness of their original virtue and of their admirable piety towards their Creator whom they loved, and honored, and adored.

Our First Parents, then, were tried of God, tempted by Satan, and sinned themselves. Their trial was natural, necessary, and exalting; their temptation degrading, dangerous, diabolical; and their fall fatal, guilty, deadly. The fall is the point at which the two states of good, and evil meet and touch one another. The trial and the interdict was of God, the temptation was of Satan; and the dire calamity was their own act, their own voluntary act, all things considered.

## CHAPTER XV

### *Of the Time Our First Parents Continued in Paradise*

If we contemplate mankind as they existed in the earliest ages, we discover by scripture that they were distinguished for very long life.

Noah was nine hundred and fifty years old when he died. His father was upwards of seven hundred, and his grandfather Methuselah almost a thousand. Enoch was translated at the age of three hundred and sixty-five, Jared was only seven years younger than Methuselah, and the father of all. Adam, expired only at the advanced age of nine hundred and thirty years!

Human life may be divided into five different periods, infancy, adolescence, puberty, manhood, and old age. Infancy extends from birth to the second dentition, adolescence from the second dentition to puberty, puberty to the period of marriage, and manhood from marriage to old age. Since the flood men have run through the whole of these five periods in at most eighty years; but the antediluvians, generally, did not pass through them but in eight or nine hundred years; consequently each of those divisions of human life, was much more extended in them than in us. We reach the second dentition or receive our second set of teeth about the age of seven years, and at that time pass from childhood to the period of adolescence or boyhood.—Thus we fulfil the first period of our life in the lapse of seven short years; but this could not have been their case. Their childhood must have been extended proportionately with the whole of their existence. We exhaust the period of adolescence or boyhood at about fifteen, and at that age attain to puberty.—But this they could not have done. Adolescence or boyhood was surprisingly extended in them; they do not seem to have reached maturity before one hundred years; consequently the age, at which they were blessed with children, was not until that number of years had passed over them, Lamech was one hundred and eighty-two years old before Noah was born. Methuselah was one hundred and eighty-seven at the birth of Lamech. When Enoch was born his father Jared was one hundred and sixty-two, Jared's father again was one hundred and eighty-five; and Adam was one hundred and thirty at the birth of his third son, Seth. Thus we see that as human life extended itself, not to tens but to hundreds, the different periods into which it is divisible were proportionately extended, and that the antediluvians generally, who lived for eight or nine hundred years, did not attain the age of puberty till they were a hundred at least.

In this respect our first parents resembled their immediate descendants. Adam was blessed with his third son, Seth, only when he had attained his hundred and thirtieth year; and his first son, Cain, was not born to him till after his expulsion from Paradise. Therefore, being expelled just before he reached puberty and having three sons, Cain, Abel, and Seth immediately after his expulsion and before he attained one hundred and thirty, it follows evidently that he could not have lived less than one hundred or more than one hundred and thirty years in Paradise; he must consequently have been created in a state of entire adolescence; and thus, by a wise providence, he felt himself, at his

creation, equally removed from the febleness of childhood and the disquietude of that age which lies immediately beyond adolescence.

To this view of the matter one objection only, of any moment, can be opposed; and that is apparent rather than real; that the divine Father gave commandment to the original ancestors of mankind, while in the garden, to fill the earth with their own species. To this we answer, that the Creator, being supremely peculiar in his attributes, speaks of those things that are not as though they truly existed. He did not, therefore, speak but with a reference to the mature nature of those whom, at the moment, he was graciously pleased to address; and gave them commandment in relation to a period of their existence, which was immediately to follow the happy state of adolescence in which he had created them. This is a mode of speech by no means unusual in the holy scriptures. At the flood, the Lord said to Noah, his proclaimer of righteousness, "The end of all flesh is come before me." But the deluge did not occur till one hundred and twenty years after this had been uttered. To Abraham He said, "A father of many nations have I constituted thee." Yet Abraham was then without a child. In this, as in many other instances, and particularly in the words relating to the increase of our species, the Great God speaks of those things that are not as though they were.

Milton, on the contrary, supposes our "beloved first parents to have been created in perfect manhood and, in a splendid poetical fiction, describes their nuptials as occurring at the moment of their first introduction to each other.

—————To the nuptial bower  
 I led her blushing like the morn; all Heaven  
 And happy constellations, on that hour,  
 Shed their selectest influence; the earth  
 Gave signs of granulation, and each hill.  
 Joyous the birds, fresh gales and gentle airs  
 Whispered it to the woods, and from their wings  
 Flung rose, flung odors from the spicy shrub,  
 Disparting, till the amorous bird of night  
 Sung spousal, and bid haste the Evening Star  
 On his hill top to light the bridal lamp.

This ravishing gloss of our great Bard is encumbered with insuperable difficulty, inasmuch as it is incongruous with some of the most obvious points of that extremely general narrative in which the holy scriptures comprise the history of our First Parents. While the fact, that in Paradise they flourished in the innocence of unconscious adolescence and did not while there taste of the happiness of marriage, derives indubitable support from the letter of the sacred oracle, which to



poets, as well as to all others, is the only safe guide when discoursing of things religious. It was not till after the fall and their expulsion from Paradise that Cain, their eldest, was born.

## THE EVIL STATE CONSIDERED

### CHAPTER XVI

#### *Of the Evil State in General*

The great and dreadful things of this State are all of an evil nature, and were ulterior to man's original condition. Sin, guilt, cowardice, shame, condemnation, death constitute its leading features. These evils were not man's by birthright, they are not his by right of inheritance; but were unlawfully purchased by him at the promptings of that ferocious spirit, who dared to purchase a knowledge of them with the loss of heaven.

We have, heretofore, been looking at man in his native abode, clothed with innocence and full of happiness, basking in the sunshine of divine favor and swaying his unstained sceptre over a peaceful world. The scene is now to be changed from good to evil, from happiness to misery, from pleasure to pain; temptation is to take the place of trial, and sin of righteousness, guilt is to be substituted for innocence, and cowardice and shame for the courage and serenity of conscious worth. Satan now usurps the place of God, or rather opposes him; and ruin and dismay trample upon order and primitive security, till death enters and by a destruction unavoidable and irresistible reigns triumphant over a fallen world.

### CHAPTER XVII

#### *Of the Temptation by Satan*

As the successful trial of Adam's understanding, in the naming of the animals, had a direct tendency to inspire him with a consciousness of his own intelligence, and thereby to increase his self-satisfaction and by consequence his happiness, so it very necessarily prepared him for that higher trial to which his virtue was put in the commandment respecting the forbidden fruit.—Naturally considered Adam's understanding in the one case was as severely tried as in the other case was his gratitude and loyalty to God. And it may safely be affirmed that all of us would rather venture on the one trial than the other. All of us would, doubtless, esteem it much less difficult to abstain from the fruit of a certain tree than to come off with honor in a case like that of Adam's, in which he was to seize upon some action, instinct, or external

appearance in the forms of all the animals as a reason for the name to be imposed upon them for all future time.

Indeed, it must have appeared a training of a very gentle and gracious character for the Lord God to demand of him as a test of his reverence only a simple abstinence from the fruit of one tree: and the matter was rendered still more amiable by what was said of the other vegetable products of that happy home of man, that he was at liberty freely to eat of them all; and this goodness was still further heightened by its including the tree of life itself, which seems to have been planted by the side of the interdicted tree in order to show to man, that his benevolent and holy Creator would rather that he should partake of absolute immortality by the one than sin and death by touching the other. The trial was wholly of a negative character, and enjoined nothing to be done, but only something to be left undone; and in this Adam had no habit to contend with and conquer; for he had never partaken of this tree as food. Indeed, he was, in this view of the matter, by no means free to fall; the balance of motive was all on the side of perseverance.

The fact is, that Adam very probably never would have sinned, but on account of his affection for his unsuspecting partner, who, not having so great an experience in trial, and never having like him tasted the happiness resulting from conscious superior wisdom, became more a proper object of fiendish duplicity, and, therefore, she actually fell before the temptation.

Still the mother of mankind was tried, and in trial gave proof of an innate virtue not inferior to that possessed by her husband. And had trial, which was of God, been the only test to which her fidelity was put, she would, doubtless, have triumphed and continued in innocence forever. But to trial by God succeeded temptation by Satan, and though she had sustained the one, she could not resist the other. Though she had lived and rejoiced under the trial or fatherly prohibition which said "Thou shalt not eat thereof lest thou die:" she could not withstand the deceitful suggestion, "You shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

How singularly adapted to human nature on its weakest side is the temptation of the Fiend! "You shall be as gods knowing good and evil." To this day do men sacrifice duty to knowledge: superior wisdom is the ambition of all. Strange as it may seem scarcely the man exists, who would not rather that you would blame his heart than his head, who would not be called knave rather than fool, who would not rather be thought ungrateful than incapable. And yet *Si ingratum dixeris, omnia dixeris*—If you call a man ungrateful you call him every thing that is bad.

The temptation, therefore, is founded on a consummate knowledge of human nature, and is directed to that popular and specious weakness in man, by which, to this day he is ever prepared to apologise for neglect of duty, his admiration of a diviner wisdom. The profound knowledge of human nature which directed this temptation and the bold but succinct subtilty with which it is addressed to the object of it could be possessed, at this early date of human history, only by a being of the very highest order of intelligence; and the language used concerning Satan, under the symbolical name of the “Serpent” implies both his superior knowledge, and subtilty.

*Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the Serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.*

*Your eyes shall be opened.*—Man is, as has been observed, endowed with a capacity for knowledge and duty, and is susceptible of the two sentiments of misery and happiness. As knowledge and obedience are ever followed by happiness, so knowledge and disobedience are the certain sources of misery. The devil knew this by experience; he had purchased this knowledge at the expense of heaven itself. There was a time when his experience, his natural and happy experience, reached only to knowledge, duty, and enjoyment; but he had fatally become wiser; his eyes had been opened; and he now felt what it was to know evil by being undutiful, and to taste of misery by sacrificing his happiness to his ambition. And thus were our First Parents also to taste of misery, the consciousness of having done evil by yielding to his suggestions.

“And when the woman saw, that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also to her husband with her, and he did eat And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew they were naked.”

Alas! that a knowledge of misery should be purchased at so fatal a price. How deplorable to behold two beings hitherto innocent, pious, and happy, thus pushed all naked and unprepared into a state in which they must inevitably live in misery, or but for the mercy of God die in despair! How dreadful to know evil by loosing our righteousness, and misery by casting away our happiness.

But let the reader please take notice to what is meant by a state of misery. It is a state in which, from a sense of sin and a fear of punishment, the mind is disturbed in such a way as to be afraid of God and ashamed of itself and consequently unhappy, a state of feeling wholly unknown to beings innocent of the violation of law.

The reason why we would have the reader to attend to this account of the state of misery is, because it is a principle business of the gospel, of which we shall immediately speak, to excise or cut out of the conscience this intolerable burden—the sense of guilt, and to replant in the human heart, as in its native seat, the joys of innocence, the joys of the spirit of God.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### *Of the Fall of Our First Parents*

It has been noted in the preceding pages that there is a difference between trial and temptation; there is a difference also between both of these and sin; temptation and sin are not an identity; for one may be tempted without sinning, as was the case with our Saviour; and a being may sin without being tempted, as was the case with Satan when he seduced man.

Sometimes, however, sin and that which tempts to the commission of it are so closely connected that they are distinguished with difficulty, as in the case of Joseph; and some sins never would be committed perhaps, but for the supposed goods with which they are associated, as in the case of Judas.

But when a man does commit sin it is because he believes it to be best, all things considered. This is the case with all who sin; for it is a voluntary evil, sin of ignorance excepted; no man needs to sin unless he chooses; the love of sin, therefore, springing either from the thing itself, or from something associated with it, forms the root of the whole matter. But that which is thus engendered in the mind, is next born into practice or real life; so that we have first the love of sin in the heart, and second the practice of sin in the life, real life, practical life.

When our First Parents sinned it was because they first chose to do so, because they first thought it best for the time, all things considered. As the text aptly says, the fruit appeared desirable both for food and wisdom; and desire being once conceived it was of ready birth and speedily leaped forth into life. “She took of the fruit and did eat, and gave also to her husband with her, and he did eat.” Alas! though temptation may be supposed to palliate the guilt, it could neither apologize for it nor prevent its interminable sorrows.

Now the moment our First Parents sinned, their state was changed in law from that of life, righteousness, and happiness to that of sin, misery and death. In this last state, guilt was first of all attributed; then followed misery or the influence of sin on the mind, cowardice, and shame; finally death entered.

Thus we have the whole attributes of sin before us,—the love of it, the practice of it, the state of it, its guilt, its power, and its punishment. We shall now speak of these six matters relating to sin.

## CHAPTER XIX

### *Concerning Sin*

1. OF THE DESIRE OR LOVE OF SIN:—It would suit too generally those who indulge in sin to be permitted to apologize for it—to be permitted to say, “we could not help it. We were compelled to it. We were tempted to it. We were desirous to please. We were deceived,” and so forth. This was the unhappy but unavailing apology of our First Parents. “The serpent beguiled me,” said she. “The woman, which thou gavest me,” said he. But the Divine Father held each guilty, for they were all responsible. With his instructions or word for our guide it is equally criminal to deceive or to be deceived.

Let us not imagine, that overt sin can be atoned for by a pretended inward purity, We judge of the secret thought by the outward act: and if we commit sin it is because we love it. If it is found in our practice it is because it is first in our heart. Love it not and you will avoid it; abhor it and you will flee the very appearance of it.

Lot’s wife loved sin, looked back upon its flaming abodes, and was changed into a statue of salt. Joseph abhorred it, fled from its presence, maintained his innocence, and rose to the primacy of Egypt, an honorable and providential reward of his tried virtue. If our First Parents yielded to sin it was because it was first in their hearts.

2. OF THE PRACTICE OF SIN:—To sin, or not to sin, that is the question, apology being wholly inadmissible. The scriptures demand not only that we shall do no evil, but that we shall not think it. Why do evil thoughts arise in your hearts? said our Lord Jesus. The violation of law is to be dreaded even in thought. How dangerous then in word! and how much more so in action! But to keep it out of our words and actions, it is only necessary to keep it out of our hearts. Strangle it in the birth then; it is the offspring of the serpent and worthy of death. It is in the heart that evil is conceived; it leaps forth to life at the lips; and is perfected by action; it is here the monster appears full formed and raging to destroy: for sin is dangerous to him who indulges in it, dangerous to

his fellows, and insulting to God. The practiser, like the lover of it shall never see life. If, however, it is bad to love it, it is still worse to practice it. Chase it then from the thought.

“Lord,” said David, “who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doth evil to his neighbor, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor. In whose eyes a vile person is contemned: but he honoreth those who fear the Lord. He that sweareth to his hurt and changeth not. He that puts not his money to usury; nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved.”

Law is the most majestic and controlling influence in the universe, whether we consider it physically or morally. When we sin, therefore, we insult the majesty of law and him who made it; who will not hold us guiltless; but will certainly require it at our hand. From law springs all the order we behold in the universe; disregard to it is the certain source of disorder. See the order and permanence of the natural systems, which continue to obey the laws impressed upon them at their creation; and behold the distracted fortunes of the human family, of the Jewish nation, and of the Christian church, who have broken away from original law. But its majesty cannot be compromised; its insulted honor must be appeased; on earth it demands the outpouring of the blood of the Son of God. But in Satan’s case it refuses propitiation altogether. It calls for nothing short of perpetual exclusion; and his daring outrage on earth will be punished forever both in him and all who rashly espouse his fortunes.

3. OF THE STATE OF SIN:—The same thing may exist in different states. So may man. He once existed in a natural state. He now lives in a preternatural one. He was once possessed of righteousness, happiness, and life. He is now doomed to sin, misery, and death.

The earth is successively in a state of light and darkness, of elevation and depression, changes giving birth to very different phenomena. The oak is first in the acorn, and wine in the grape, and the grape in the seed. Man himself is first in the womb and next in the world, in a state of adolescence and in a state of marriage.

It is admirable to behold how suddenly a thing will change its state or condition, and clothe itself with all the advantages and disadvantages of the state into which it leaps. At night-fall the earth is merged in darkness, and only a few hours suffice to clothe her silent sphere with all the nocturnal drapery of the solemn change. Again she immerses from night, is born of darkness, arises dripping from the womb of the morning, and in a few hours again clothes herself in the garments of

light.—The oak which is now in the acorn, soon appears in the forest, and finally in the fire. The seed that is sown to-day is in a state of vegetation to-morrow. The child that is this moment in the womb, is next moment in the world and living by a new mode of subsistence totally; and the youthful pair, who now stand upon the floor in a state of celibacy, by the usages of society, sit down in a state of wedlock for life, but before night may be in a state of death.

So it is in religion. The Eunuch sitting in his chariot, a Jewish proselyte, steps out, is immersed by the Evangelist, Philip, and becomes a Christian. The Jews stand on the one side of the Red Sea and are the bondmen of Pharaoh; they pass the waters, are immersed into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and are become his disciples; on the one side they are slaves, on the other freemen. Noah was this moment in the ark and next moment on the earth. In the former a fugitive from the world that had sinned, in the latter the sole heir of the world we now inhabit, — Adam and Eve, then, were this moment in a state of nature, innocent and happy; next moment they were in a preternatural state, guilty and miserable; and as they had by the violation of law, suddenly unrobed themselves of the blessings, privileges, and honors of their original state, so they very soon felt themselves clothed with the horrors of that into which they had sunk, shame, cowardice, and recrimination.

4. OF THE GUILT OF SIN:—Is not guilt filed against that man who sins? yes, it is. Let us, therefore, remember that, in the vision of the judgment. It is said “The books were opened.” It is dangerous pastime to incur debt; it is still more dangerous to incur guilt. The sins of the Jewish nation were remembered against them regularly once a year by the ministration of the High Priest, when he appeared before the Lord on the day of annual atonement: and this could have been done, only because guilt had been filed against the nation. The Lord Jesus is said to have redeemed those transgressions upon file under the first covenant. But it is obvious, that the Ruler of the world puts on file the sins of all nations, and all individuals, Adam and Eve, not exempted, and that their transgressions are borne with only in view of the one act of righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

5. OF THE POWER OF SIN:—All our doings, that are not of a negative character, exert a moral or immoral influence over us according as they are good or evil. He, who voluntarily incurs guilt once, is greatly strengthened thereby to repeat it; and the circumstances of the case, which are not always understood, in all their relations, may involve him again and again.—Innocence is a clean canvass on which to delineate the portrait of life. Happy the man, who does reverence to its sacred and fair page.

The less apparently the sin, the greater in reality the danger. At all events “he that is unfaithful in the least is unfaithful also in that which is greatest.” He, that for a trifle would sacrifice his innocence, and violate law, his conscience, his religion, and his sacred honor, could not easily be supposed long to resist a greater temptation. Judas abstracted paltry sums from the money with which he was entrusted, till yielding to the ascendancy, which his evil actions had acquired over him, he finally sold his master for forty pieces of silver. The politic Ahitophel, David’s minister, profoundly understood the influence which evil actions sway over the guilty. In conformity with this he counseled the ambitious but unexperienced Absalom to go into his father’s wives in the presence of all Israel, a deed fitted beyond others to destroy all hope of future reconciliation with his royal father, to make himself the fool-hardy villain, and to embolden his fellow conspirators. The miserable results of its influence on our First Parents were cowardice, shame, recrimination, and guilty palliation.

6. OF THE PUNISHMENT OF SIN:—Death is the opposite of life, and is, therefore, the consummation of evil. Like birth, however, it is so common among the sons of men, that as there is but little general joy for the first so there is but little public sorrow for the last.

The human family consists of about a thousand millions of souls, who die off and are renewed again in every thirty years nearly. All this amazing carnage goes on in comparative quietude and, therefore, it fails to affect us; but could we behold on some boundless plain the whole race of man, all who have lived since Adam and Adam himself, all who now live, and all who shall live from this to the resurrection, with death stalking from rank to rank, killing this immense mass of flesh and blood, mowing down successively the kings and fathers of mankind, courtiers and their slaves, and withering the flowers and dashing to pieces the glory of society, the high, the low, the rich, the poor, yea all the inhabitants of the earth, and casting them into the grave without distinction, at the rate of three thousand every hour and fifty every minute, then perhaps we should gain some adequate conception of sin and of its horrid nature, not only in its love and practice and guilt and state and power, but also in its punishment, death; for “the wages of sin is death.”

Thus, then, have we glanced rapidly at sin in its different phases. And thus we see where Adam stood in the eye of the law, when his divine Creator called to him, “Adam, where art thou,” after he had sinned, and fallen from innocence. He now stood all naked, divested of righteousness, and ready to be slain according to the most literal import of the law which he had violated, which said not only “Thou shalt die,” but intensely, “Thou shalt surely die;” and not only so, but it marked out the time of his death. “In the day thou eatest thou shalt surely die.” This



could not be misunderstood; it is not now misunderstood when interpreted most literally; it was not then misunderstood; for both of our ancestors surely knew it to mean precisely what it said; that they should both die on the day they violated it. What Eve answered to the seducer, and what Adam said to her, conspire to shew, that both understood the law aright; that it threatened immediate death; and their conduct virtuous and pious had, up to the day of the fall, been framed upon a literal understanding of it. Indeed if God had not meant what he said, how could angels, henceforth, have any confidence in his word? How could any of his intelligent creatures aware of this transaction ever again repose in his sayings with confidence that they would be fulfilled? The law, then, said that man should die, he should surely die, and die the day he eat of the interdicted fruit; and it meant what it said without any gloss or explanation whatever. The fear and the shame, and the recrimination, and the palliation, which succeeded, prove also, that they were dead in law the moment they sinned. Had now a thread of lightning from the clouds passed through them and laid them lower than the shades in which they sought concealment the executive would have enforced what the legislator had decreed, literally decreed, publicly decreed. "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

## CHAPTER XX

### *Of Opening the Eyes*

"For God doth know that in the day you eat thereof then your eyes shall he opened and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

THEN YOUR EYES SHALL BE OPENED:—To what? To the things of a new and preternatural state. They had already tasted of good; they should then taste of evil; and increase their knowledge by sacrificing their happiness, and learn the value of innocence by having lost it, and the honor of being admitted to sensible communion with the Deity by being denied it forever; while the pains they should suffer and the remorse which should consume them, would instruct them how fallacious it was to reason of a matter on which they had revelation, to prefer the word of any one to that of God, and to think of what they might become in a new state when they were so completely blest in their natural one.

When persons change their state their eyes are necessarily opened to the advantages and disadvantages of that state. But before the change occurs it is impossible to possess any thing but faith on the subject. A child knows nothing of day and night and season and change, it knows nothing in short of practical life before it is born into it. So of man in relation to the unseen world; we know nothing of it experimentally: we may have faith, but we have no knowledge of it.

This reasoning holds good of moral changes as well as physical ones, and of religious as well as moral ones. Hazeal, while he was only servant to the king of Syria, felt like a man; but when he was elevated to the throne of that kingdom he felt like a usurper, and executed upon the nation of Israel his neighbors all those cruelties which it was told him by the prophet Elijah he would practise, and which at the time Hazeal thought barbarity fit only for a dog. "Is thy servant a dog" said he to the prophet, who was weeping in view of the cruelties which he should practise on the daughters of Israel and their children. "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing."

It is said of Paul that those, who had witnessed against Stephen and were now stoning him, laid down their garments at his feet for care till they had accomplished their bloody deed, and that this young man was well pleased with his slaughter, that he made havoc of the congregation, entering into houses, and dragging men and women, whom he committed to prison. He himself said he had shut up the saints in prison, had voted against them in the question of life and death, had scourged them, compelled them to blaspheme, and persecuted them even to strange cities.

Yet there was but a moment between all this dread cruelty, blindness, madness, and the most unfeigned faith, reformation love. He entered Damascus, was visited by a Christian, arose, was baptized, was pardoned, and received the Holy Spirit. He had changed his state; his eyes were opened.

These things show that persons are not to be judged of in one state by what they were in a former state. A good state may give forth a bad being and a bad state may give forth a good being. The Saviour came out of Galilee and satan out of heaven; Paul came out of an evil nation and Adam out of Paradise. Sin issued from the garden of Eden, and righteousness out of Jerusalem in which was slain the Son of God.

The command to man was, that he should not change his state lest his eyes should be opened to evil and because his native state was good. The command to men now is, forthwith to change their state, because it is evil, and to obey the gospel when they will experience that their eyes have been opened to good:—

## CHAPTER XXI

### *Conclusion*

YOU SHALL BE AS GODS:—This expression perhaps implies that the Devil before this period was familiar with idolatry, and that by using the word gods here he meant not only to arouse the ambition of

our First Parents, but to pave the way for that species of false religion, which more than any thing else tended afterwards to destroy from the earth all faith in the true God. Idolatry, as will be shown in another part of this work, is most of all things opposed to the true religion of the state of respite or the present state.

We have now touched upon the several points in the very general narrative of scripture relative to the state of evil, and the temptation and fall by which man was introduced into it.

It commences in temptation and ends in death; all its intermediate points are evil and only evil. It differs from the first state as happiness does from misery, as righteousness does from sin, as courage does from cowardice, as shame from self-approval, as obedience from disobedience, as weakness from strength, as death from life, as Satan from God.

It now remains for us to examine the state of respite, or the present condition of man; and to shew the principles upon which it has obtained in consistence with the law which put an end to the state in which man was created.

*“In the day thou eatest thereof thou shall surely die.”*

In conclusion, however, we beg leave to ask those who affect to scorn the Mosaic history of the origin of evil and of man, where are the romance or lightness of which they complain? In what point of the extremely condensed narrative do they find anything inconsistent either with the possible, or the probable or even the decorous? Is there in it any thing contradictory to the acknowledged constitution of human nature? Is man's life asserted to have been originally any thing else than animal life like our own? Does it offend them, that the writer should have referred the origin of mankind to God, and said that they were created and did not make themselves, or were the work of chance, or fate, or nothing at all? Was it cruel to try their virtue in order to increase their happiness? Or to represent them as blest with sensible communion with their maker because they were innocent? Was it improper to represent the Deity as good rather than evil? Or would they have been better pleased if God had been represented as the author of both good and evil?

For my own part, I am compelled to say, that I am unable, after many years of inquiry, to discover any thing improper, indecorous, or unnatural in this history.

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