

which we as subjects of God's moral government have been endowed. And this free-will in moral action demonstrates our dignity, and at the same time lays us under a weight of responsibility and obligation, which it is impossible for us fully to express. Life and death, heaven and hell, the blessing and the curse, are set before us. We have power to receive or to reject; to believe and be saved, or to disbelieve and be damned. God in his sovereignty has willed our freedom; and all the warnings, intreaties, expostulations, commands, threatenings, promises, and persuasions of his word, prove our freedom to choose the good and refuse the evil, or choose the evil and refuse the good. What the Prince of English Poets says of the angels who kept not their first estate is no less true of men, and cannot change:

“ Their nature, nor revoke the high decree,
Unchangeable, eternal, which ordained
Their freedom; they themselves ordained their fall.”*

When a sinner believes the gospel and thereby becomes a Christian, he doubtless acts in view of motives, strong motives, motives which he himself did not furnish, which he never could furnish, which he never would have been disposed to furnish of his own accord. The motives were from above, they came down from heaven. God in the riches of his grace brings the mighty moral motives of the cross, the strongest, the grandest, and most glorious in the universe, to bear upon the sinner's mind. The sinner has perfect power to resist all these motives, but when he exercises his free agency and yields to the claims of God, of Christ, of the Spirit, he becomes a Christian, and is at the same time a debtor to and a monument of rich, free and unsought grace. The motives furnished by the cross of Christ are the most powerful within the range of our knowledge, and *every sinner* under the sound of the gospel is surrounded by and subjected to their mighty moral influence. God is now waiting to be gracious; and ready to welcome every prodigal on this his footstool back again into his favour and family. God says, Come now and let us reason together. Christ says, Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. The Spirit and the Bride say come. These are powerful motives, but it is a melancholy fact that multitudes are every day madly resisting those motives. Surely when sinners lend a deaf ear to the pleading earnestness and eloquence

* Milton.