

without sin. A world blasted, for man a sinner. It does not follow, however, that the degeneracy of man and nature was completed, and all the miseries experienced at once. Man at once became a sinner, but he did not at once sink to the lowest depths of depravity. He lost the high favour and communion of his Creator, but he still knew God, and he still worshipped him, though in a different spirit, a different character, and through a new medium. The change was from sight to faith, from innocence to consciousness of guilt, and from possession to hope. The progress of humanity downward was rapid, but not immediate; for when God looked down from heaven on Adam, and Abel, and Seth, he saw the smoking altars of their penitential faith, and heard the wail of sorrow over Paradise lost; but as men began to multiply on the face of the earth, sin multiplied in its power and extent, and at last, after sixteen hundred years, "the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil and that continually." And it was the same with the earth, for while, at the verdict of God, various elements might begin to derange it, yet it was not in a day they had their full power and completed their devastation. When the curse was pronounced, the flowers of Eden did not at once languish and die; the corn did not shrivel, and the thistle rush up in its stead; the trees of the wood did not become stunted, and the thorn spread its armed barrier against man's progress over his domain; the green fields did not become parched, and their brutal population begin to cry and faint in the agonies of hunger; nor were the "rivers of waters" less clear, and full, and fertilizing; the Pison still compassed the aural Havilah; Gihon still spread itself through the land of Cush; Hiddekel, and the lordly Euphrates still rose, up among the mountains that begirt the north of the primitive fatherland, and flowed, through the forest and mead, with unimpaired majesty to the mighty ocean.

Some, we know, take a different view, and maintain that the effects of the curse on nature, were instantaneous, and directly from God; and that, in producing these, man had no part. Without entering into the metaphysics of the subject, we would simply put it thus. If it be allowed—and it is—that in the future age, that better period which is predicted and anticipated, the earth is to be delivered, to a great extent, from the curse, by the universal evangelisation of mankind; that as they become holy the earth is to become better, and arrive nearer to its prim-