

less than this; for the principles of morality, like the Infinite Principle of all principles, are unchangeable and eternal. Evil therefore cannot be of God, or in any sense of the word, from God. He hates sin; his nature is against it. It is opposed to his desire, his government, his holy law, the interests of his mighty empire, and the holy happiness of his subjects. It has been often asked could the Divine Being not have prevented evil from ever entering the universe?

Without doubt we reply God could have prevented sin had it so pleased him. For he who doeth according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth was under no obligation to create any beings in his own image after his likeness; and he might in his adorable sovereignty have remained for ever alone had it so pleased him, and thus he would effectually have prevented the existence of moral evil. It is however sufficient for us to know that the all-wise and infinitely benevolent One did not please to remain for ever in the solitude of his own society. He did not choose to remain the only intelligent being in the universe. He chose to create moral beings, or powers,—powers, that would be free to act, and act freely,—powers, that would originate as really and as truly as himself. In one word, the infinite, uncaused mind made finite minds who were to be as truly first causes as himself. It should never be forgotten that all the accountable subjects of God's moral government are first causes, as well as effects of the uncaused first cause. That we are effects, or creatures, no one but an Atheist will question; we are however real causes, first causes as well as effects. We are as truly the originating cause of our own moral acts, as God is the originating cause of our existence. Indeed, we may with all safety venture the assertion that if the subjects of God's moral government are not as really and as truly the first causes of their own moral actions as God is of his, there can be no such thing as virtue or vice, moral excellency or moral evil among the ranks of created beings. The foundation of responsibility, praise, or blame, lies in the creature's power to act *from himself*.

This is the view which we have been led to entertain, and it is when we view the subject which we are now considering from this standpoint, that we see not only how it was possible for sin to enter the universe in direct opposition to the will of God, but also how it actually did enter.

If the remarks which have just been made are correct then it