

cence—there I placed him surrounded by all happy influences and amid greatest advantages; if you would form an estimate of what I have done for primeval man, study Eden!" It will be borne in mind that we are not meddling with the mystery of the origin of evil, but are concerning ourselves only with its entrance amid the experience and history of our race. God made man holy and He placed him amid scenes most favourable to the continuance of his integrity. The Eden of the Bible is "wide as the poles asunder," from the world as it now is, as to nature and character. The Creator may have been building up during myriads of ages this present human dwelling-place, adapted to a state of discipline, development and education for sinful man, that sinfulness being foreseen; but it is expressly declared that God specially planted this garden of delights for his human offspring as they came out of His moulding hands. There was mutual adaptation between the dweller and the dwelling-place—both altogether good, like the Creator. The tenants occupied their glorious abode so long as they continued true and upright. When they fell into transgression all fitness was gone: they must be banished from the place no longer adapted to their condition. Thus we have in the whole Eden scene eloquent witness to God's idea—His thought from which man's life is a departure. It forms a background, against whose sweet and calm radiance the hue of sin looms black as night. That background was reared up by the Most High—the departure, the sin, were exclusively man's.

What thoughtful man has pondered the Bible narrative of the transgression without seeing the likeness to his own sins? The process described is exactly that of which we are ourselves conscious. Attempts have been made with these early records to allegorize, or to make them rather an epic poem than history. But who is satisfied with these attempts? You cannot feel content with anything short of the narrative meaning just what it says. It is to be assumed that God's intercourse with man primeval would be widely different from that which now obtains; the circumstances of the case are totally diverse, and he works no unnecessary miracles. Then he spake face to face; now he addresses us otherwise, for he has established *media* of intercourse, and the special and exceptional are unnecessary.

The narrative introduces to view a *tempter*, who has not yet ceased to wield influence. We know what it is to be tempted. See the woman gazing, desiring, doubting God, yet believing the devil, and then taking and eating! She immediately herself becomes a tempter, and secures a partner in the transgression. Shame and hiding follow. They have lost those pure and loving feelings towards God which they had aforetime. There is now estrangement and dread: they fear that He will be their enemy. How like our own experience! "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man; but every man is drawn away of his own lust and enticed; then when lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death" (James i, 13-15). Is it not so that the essence of transgression is in the dawning of the thought that there is good within our reach, which lies outside the commandment of God? *There is no such good.* All that is real is within the circle of His commands. But when Eve began to think otherwise, the process was rapid to ruin. When we do so, our course is the same.

But what of the *other Eden* into which the Christian's life journey at length enters, and where he lives for ever. How shall its happy bowers be reached, and its glorious light enjoyed? Not at all without a divine