

whom he was well pleased;" **MATT.** iii. 17. Could sanctity itself become the victim of that wrath? Not, save in that human nature which had so offended, and which, for our sake, he disdained not to assume. This was *the ram*, the father of the flock, "entangled by the horns among the briars; that is, by his doctrines, in which however his strength consists, as the ram's does in his horns; amid the opposition, embarrassments and persecution of his crafty enemies; who, like prickly and unfruitful thorns, are only fit to be consumed by fire. This was the victim ready found to be sacrificed; **GEN.** xxii. 13. The filial Deity, as such, could not be slain. But, addressing his heavenly Father, "Thou hast fitted," said he, "a body for me;" **HEB.** x. 5. For that body, which thou hast given me; in that human nature, which I have put on; I will offer up myself a holocaust to thee; the only sacrifice capable of satisfying thy justice; of appeasing thy wrath; and of restoring to my adopted brethren their forfeited right to that bliss and glory for which thou had'st created them.

"And Abraham called the name of that place, the Lord seeth. Whence to this day, it is said in the mountain the Lord will see;" *ib.* v. xiv. The mountain, thus alluded to, is Mount Calvary; on which the pre-figured Isaac was sacrificed; the worthiest object beheld by the Lord on all our earth, his co-eternal son as man, yielding up his life in atonement for the sins of mankind. At the sight of him, the Almighty father relents; and at his earnest entreaties spares us for his sake. "Father" said he, forgive them; for they know not what they do! **LUKE** xxiii. 34.

Some read the above text; "in the mountain the Lord will be seen;" which more directly points to the Lord's appearance at his crucifixion on Mount Calvary; **ch.** xxiii. v. 7. Abraham rose up and bowed down to the people of the land.—This great Saint and favourite of God, was evidently no Quaker in his manners; nor were "the children of Heth" such in their speech, who styled him, *My Lord*.—**ch.** xxiv. 2, 3.

The lawfulness of an Oath, which Quakers also deny, is here proved by the solemn oath which Abraham made his servant take.

Original.

### THE MORAL EVIL.

I see another Law in my Members fighting against the Law of my Mind.—**ROM.** x. 23.

In contemplating the endless wonders of this stupendous universe, we view every thing in it pursuing its wisely appointed course, and tending to the end for which it was made. The heavenly bodies, for instance, are seen to describe, with absolute exactness, the circuits traced out to them, to be performed by them in a given time. The sun is true to a moment in his appearance and disappearance round our globe, and wheels along with unerring precision throughout the range immense of his annual orbit. The moon, too, knows her time and her place in the firmament; and, though constantly changing, is never found straying from her place assigned. The

seasons are regular in their expected succession. The flowery Spring, awakening with gentle whisper the spirit of vegetation, bids him prepare in embryo the fruits of the earth. These are consigned, in all their gay, green, growthy vigour, to the ripening influence of Summer. Autumn, at length, receives matured, and pours into the lap of Winter the needful provision against the dreary and unproductive interval ordained for Nature's rest.

The elements obey the laws designed to impell or restrain them. Animals, and all living creatures, excepting one, are orderly, and guided by their several instincts, within the boundaries set to their operations by the all-wise Creator. Man, alone, forms an exception to the admirable and perfect whole; and though he is the only rational creature here below, to whom all seems referred, yet he is the only one observed to swerve from Reason's rule, and to pursue a track directly opposite to the one traced out for him to walk in. Hence, to whoever contemplates the general system of nature, he invariably forms the greatest puzzle and enigma of the universe. The greatest difficulty has, therefore, always been, save in the revealed religion, to account for that perversity of disposition, which sets him so at variance with himself when it solicits or impels him to act in direct opposition to what his conscience tells him is the will and order of the Deity.

Reason, which discovers nothing but good flowing from the source itself of goodness—nothing but perfect from absolute and essential perfection—acknowledges itself wholly at a loss to explain this anomaly in the works of God, and incapable of ascertaining the original cause of man's propensity to evil. It, indeed, clearly perceives, that a fatal change has taken place in him; for, the idea we have of the infinite goodness and justice of God, obliges us to suppose the creature issuing guiltless from his creating hand—more perfect in its kind than it is now observed to be, and happier in its condition. The same idea obliges us to ascribe all to the creature's own fault its present imperfection, and consequent wretchedness. We hence necessarily infer, that human nature has been somehow polluted—and that, too, in its very source—since Evil is derived on all, like a family distemper; for who of our race, young or old, but feels its afflictive influence? It is an evil, then, inherited from our earliest progenitors, in whose guilt alone it could have originated.

This much Reason clearly perceives, unassisted by revelation; and also, that, though we are punished, we are not finally cast off; since our sufferings are still blended with numberless comforts and delights. We find ourselves still the objects of our Maker's kind regard, who seems to chastise us as a father, only to reclaim and to save—not, as an inexorable judge, to condemn and destroy.

Here our reason, after catching this cheering glimpse of hope, straight loses itself in its conjectures as to the means and manner of restoring our fallen and degraded race to its primitive condition, which nothing could make known to us but the Deity's revelation of his own free and merciful purpose.

Let us, then, attend to what has been revealed concerning man's original state;—his transgression, the cause of all his woe, and the means his Maker has thought proper to use, in order to cancel his guilt, and fit him for enjoying, even in an enhanced degree, the endless, pure, and perfect bliss, for which he had created him.

Man, we are informed, was created such as reason shews he must have been, innocent, and therefore perfectly happy—happy internally and externally—in his whole being, soul and body: in his soul, because his will ever assenting to his understanding secured that guiding faculty's entire approbation, which always afforded him the purest mental satisfaction, and never left him cause to repent, or repine: in his body, as all external objects were made but for his enjoyment, and wholly calculated to bless and delight his senses.

He was created to the image of God—rational, immortal, just, happy and free; bearing in his nobler half, the soul, a further particular resemblance to his Maker, who, as he has revealed himself to us, one in essence, and three in Persons, has made the soul one in substance, and three in powers, the will, the memory and the understanding.

He was constituted from the beginning a Free Agent; and, though bound by every possible motive to make the divine will the rule of his conduct, he was left at perfect liberty to obey, or not obey, as he chose; not, however, without being sufficiently warned of the evil that would accrue to him for his disobedience. In one sole instance was he required to give proof of that entire deference, which he, and all creatures necessarily owe to the Supreme Will of their Maker. In the midst of all the sweets of Paradise, he was forbidden, under the pain of death, to eat of the fruit of a certain tree.

This restrictive mandate was such as affected, by its breach or observance, his whole being, with which he was bound to worship God: his soul and his body: his soul, by the merit of her obedience, or the guilt of disobedience: his body, by the due mortification, or criminal indulgence of its animal appetite. This mandate, however, he ventured to transgress; and thus broke the golden link of love's bright chain, which bound him to his Maker: setting himself adrift from his holy and happy state, upon the wide wafting, and tempest-troubled ocean of sin and woe.—Thus is accounted for, all the misery to which our race is exposed—a misery originating in the transgression of our first parents, and entailed by them on all their posterity.

Their rash act, of only eating an apple against the command of God, may seem at first scarcely an adequate cause for all the evils, thence said to be derived. But that act, considered, as it really was, a positive refusal to obey the Creator, is, in the eye of reason, no less a deviation from the order of nature, and a direct tendency to confusion and ruin in the moral sense, than it would be in the physical, should the seasons refuse to succeed each other in their appointed turns: or should any of the planetary orbs

forsake its course assigned, and reeling widely from its sphere, should meet and obstruct the others in their full career, till the mighty blending masses, with hideous crash and din, carry disorder, ruin and desolation through all the works of God, in spite of his conservative Omnipotence.

It is true, the moral evil was permitted, and, as reason itself demonstrates, for reasons worthy of God, who, in calling the rational beings into existence could have had no view of thus enhancing his own all perfect bliss; but in the excess of his goodness, of allowing a participation in its sweets to creatures rendered capable and worthy of such a gratuitous favor. These therefore, he created free, that, as loving children, they might obey him by choice; not as slaves, by necessity. All other things he created for their sake, and maintains for them in the most perfect order, and inviolable regularity. Them alone he left for a time in a probationary state of filial freedom and independence: putting it thus in their power to acquire, by their voluntary obedience, a rightful claim to his fatherly affection: and, by meriting the bliss for which they were created; to enhance their dignity, and perfect the relish of all their felicity, by their sense of having, as far as in them lay, deserved it; thus, in granting them their freedom, God, according to St. Augustine, has crowned his own gifts, by enabling them to consider such as their acquired property.

The only rational and immortal beings of whom we have any knowledge, or report, angels and men have abused of their freedom, and thus merited their chastisement; which sad circumstance has called forth the display of two hitherto unexercised attributes of the Deity; of his justice to punish, and his mercy to forgive. In the case of the angels, whose guilt originated in themselves, his justice is shown in all its awful and unrelenting rigor. In that of man, whose crime was not of his own conceiving, but of the tempter's suggesting; that same justice is but partially severe, and conditionally limited. A new state of probation is therefore allowed to man. The divine mercy interposing in his behalf, affords him the means of atoning for his offence to justice. He is thus enabled to effect a most perfect reconciliation with his offended God, and to regain, even in an enhanced degree, the bliss and dignity, from which he fell; so that, according to St. Paul, "where sin has abounded, grace has abounded more."—**ROM.** v. 21.

Little did the devil dream that such means of salvation could be found for guilty man. He reasoned from his own experience, and naturally concluded that he had rendered man's condition as hopeless as his own. What else could he suppose? He had found God's wrath implacable: nor ought he knew, was in the creature capable of atoning to divine justice for the offence committed. Mercy was an attribute of the Deity to him quite unknown; and the possibility of not only raising man from his fallen state, but of exalting him far above his former dignified and happy condition, was a mystery