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## The Pilgrim.

The way is dark, my Father! cloud on cloud  
Is gathering quickly o'er my head; and loud  
The thunders roar above me. See, I stand  
Like one bewildered. Father, take my hand,  
And through the gloom lead safely home Thy child,

The way is long, my Father! and my soul  
Longs for the rest and quiet of the goal,  
While yet I journey through this weary land  
Keep me from wandering! Father, take my hand;  
Quickly and straight lead to heaven's gate Thy child.

The cross is heavy, Father! I have borne  
It long, and still do bear it. Let my worn  
And fainting spirit rise to that blessed land  
Where crowns are given. Father, take my hand,  
And, reaching down, lead to the crown Thy child.

The way is dark, My child, but leads to light!  
I would not have thee always walk by sight.  
My dealings now thou canst not understand!  
I meant it so; but I will take thy hand,  
And through the gloom lead safely home My child

The way is long, My child! but it shall be  
Not one step longer than is best for thee,  
And thou shalt know at last, when thou shalt stand  
Close to the gate, how I did take thy hand,  
And quick and straight led to heaven's gate My child.

The cross is heavy, child! yet there is One  
Who bore a heavier for thee: My Son,  
My Well-Beloved; with Him bear thine and stand;  
With Him at last, and from thy Father's hand,  
Thy cross laid down, receive thy crown, My child!

## The One Lawgiver.

BY TALBOT W. CHALMERS, D.D.

ONE of the most distinctly marked features of the Church of the present day is the weakened hold which men have of the doctrine of future retribution. This is shown not by the alteration of creeds and confessions, but by the publication of books and pamphlets, by the utterances of prominent men in different communities and by the action of various local ecclesiastical bodies. In these it is declared with more or less emphasis that sin is not eternal, and that one day all men without exception will be brought home to happiness and to God. But if this be true then there is no such thing as retribution. All the penal sanctions of the law are changed into corrections, their real ultimate end being not the satisfaction of justice, but the reformation of the transgressor. Sympathy with the wrong doer takes the place of sympathy with eternal rectitude. This arises from a feeble sense of the evil of sin. Men shrink from the unsparing denunciations of Scripture, and are disposed to palliate and excuse moral delinquencies as if they were infirmities, accidents due to the weakness of man's nature, greatly to be regretted indeed and avoided, yet not by any means demanding a penalty strictly endless. If we trace further back the source of these views, we find it in the inadequate apprehensions men have of the divine Law. They do not recognize its absolute and unchangeable authority. They merge all the perfections of God into his one aspect as a Father, and so overlook his majesty

as a moral governor. Forgetting, too, that a father must rule, and that a family without discipline is on the road to ruin, they so explain the divine paternity as to make it mere good nature. The Father of all cannot finally reject any, and His grace is as universal as mankind. Making happiness rather than holiness the last end of His procedures, they resolve the law into an educational institution instead of an original and unbending standard of duty. In direct opposition to all such loose and indefinite opinions stands the positive assertion of the Apostle James (iv:12), "There is one Lawgiver." That God is a Lawgiver arises from the fact that he is Creator. Even in the lower sphere of physical forces it would be inconsistent with His perfections to allow the existence of a permanent chaos. Were there no uniformity in natural sequences, science would become guesswork and life a riddle.

But if God imposes law upon unorganized matter, much more must He upon rational beings. Man, we are told, was made in the image of God, a free self-conscious agent, endowed with reason, conscience and will, and therefore raised immeasurably above all others order of being on earth. As the immediate offspring of God he partakes of his spiritual nature, and therefore is capable of knowing Him and having communion with Him. But he is also capable of turning away from Him and pursuing wrong courses. Man, therefore, must have a rule of action. His own moral constitution requires it, as well as his relation to his Maker upon whom he is dependent and to whom he is subject. The wise and holy God cannot be indifferent to the character of His intelligent creatures either in respect to their dispositions or their conduct. He must have a will upon the subject, and that will must necessarily take the shape of law. It is indeed conceivable that he might have so constituted men that they would always be disposed to do right, an infallible propensity of nature guiding them at every step, so that there never could be a possibility of their going wrong either from inclination or from mistake. But, so far as we know, the Almighty never did constitute any of his creatures after this manner. Such being the case, man with all his high endowments being fallible and peaceable, there must needs be given to him a fixed rule of conduct. Mere suggestion or advice will not answer. There must be something absolute and peremptory, something that comes as the irrevocable declaration of God's own judgment of good and evil, something established over mankind, like the sun in the firmament, the same from the world's first day to the last. It says, Thou shalt or Thou shalt not, and it means to be obeyed. It has, therefore, sanctions, as it, indeed, must have; otherwise it would not be law at all, but a mere expression of opinion. And these sanctions must be enforced. For if not, then they might just as well not exist.