

and you know it will ; some loss and evil will, and you know it will. Is it not high time, therefore, for us to consult some other authority than that of this scientifically discredited sentiment ? The question is whether you are wise enough to estimate the amount of pain, or loss, or evil which may last forever.

Apply to this misleading sentiment another and yet sterner test. Suppose that the world were not yet created, and that you were asked : "What will there be in this moral system which God is about to call into existence ? Will there be evil in it ?" "I do not think there will be, because God is good." "Will there be any one in it allowed to lose peace of soul by falling into love of what God hates, and the hate of what God loves ?" "My sentiments assure me that there will not be. God is good and perfect. There will be no imperfection in his work." "Will there be in this universe which is about to come into existence any free and responsible agent, weighted from birth to death with inherited bad tendencies, which, although not sin, are the copious fountain of evil choices. Will there be a law of hereditary descent, by which beings innocent, so far as their own acts are concerned, will be brought into the world to suffer to the third and fourth generation, as a consequence of the evil choices of their ancestors ?" "No ; that cannot be. A perfect Being with a perfect motive, creating with a perfect purpose, never will call such a law into existence." "How do you know he will not ?" "My cultured sentiment is all against it. I was born in the city of Boston. It is almost a violation of taste to suppose that God will do anything of that sort. It is too late to teach in the nineteenth century that Infinite Wisdom and Power, bringing into existence a moral system, will allow to exist in it anything which Beacon Street would not anticipate. Advanced thought cannot admit that any such imperfection will exist in a universe created by a perfect being. God is good. Evil will not be allowed to begin. I am sure nothing of the kind will be found in the world. It is not to be supposed for a moment that an Infinite Being will permit sin to exist in a moral system. I am willing to stake my eternity on the veracity of this sentiment."

Turn now to the actual facts of life, and what is here ? What Infinite Wisdom and Power and Goodness have permitted, and nothing else. What God does not do cannot be done wisely. He has not prevented sin ; He has given to evil, as well as to good, a power of self-propagation ; He has made it a rule that children shall suffer, as well as be blessed, for the evils of their ancestors, and this to the third and fourth generation. It is a fact beyond all comment amazing, that sin has such self-propagating power as to spread itself from birth beyond what we should say is the range of responsibility for it, and that men should come burdened into the world with the offences of those who went before them. But virtue has equally great and even greater power of self-diffusion. Why could not there have been an upper without an actual under in this free world ? Perfectly innocent is many a maniac ; perfectly innocent is many a cripple. But not innocent, some ancestor whose mischiefs spread by hereditary descent ! God allows such things to be, and yet we believe God is perfect.

Archbishop Whately has shown elaborately that all the reasoning which proclaims that sin cannot endure forever proceeds on principles which prove that sin would never be allowed to begin.

Will your unreasoning sentiment stand in this light of science ? Or is the universe perhaps more complex and serious than you dreamed ? I affirm, gentlemen, that all this unscientific sentimentality is best tested by taking it over to a point previous to the commencement of our moral system, and applying the reasoning there fully and fairly. If a sentiment indicates the truth, it will work well there. Well, I go ensnathed in this sentiment into the councils which precede the formation of this world, and I really find myself a minority there. *Incontrovertibly there is in the universe a different plan than I should think there would be, if I were to follow the lead of this sentiment, which is the secret source of the denial that all character tends to a final permanence.*

Therefore, my friends, as this sentiment fails us when we apply it to this course