

have had a beginning. Where did it originate? Did it take its rise in created or in uncreated mind? It must have originated either with the moral governor of the universe, or with some subject of his kingdom. There is no alternative, as it seems to us, for it had its commencement either with the Creator or the creature. We feel utterly at a loss to conceive of any other source out of which moral evil could arise. Where then did it originate? Where? Was it with the creature or with the Creator? Was it with the governor or with the governed? Was it with the Father of lights, who dwells in light, and with whom there is no darkness at all? Or, was it with some member of his great family that sin originated?

What answer shall we give to this question? O I feel for one, when I look this great subject in the face, that I cannot and dare not equivocate, vacillate, or hesitate for a moment. Evil cannot dwell with God, and it could not come from him. The infinitely holy One had no part or lot in this matter. We must come boldly out with our views on this subject and fearlessly maintain that the origin of sin must be found anywhere but with that all-wise and infinitely good and glorious Being in whom there is no darkness at all. In the very nature of things he could not decree the existence of what he hates with a perfect hatred; and it seems to us nothing short of blasphemy and the very climax of impiety for any man or body of men to say that "God has decreed whatsoever comes to pass."

The fact that God created all the dependent universe, and instituted a moral system, does not in the slightest degree alter or affect the soundness of our conclusion. For the question before us is not, Did God give being to all the intelligent creation? The question is not, Did a moral system originate with God? for in the nature of things a moral system could no more have its beginning with the subjects of God's moral government than their creation could originate with themselves. The moral universe, with all the numberless subjects of that vast kingdom over which Jehovah rules and reigns in righteousness, came from his hand. This is a settled point, but the question is, Did the evil thoughts, desires, and purposes which spring up in the minds of many of the subjects of His dominion come into being in virtue of a Divine purpose? In other words, is moral evil the product of the infinite mind or of finite and fallible minds?

The question is *not*, did He *foreknow* that moral evil would