

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 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 chastisement; which sad circumstance has called forth the display, of two hitherto unexerted attributes of the Deity,—of his justice in punishing, and of his mercy in forgiving. In the case of the Angels, whose guilt originated in themselves, his justice is shewn in all its awful and unrelenting rigour; 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 Saint Paul, *where sin has abounded, grace has abounded more.*—Rom. 5, 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 aught 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 placed beyond the utmost range of his conjecture. He gloried, therefore, in the full conviction that he had marred the designs of God in man's regard; and ruined the earthly creature forever.

Here, as nothing happens without a cause, we may naturally inquire, what excited in the tempting fiend so fell a hatred to our race; and why he so eagerly sought to involve it in his own destruction.

But that race was created to inherit the bliss, from which he, and his guilty followers fell. It was envy, then, a vice that ever seeks to accomplish the ruin of its object; it was envy, that urged, and still urges him on, in all his mischievous plottings against our kind. Besides, his rage

against that God, whose chastising might he ever feels, redounds upon the creature so favoured by the Deity.

Is it not also probable, that when the Angels first beheld man, sprung from the forming hand of the Creator, at that time when the material followed the spiritual creation; when *they the morning stars praised him together, and all the sons of God made a joyful melody*, Job. 38, 7.—Is it not probable, that at that moment, while they considered him by his nature, as so much their inferior, that Almighty God may have revealed to them his design, of some day, so identifying himself with man, as to make him in his own person their rightful Lord and Sovereign; and in this anticipatory sense, in order to try their humble and due submission to his Sovereign will, may the Eternal Father have said, alluding to the word incarnate, His eternal Son: *Let all the Angels of God adore him!* Ps. 96, 7.—Heb. 1, 6. Who knows but this very command, addressed to the whole host of Heaven, may have formed the test and trial of their allegiance? and the occasion of Satan's fall, together with those, who like him, from the proud sense of their natural superiority, may have disdained to worship, as man, the filial Deity. All that we know for certain on the subject, is that the sin of the Angels was the sin of pride, and the vain thought of exalting themselves above the most *High and Holy One*; at the same time that we observe in scripture their opposition chiefly directed against the eternal Son, especially in his capacity of man, the Redeemer and the Saviour of the human race.

It would seem that God, who foresaw all that would happen, and had formed from all eternity his designs in man's regard, intended in creating him, not a simple, but a compound being, whose person consists in the closest union of two apparently incompatible substances, of a rational and thinking soul, with an inert, unconscious, material clod, to afford him, in himself, a striking proof of the possibility of that otherwise seemingly incredible mystery, *the Incarnation*; a mystery designed for him alone, and intended to form the great subject of his faith, and object of his hope; by which, God, who made man to his own image and likeness, disdained not to make himself to man's image and likeness, in order to restore of that image and likeness, what had been degraded in it, and disfigured by sin.

No wonder then, that man should be the particular object of envy and hatred to Satan and his associates, whose forfeited bliss, he was created to inherit; whose fall and reprobation may have originated in their opposition to his predicted Deification; and who view the easy deemed victim of their seduction, not only rescued from their revengeful grasp, but placed in a more meritorious, and consequently, a more desirable condition than ever; nay, ennobled and exalted above them, by that very nature, which they despised, as so inferior to theirs, and which now forms the precious and wonderful link, that inseparably unites him in the closest kindred with his Maker: the least with the greatest,

the most abject with the most exalted; the finite, and even mortal, doomed with the infinite and eternal.

But how was this wonder of wonders to be wrought; and still the dread sentence of death, pronounced against guilty man, to be verified? O, it is here that revelation discloses to us a mystery, which no created intellect could ever once have dreamed of.

Man had freely and deliberately sinned, and thereby, like the rebel Angels, not only had forfeited his title to that bliss, for which he was created, but had also incurred the dread penalty of *Death* in all the extent of its meaning: *Death* spiritual, which deprives the soul of her life, the grace of God: *Death* temporal, which separates the soul from the body, and dooms this last for a time to return to its native dust: and finally *death* eternal, by which the whole man, body and soul, is condemned to an ever dying life, or rather, an ever living death; for death eternal is but life continually prolonged in order but to feel the pangs and agony of death. Such was the woeful state, to which man had made himself liable by his guilty yielding to the suggestion of the tempter.

From this hopeless state did God resolve to deliver him. Man, however, must make the satisfaction due by him to divine justice for his offence. But neither man, nor all the creatures together, can make the adequate satisfaction required. How then was this incompetency in the creature to be removed? Ah! could it ever have entered into the imagination of man or Angels that God himself would become that man capable of atoning superabundantly for the guilt of man?

The cheering tidings of God's gracious purpose, were announced to man in Paradise, immediately after his fall. It was when he had all to fear from the justice of his Maker, that his Maker's mercy gave him all to hope. He dreaded now, his late delight, the Deity's wonted visit; and hid himself from his face, among the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called Adam, and said to him, *Adam where art thou?* His heavenly Father invites him back, his still beloved, though disobedient child.—He hears him and his partner acknowledge their fault, and accuse the serpent as the author of all the mischief. He seems quite to overlook their crime, and turns the whole weight of his indignation against their tempter. He lays his curse upon him, dooms the proud aspiring fiend to the most abject, vile, and filthy pursuits; declares between him and the woman, whom he thought to have brought under his controul; and between his brood, the wicked, and her offspring, whom he fancied now blasted in their root, and thus ruined forever: an endless breach, and a determined hostility. He foretells that she, the weaker sex, over whom his cunning had prevailed, should yet set all his might and malice at defiance. That she should crush his head, and trample him in the dust, while he vainly laid snares for her heel.

Having thus allayed the fears of our first Parents, shewing them still hope, where no hope appeared; he then, and not till then, passes sentence upon them;