

and therefore an indignity offered to him, by France or by her official representatives, is equally as offensive as though it were offered to each citizen of the empire personally, so that the guilt incurred by such an act, is as much greater than that incurred by offering the same indignity to a private subject, as the value of the united interests of all the millions of the British Empire, is greater than the interests of one individual. And thus, by a close observance of facts, we are enabled to lay it down as a fixed principle, THAT OTHER CONDITIONS REMAINING UNCHANGED, THE GUILT OF EVERY SIN IS ALWAYS IN PROPORTION TO THE VALUE OR IMPORTANCE OF THE RELATIONS WHICH THE PERSONAGE SINNED AGAINST SUSTAINED TO OTHER INTELLIGENCES. But as this formula is too long for convenience; and as rightfully sustaining important relations to other intelligences, always gives true dignity to such a personage, in proportion to the importance of the relations which he honourably sustains: the formula may be thus stated.—THE GUILT OF SIN IS ALWAYS IN PROPORTION TO THE DIGNITY OF THE PERSONAGE SINNED AGAINST.

It may now be observed, that this method of measuring the guilt of an offence, is universally acted upon among all families, peoples, nations and languages: so universally, indeed, that it is deemed utterly impossible to find a single exception in any nation barbarous or civilized; or, in any age ancient or modern. Of this, while in the city of Kingston, last Thursday, I was furnished with a striking exemplification. Stepping on board the small steamer *Juno*, I entered into conversation with a man who had evidently been an old seaman, and incidentally learned from him, that on a certain occasion he and six others deserted from their vessel, in one of their boats—this was near the coast of New Zealand. After sailing some time, they were compelled to land on one of the islands. In a difficulty that occurred between them and the Islanders, two of the white men struck the chief; the two guilty of this offence, were instantly killed—their flesh pulled off their bones, and eaten in the presence of my informant and his four associates, as they stood bound in their midst. I then asked him why the cannibals did not make food of him and his companions? "Oh!" said he "they never kill people *simply for food*, we ~~DO NOT STRIKE THE CHIEF!!~~ They killed only the two who did—they regard *his person* as sacred—whoever **TOUCHES HIM MUST DIE!**" Lost then as these cannibals were to all the less palpable principles of moral responsibility, they still retain the knowledge of the fact, that the guilt of an offence is in proportion to the dignity of the personage sinned against—a principle in relation to which it would seem, that nothing but the shocking necessities of error could ever induce any man to call in question its rectitude for a moment; inwrought as it evidently is, into the texture of man's moral constitution by the finger of the living God.

As the propriety of the application of the principle for which we contend, as necessary to the attainment of a correct estimate of the guilt of offences, must now be considered as fully established, so far as it affects all offences committed by man against his fellow; it is now necessary to enquire—does the principle reach any higher? Is its application acknowledged in Heaven?—*Must it be applied to the offences committed by man against his God?*

We have now reached a point where all must feel that we are dealing with an issue of appalling magnitude. And you who have staked your eternal destinies upon the *truthfulness* of the finite nature of your guilt, unable any longer to shut your eyes to the fact, that everywhere, and in all ages, the guilt,

of every offence has been rated in proportion to the dignity of the party sinned against; the question with you now is, can you retain the hope, that this principle is not applicable to your offences committed against God. Knowing that the failure of this hope is the conviction that your guilt is infinite, and that you have fully merited *endless misery*, you refuse to let it go. Like the wretched victim of heedless folly, who, week before last, sprang from his boat as it sped, careering to inevitable destruction, through the foaming surges that crown the brow of Niagara's face of death! To avoid the experience of its horrors, he sprang from his boat, ere yet it quivered, half length in air, o'er ruin's gulph—he sprang,—*alas!* what necessity was there! and clenching in agony the foam-clad trunk of a forest tree that had been wedged between sunken rocks, by the downward sweep of the raging torrent, he clung to this last and only object that could stay the instant consummation of his doom; and as he tightened his embrace of his last refuge, as quivering, it seemed ready to be wrenched from its moorings, so *you* cling to the hope we have named, while the force of this argument makes it tremble in your grasp. But here the analogy ends; for when the moment came, as come it did, that he could retain his grasp no longer, the skill of the multitude assembled having been baffled in every effort made for his rescue, springing upwards in the agony of despair, and uttering a wail, which none that heard can ever wish to hear repeated, he fell into the boiling flood that feeds the cataract, and was lost! In your case, however, the abandonment of your refuge is essential to your safety; for on making the discovery that your guilt is infinite, driven from a refuge of lies, your eyes will be opened to see the necessity of an Omnipotent Saviour: placed by the enormity of your guilt infinitely beyond the reach of created assistance, you will indeed find yourself floating on the tempestuous fiery surge that feeds the cataract, whose gulf is hell; and on whose face of clouds and darkness the lightnings of God's just indignation has traced "*Eternal Death*;" but though floating on such a surge, you are saved from dying with a lie in your right hand—the truth that you are lost, and which your lie did not annul, now takes full possession of your soul; and finding that all created help is placed at an *infinite distance* from you, you have, for the first time, reached a position in which you can appreciate the deliverance of God. And as in your *absolute impotency*, you desecrate the Omnipotent God, making bare his holy arm—and looking upon you, you hear him exclaim, "Save from going down to the pit for I have found a ransom." A ransom! Your soul hangs on the sound—with you, its necessity is no longer a question—Gethsemane and Calvary sweep before you—your soul absorbs the strange depths of their meaning—like a worm, helpless on the bosom of a mountain torrent, you find yourself on the flaming surges of the curse of a broken law, and hell and destruction before you; still you find a passion more absorbing than fear, rapidly gaining the ascendancy as you gaze on the bleeding, anguished form of the Son of God—fear, shame and remorse all merge into contrition, and in brokenness of spirit you plead for pardon at his wounded feet; in faith believing that his blood cleanseth from all sin. Your prayer is heard—peace fills your soul—your guilt is cancelled—and your mouth is opened, to sing the high praises of God, who has plucked you as a brand from the burning. It is for the attainment of this end, and not because of the love of alarm, that we now press the questions of this issue upon you. The questions have been distinctly stated, for proof of what the answers should be, we now appeal to the word of God