

account for the many enemies which often attacks the best products of the earth, and prevent them coming to perfection? The weeds which impede the growth of corn, and require to be rooted up; the insects and vermin which prey on it—the slug, the caterpillar, the wire worm, and all their companions; the diseases to which the plant is liable, such as mildew, rust, smut, and many others; from whence do these things come? They exist, as every farmer could tell us he finds to his cost. They interfere with the full development of many a harvest, and cause many a field to disappoint its owner of a full crop. But how can they be accounted for! I am bold to say that only one answer can be given to this question. That answer must be sought in the third chapter of Genesis, in the old familiar story of sin coming into the world. I assert confidently that nothing but the records of that chapter can explain the state of things which we see continually under our eyes. We cannot for a moment suppose that God created anything imperfect. Everything that God made was like him who made it, "perfect and very good" at the beginning. But something has evidently come in since the day of creation, which has defiled and marred God's handiwork. That something is sin! The earth, with all its beauty and fertility, is an earth which is still under the primeval curse—"Cursed is the ground for thy sake. . . Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee" (Gen. iii. 17, 18.) I look for better days to come on the earth; I believe that the words of the Psalmist shall be fulfilled when Christ returns the second time, and the curse is taken away. "Then shall the earth yield her increase," &c. (Ps. lxxvii. 6.) But in the meantime I believe firmly that the earth shows everywhere the footprints of sin.

The infidel and deist are fond of pointing to the works of nature, and bidding us look up through nature to nature's God. But let them explain, if they can, the anomalies and imperfections which no student of nature can fail to observe on the earth. I tell them boldly that they never can be explained without the Bible. The Bible alone can solve the problem.

The Bible alone can make things plain. Without the Bible there are a thousand things in nature which would perplex and puzzle us. But when I read what happened in the garden of Eden I see a solution of all my difficulties. I find that nature confirms revelation.

3. I believe for another thing, that the earth touches *the great truth that life comes out of death.*

No man, I imagine, can study what goes on yearly on the face of the soil without seeing that the death of one thing is the life of another. The annual death and decay of millions of leaves and plants is a part of the process by which vegetation is continually maintained. Leaf after leaf perishes, and contributes to the fertility and productiveness of coming years. Plant after plant is turned into rich mould, and helps forward the growth of another season. Even the seed corn which is sown exemplifies the same great principle. Grain after grain must die before they can appear "the blade, the ear, and the full corn in the ear." The golden harvest which is reaped every autumn could never exist unless this great principle was annually worked out—that life springs out of death.

Now what is all this but a confirmation of one of the mightiest truths of Scripture? What have we here but light thrown on the great foundation of Christianity—Christ's death the life of the world? Hear what our Lord himself says: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John xii. 24.) The sacrificial death of Christ as our substitute on the cross is the foundation stone of the whole Gospel. From his cross and grave spring all the lessons of a Christian. Take away his atoning death, and you take away everything worth contending for in revealed religion. His death is our title to life; his sufferings the ground of our claims to glory; his crucifixion our warrant for expecting a crown. What intelligent Bible reader does not know that these are among the first principles of our faith? Is it nothing, then, that this great truth is pictured out every year on the face of the earth around us? To my mind