

THE
TWO TREES
OF
PARADISE

OR

GOD'S GRACE
AND MAN'S
RESPONSIBILITY



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"Bible Outlines"
Etc., Etc.



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Prefatory Note to Third Edition.

THE connection between Man's Will and Responsibility with God's Grace and Sovereignty is here traced through Scripture. Many have told us that a flood of light has been thrown on these interesting questions, and that difficulties and perplexing thoughts have been satisfactorily solved. That was our purpose and object in writing the book.

There are many subjects treated of in these pages, all more or less directly connected with the immediate subjects on hand, which are in brief, to trace through Scripture GOD'S GRACE and MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY, and our little volume is again sent forth upon its sacred mission.

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THE TWO TREES OF PARADISE:

OR,

GOD'S GRACE AND MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY



THE RUINED EARTH.

Nigh 6,000 years ago, this earth lay buried beneath a mass of waters. How long it had lain in its watery tomb—a huge, chaotic, shapeless ruin—we cannot say, for the Word of God does not, nor can science tell. But God was about to break its slumber of, perhaps, many thousand years.

The earth, as also heaven, had been created in perfection and goodness at an undated period named “the beginning” (Gen. i. 1). How long they stood reflecting the glory and wisdom of their Creator, and at what subsequent time and by what means the ruin of the earth was wrought, are, we believe, unanswered questions. Certain it is, however, that the scene of utter desolation so graphically described in the second verse of the Bible, was *not* the creative work of God, for “His work

is perfect;" besides which, the grandest of the Hebrew prophets has written, "For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it; He hath established it, He created it not in *vain* (or "void," same word as in Gen. i. 2), He formed it to be inhabited" (Isa. xlv. 18).

The first three verses of the Bible, if read simply as written, answer various perplexing questions which present themselves to thoughtful readers:—verse one is a complete and comprehensive statement in itself, applying to the primitive creation of heaven and earth; verse two intimates the condition of the earth after its creation, and prior to its preparation as a home for man; and verse three refers to the first act in the six days' work in which the earth was again set up in perfection.

Ages innumerable may have rolled on while the Creator was imprinting a certain testimony on the rocks and various orderly strata in the bowels of the earth, convulsion and disaster may have followed in succession, and whole systems of organic life in countless numbers and endlessly diversified forms may have existed. All this, and much more, may be fully allowed, on scientific authority. But that man was

evolved out of lower and previous conditions of life, or that the earth before its ruin, as noted in verse two of the Bible, was peopled by a race of human beings, are statements utterly opposed to Scripture, degrading to man himself, and a manifest contradiction to the ascertained *facts* of science. Man has not been found, and never will, although eagerly sought for in the fossil remains previous to the historical period.

SCIENCE AND SCRIPTURE.

Science has furnished us with numerous facts, and when she confines herself to her proper domain, which is to examine existing phenomena and generalize under a uniform law, she may be accepted and her teachings valued for their real worth, only, be it remembered that science cannot meet the soul's need in the presence of God, or settle any moral question whatever; and, further, that the facts and laws of creation were *there* before science discovered them. Man is himself the subject of creative power and wisdom. He did not behold the Creator at His work. Angels cannot inform us how things and persons were produced, for they, too, are the handywork of God. To whom,

then, can we turn for certain information as to creation? Why, to the Creator only. But now that we have to do with God, the mightiest intellect must be laid low in the divine presence, as a tribute to the infinite ways of Him who is unsearchable. He speaks, and we reverently hear, "By *faith* we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God" (Heb. xi. 3). Physiology declares that man is mortal, so does Scripture and every-day experience; but when the physiologist reasons from the present fact of man's mortality (of course true as to the body only), that therefore he was always so, we reject the thought, and affirm, on divine authority, that mortality is a consequence of sin, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Physiology can speak of man as he *is*, but herein consists the value of the Word of God—and, O beloved reader! it is a treasure too precious to be lightly parted with—that it sheds divine light upon man's past, present, and future. Nor does the fact, if such it be, that death among animals and plants was the rule previous to the earth being prepared as a home for man, prove that therefore man was created mortal. How can it prove anything of the kind? One would naturally

think that the reverse would have been the conclusion arrived at, for man was created a *moral* being, not so the animals and plants. Many pious persons whose reverence for the Word of God is worthy of all praise, are either distressed at the alleged discovery by the scientist of life and death previous to the six thousand years of man's history on earth, or they are driven to deny *in toto* the evidence of geology on this point as contradicting, in their opinion, the Word of God, which is *supposed* to teach that death upon all living creatures was the result of Adam's disobedience to God. But the Scriptures do not teach that the lower and inferior creation became subject to death through the sin of its moral and responsible head; moreover, they speak only of death in *this* world, and intimate nothing as to life and death amongst animals and inferior orders of creation generally, during the unknown and uncountable pre-Adamic times. Rom. v. 12 refers to death in the human race and as the result of man's sin; while Rom. viii. 20 shows that the whole system over which man was set as head and moral link between it and God was subjected to "vanity" or "ruin;" it does not say *death*,

CREATION.

But now as introductory to the creative week, we have the Spirit of God brooding over the dark and watery waste, planning and arranging this earth as a sphere for the display of the ways of God and as a dwelling for man (ver. 2). Wondrous were the counsels respecting this earth. Here were to run the wheels of God's government as seen in vision by the exiled seer of Chebar (Ezek. i.). Here the course of creature responsibility was to be fully developed in the sorrowful history of the first man. Here, too, the Lord of Glory passed along in silent, enduring, resistless love. Here, also, grace rose in holy triumph over the misery of man. Here, too, has been witnessed the grandest of all facts, and the accomplishment of the grandest of all the divine and eternal counsels, **THE LAMB SLAIN**. Here, also, where sin and death reign, where creation groans, and hearts are broken, glory will yet brighten its dreariest plains for one thousand years.

We may here remark, that Scripture does not determine the antiquity of the earth (that is an open question solvable by science if she can), nor does it assert its *creation* in six days. The

age of Adam, and *not* of the earth, is noted in the earliest chronological portion of the Word of God (Gen. chap. v.), and all the subsequent dates likewise respect man ; neither is the earth said to have been created in six days, and really the distinction between "creating" and "making" (see Gen. ii. 4) is important in these studies : " In six days the LORD *made* heaven and earth " (Exod. xx. 11).

We come now to the creation of man and his place of lordship and dignity in the beautifully ordered scene. We have had light thrown upon a ruined, dark, and watery waste. What a scene of desolation the light revealed ! Next, we had the waters divided and a beautiful expanse formed, but as yet untenanted. Then followed the appearing of the dry land ; instantly, at the divine Word, it clad itself with beauty and vegetation. The sun then poured his golden beams upon the beauteous earth, and as he slowly sinks in the west, the pale and silvery light of the moon—the queen of the night—aided by the brilliant starry host, illuminate the earth and heaven ; then the waters are filled with life, and heaven with flying bird ; lastly, the land is occupied with cattle, beasts, and moving creatures. What

then? Is the work complete? As yet there was no intelligent, responsible creature morally competent to express the Creator in the vast and sinless scene. Where could you find amongst the various forms of organic life in heaven, earth or sea, a being who could lead creation's praise, enter into the moral perfections displayed by God in His beauteous workmanship, represent Him therein, and become the vehicle of the divine thoughts to the waiting creation. Hence God will work in the absoluteness of His sovereign will, and create a man in His moral likeness, fitted to be His representative in power on the earth. This was truly a work worthy of the Creator, and surely it was fitting that thus a moral link should be established between the Creator and His work.—*Hand Book to the Old Testament, by Walter Scott, p. 24.*

RELATIONSHIP THE GROUND OF RESPONSIBILITY.

Man by the speciality of his creation, being the subject of Godhead counsel—"Let us make man in our image, after our likeness"—and as having life breathed into his nostrils by the Lord God, was thereby placed in immediate relationship to the Creator. All responsibility is founded upon

an established relationship, hence where the relationship does not exist, neither does the responsibility which is based upon and is necessarily attached to the relationship. I have not the responsibility of a father resting upon me, if I am not one. Responsibility flows from a known relationship. The "brute beasts *made to be taken and destroyed*" (2 Peter ii. 12), manifest the divine intentions respecting the lower creation; the animals answer the end of their being and existence when ministering to the need and pleasure of man, but that does not involve responsibility on their part, as they have not been set in *moral* relationship either towards God or man.

DIFFICULTIES.

Before briefly tracing the course and history of human responsibility as written in the Word of God, it may be well to clear the subject of a few difficulties. It is affirmed that man's responsibility to God ceases because the sinner is unable to meet it: why press responsibility on the sinner when there is neither the will nor ability to discharge it? But responsibility, as already remarked, has its source in a positive and known relationship; it is thus independent

of the state or condition in which the debtor may subsequently find himself. Suppose a case:— A man goes into business on borrowed money, afterwards he becomes bankrupt and is unable to discharge a single penny of the five hundred pounds he is owing. Is he thereby discharged from the obligation to pay? Is his responsibility as a debtor gone? And suppose, further, that the man has not even the desire to pay, that he lacks the honest wish as well as the ability to meet his debts, *that* does not touch the question of his obligation to do so. So long as the position of creditor and debtor exists, the responsibility to discharge the unsettled claims remains and may justly form the ground of judgment on the part of the creditor. Besides man—the debtor—was not always without will and power to meet his responsibility. Innocence was the *state* and Paradise the *place* where human relationships, and consequently responsibility, were first established. Adam began his history *in* Paradise, we commence ours *outside* the garden. *He* was able and willing to meet his creature-obligations, and in fact did so for a brief season: *we* are neither able nor willing, and in fact never have met our responsibility to God—as sinners. And this leads us to the solemn consideration that the

fear of God and the dread of judgment to come, inherent in man, can alone be accounted for on the ground of *unanswered responsibility*. Does not conscience too—that inward tribunal before which actions are weighed and pronounced good or bad, and which became part of man's inheritance by the fall—bear its solemn witness to the fact that man is a sinner awaiting the sure judgment of God? And, in proportion as conscience is sensitive and supplied with light from the Scriptures, *its* voice becomes troublesome to the soul, and its witness to the unanswered claims of God most powerful. Nor is it what men *are* but what they have *done* which constitutes the ground of judgment. Alas! if the precious blood of Christ, the answer to the sinner's ruined responsibilities, be not the repose of the soul and the rest of the conscience; if life, eternal life in the Son of God be not the assured portion of our reader then eternal punishment is the dread alternative, "For because of *these things* cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience" (Eph. v. 6).

The world, whose history began with man outside Paradise, and who will end it with men cast into the lake of fire, might be likened to a forest every tree of which is utterly corrupt and

the fruit poisonous. Men are not responsible for being planted corrupt trees, they cannot help their state, "shapen in iniquity," conceived in sin (Ps. li. 5), but they are directly and immediately responsible to God for the fruit produced. If it is said, "Ah! but the corrupt tree can only bear fruit according to the character of the soil, the root, and the nature of the tree, and if every tree is bad, so must the fruit be." Well be it so, but as the fruit determines the quality and kind of tree, so *that* alone will come up for judgment, hence the books of works (Rev. xx. 12). Additional responsibility rests upon men because of the rejected Gospel of God's grace, which is a revelation in the cross of Christ that the first man is there judicially ended, that the axe has been laid to the *root* of the tree and, further, that God's Paradise with its tree of life, its varied and abundant fruit, and healing leaves—planted in divine soil—is opened to the gaze and possession of all who believe. God's blessed answer in grace to a ruined responsibility is the cross of Christ; His answer to a lost paradise is the Eden above, styled "the Paradise of God." Another and collateral point may here be briefly noticed. Why should the race be doomed to death; and sin, tears, sickness, cruelty, and op-

pression make up the sum of man's existence here, for the mere act of eating an apple, which in itself was not evil? Where is the righteousness of visiting such a simple act of disobedience with such severe and lasting penalties? But, we would ask, Is the offender the fit person, and is he in a fit state to adequately weigh the gravity of his own offence? And if the penalty of death and other consequences were attached to such a "simple act of disobedience," then the sin became all the more heinous in view of what the transgression of such a *simple* command would entail. Besides, while fully admitting that sin and death entered the world through the failure of the federal head of the race, yet we must connect each person's own responsibility and guilt with death, the sad fruit of sin, hence adds the Apostle, in Rom. v. 12—"So death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." God alone can measure what sin is. It is eternally right that the Creator should choose to command, and that, however, exalted the creature's position may be, that he should obey. There is but one absolute, sovereign will, and it was right that the waiting creation should in its head, learn the lessons of obedience and subjection, hence "the tree of knowledge of good

and evil" which God reserved for Himself was a necessary test of the man's obedience. The great question for the universe raised in the garden of Eden was a profoundly interesting one: who was Creator—who was the sovereign of the whole created scene and whose will was to govern all? It did not require a life's-long disobedience to constitute the man a sinner; one solitary act was enough to manifest what sin is, which is simply doing one's own will or acting independently of God. Why should one be surprised at the simplicity of the test imposed? What we might regard as a trifling command sufficiently served the purpose—which was really to distinguish the Creator from the creature, maintaining the right of the former to command, and the duty of the latter to obey.

CHAPTERS i. & ii. OF GENESIS.

It would have been better for the English reader had the Bible been sectioned off into paragraphs, instead of into chapters and verses; as the present arrangement, while not without its excellencies, is yet exceedingly defective and arbitrary in numerous instances. Of this we have an example in chap. ii. of Genesis, the first

three verses of which ought to have concluded chap. i. The subject then of the first 34 verses of the Bible is *creation*; God, the creatorial title, which occurs 34 times, is the one there used. It is an interesting thought, that "God," the historical name of the Deity, will be found in the sacred Scriptures of the Old Testament in a plural form about 2,700 times: it is the broad and comprehensive title used when man as such, or creation are in view. When the moral purpose of that creation is in question, and man's special position and relationship therein, as in chap. ii., then the compound title LORD GOD or LORD simply, is the fitting and expressive one. The revelation of the Deity to the pilgrim fathers of old was as "God *Almighty*" (Exod. vi. 3); to the covenant people of Israel as *Jehovah* (Exod. vi. 3); but as *Father* of Christ to Christians (John xx. 17)—thereby putting us in the Son's relationship with the Father.

Instead, therefore, of "double documents" forming the materials from which Moses wrote the book of Genesis, and in place of "two independent and contradictory accounts of creation," as furnished in chapters i. and ii., as alleged by modern religious infidelity, it is the very reverse of what Rationalism would assert.

Nor dare we own the work, however well intentioned, of so-called "Christian Apologists," who have so little faith in God and His word that they seek to gloss over or reconcile the numerous differences in the Scriptures. Two essential requisites are needed for the removal of Biblical difficulties: *first*, unbounded confidence in God and unquestioning faith in His Word; and *second*, an honest confession of ignorance, and willingness to wait for light. The theory of previous and more ancient documents from which Moses compiled the early chapters of Genesis, is a mere idle figment of the schoolmen's brain. Pray, whoever *read* those old curious documents? Can you tell us of one person who ever *saw* them? Nay, we go further, Can you tell us of a writer previous to Moses, or heard you ever of a scrap of writing anterior to the books of Genesis and Job? Why this determined effort to get rid of Scripture—to destroy its divine character? Ah! because in their souls men *know* it to be the Word of God, their consciences are troubled at the future judgment it reveals. Blessed Word of God! We welcome it, for it has spoken peace to our souls: it has searched us, but in the presence of grace which has blotted out the sin and revealed the work of

the Saviour, which has set Him and us in the same position in the presence of God—spotless and in glory. The testimony of Jesus to Moses as the author of the Pentateuch (Matt. xix. 3-9; Luke xxiv. 44, etc.); and to its divine character (John v. 45-47; Luke xxiv. 27), is worth more than cartloads of ponderous German and English religious scepticism.

The first two chapters of the Bible are not contradictory of each other, nor do they contain separate accounts of creation, nor are divine names used there in a loose and arbitrary manner; but all is divine, inspired, and perfect. The first chapter, including the first three verses of the second, treat of creation—of the work and rest of God, hence in the account the creatorial title or historical name—*God*, is alone employed: whereas in the second chapter, the man's special and unique place in the created scene, and his moral relationships, are fully unfolded, so we have the fitting title LORD GOD used about 20 times.*

It will be observed that, while in chapter i. the creation of the man and his headship over

* For an exposition of the use and application of the *Divine Names and Titles*, see *Divine Unfoldings* as advertised on cover.

all wind up the account, the additional features, such as the Lord God breathing life into man's nostrils,* the special creation of the woman, the intelligent naming of the animals, and the account of the garden of Eden as the place of testing, mark the special teaching of the second chapter—which is to found the moral relationships of the responsible man with God, with creation, and with the woman.

THE GARDEN OF EDEN.

The garden of Eden, which for situation was unequalled, it being the source of the four rivers whose waters fertilized the whole earth—and for beauty unexcelled by all then or since, because displaying the special husbandry of the Lord Himself (ii. 8), was the chosen scene in which the strength of the creature would be tried. There the innocent man was set as centre of the vast terrestrial system which was placed govern-

* Life from God alone communicated to man in this way forms the source of his moral responsibility and accountability to God—a simple matter when revealed, but weighty in eternal consequences to every member of the human race. The life of the Second Man communicated in resurrection to the soul, forms the basis and ground of all Christian responsibility (John xx. 22).

mentally under him as lord, and as knowing neither good nor evil, for *that* was information gained on the strength of Satan's word and acquired through conscience at the fall. Alas! man now while distinguishing between good and evil, yet lacks the power to do the good and can only do the evil.

In the magnificent scene of life, beauty, and fruitfulness the innocent and happy pair were established in responsibility. As yet no serpent's trail had defiled the walks of paradise, no withered leaf, no blight, no curse, no tear was there. "God is *good*"* was warbled forth in joyous notes from every bird of song; and flower and fruit around, with cloudless sky above echoed, "God is *good*." The man, moreover, was made morally competent to hold intercourse with and enjoy communion with God—surely a blessing beyond all else, and one peculiar to him.

THE TWO TREES.

Having had the man, the garden, and Eden-circumstances, look now at the two first named

* The testimony of Paradise was—God is *good*. The witness borne by the Cross was—God is *love*. The utterance of the great White Throne is—God is *righteous*.

of all trees and their special import : the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. What is set forth by those trees ? A crowd of thoughts and questions rise before us, as we look upon the garden, the man, and the trees, and contemplate the universal scope, the far-reaching results, and everlasting consequences to all, should the first man fail. O the havoc that will be wrought, the moral ruin that will ensue, if the crown fall from the brow of creation's head and lord, for its blessing hung upon the obedience of the man—its moral centre and head !

The responsible man was first tested in Eden, and afterwards when banished the garden, subjected to forty centuries of trial and testing, so as to manifest that there could be no union of these truths—life and responsibility—in or by man, that life could not grow on the tree of responsibility, that all was wreck, ruin and misery, that the counsels of God—the only ground of blessing to a ruined sinner, are lodged in Christ, the Second Man. Did man eat of the life-tree, or of the responsibility-tree ? How is the now ruined man to be dealt with, and how and to whom is the sovereign gift of life dispensed ? Can the gift of eternal life and Adamic responsibility co-exist ? Can they grow on the

same tree? If men have utterly failed to grasp and unite these truths, and which even under the training and culture of God for 4,000 years could not be accomplished, but is yet the effort in all ages and in all countries, has God effected it, and if so, in whom and for whom?

SATAN AND MAN.

God is the fountain of all good: Satan the source and author of all moral evil. Who and what was Satan before his expulsion from "the holy mountain of God?" Known in his first estate as "the anointed cherub," he reflected the creation-glories of God, while also the most beautiful, the most wise, the most exalted of created beings (Ezek. xxviii. 11-19). But not content with a creature's place, which is ever one of subjection and obedience, he aspired yet higher. Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." May the Lord imprint the lesson upon all who handle the vessels of the sanctuary! (1 Tim. iii. 6.) What is Satan's character now? A murderer and a liar (John viii. 44), and he will yet become the most abject, degraded, and miserable of all in the lake of fire; no kingly

place will there be given him, as poets fondly dream.

What a solemn illustration is thus afforded of the inability of the creature to stand before God unless girded with Divine strength, and encircled by the arms of omnipotent power. The highest of all angelic intelligences have been tested 'midst creation glories and dignities. Man in innocence and himself the centre of a vast system displaying the goodness and wisdom of the Creator, has been tried in Eden. Highly favoured Israel has been tested in the land of Immanuel—aye, and in the presence of infinite love; but, alas! every tree has withered, and God has engraven the result over the boundless circle of all creation, and written in burning characters the one melancholy history—*all, all is failure.*

Satan, then, as the serpent—subtle and cunning—entered the garden in his twofold character as liar and murderer. See how he effected the ruin of the responsible man and thus dragged down the creation to suffering and bondage (Rom. viii. 20, 21). Insidiously he approached the weaker of the two—the one whom Adam was set to guard, to love and protect—bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. “And he said unto the

woman, Yea *hath* God* said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" This first of all questions was truly a satanic one. It was a doubt thrown upon the word of God, a fiery dart which should have been instantly quenched by "Jehovah hath spoken;" but the question was entertained, the doubt allowed, and thus the victory was nigh won. Pushing his advantage, the serpent not craftily now, but boldly gave the lie direct to the living God. "Ye shall *not* surely die." Satan proved himself a traducer of God, a liar, and the murderer of the innocent man in the garden, and after the lapse of 4,000 years, he again lied in the very presence of infinite love, and sought to destroy the Holy One of God; for the man, and the woman's seed, are ever the objects of satanic hate (John viii.) The last and successful attack upon the woman in the garden was to traduce the character of God as sovereign in goodness. *He* would give what *God* had withheld. *God* had but given them a subordinate place; *he* would make "as gods." *He* would give them opened eyes and increased intelligence—knowing good and evil; this *God* had arbi-

* Satan either conceals or denies the true relationship of man to God; hence, while *Jehovah*-God instructed the man, and addressed him as such, Satan always used the mere creatorial title, *God*.

trarily withheld, because not perfectly good. The bait was eagerly swallowed: "She took of the fruit thereof and did eat; and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat." Satan worked upon her *weakness*, and she wrought upon her husband's *affections*. She should have leant upon her husband, and he upon God.

LIFE IRRECOVERABLE BY MAN.

We have already remarked that the man's moral relations were with God, with the creation, and with the woman. All, however, was now completely ruined, although the full development of, and after history of that ruin had yet to be recorded in the pages of inspiration, and as witnessed to in the every-day life of the first man—of ourselves. Man did not eat of the tree of life during the brief age of innocence, so far as we know, and certainly he did not do so after his fall, for *that* would have rendered him immortal in misery as a living man on the earth. God, therefore, not only guarded the tree of life, but the very approach to it was hedged about by "cherubim and a flaming sword which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life." Why the expulsion of man from Eden? Why

the jealous guard over life? What is signified by the cherubim? And what is meant by the sword of flame? Weighty and important questions for man! It had yet to be tried whether life could be gained as the result of human responsibility. Life in innocence had been forfeited in paradise; could it be recovered by the cultivation of man outside, under a process of education and training carried on by God Himself? This was the issue raised, the end proposed in the disciplinary dealings of God, for the first 4,000 years of man's history. But He who knows the end from the beginning in thus placing the ministers of His throne (cherubim) around the approach to the untouched tree of life, and in effectually interposing death (the flaming sword) between man and the possession of life, thus early intimated that life was beyond the reach of man; that the breach was irreparable on the human side, and that all human efforts to get to God—to obtain life and paradise could only result in death. Every *doer* for life must find the end thereof to be *death*, so that life, the gift of God, can only be bestowed sovereignly and in grace on the sinner.

RESPONSIBILITY IN CONNECTION WITH MAN'S
WILL AND POWER.

Before briefly developing the chief features of man's history outside paradise, we would press the important consideration that his responsibility is in no wise enfeebled through his non-inability to discharge it. He could have met his obligations God-ward, creation-ward, and woman-ward, in Eden, and in fact did so, though for a very brief season. It is often said, "Why was man not constituted invulnerable to any attack on the part of Satan? Why was he not insured against falling? Why not hedged round about by omnipotent power?" Now, suppose I am a watch-maker, and I choose to make a watch. Have I not the right and power to do so? But what if the watch could reply, and say, "Why was I not made to go on tick! tick! tick! perpetually?" Has not the potter right over the senseless, lifeless clay, to make vessels as it pleaseth him? And has not God right and choice to make a man out of the dust of the ground—of inanimate material, and then endow the man with life direct from Himself, thus placing him in immediate responsibility to His Creator and others, and further setting him

where and *how* He pleased, so as to manifest that responsibility in due course and result to the full? And who is the creature that dare arraign the sovereign rights of God? Yea, who art thou, O man, that repliest against God? At the beginning man was rendered capable of rendering that obedience to God which he was responsible to do; so were the now fallen angels. But had man been constituted impeccable, then there could have been no fair trial of responsibility, the strength of the creature would not have been tested, and the counsels of love to be accomplished through death in the Second Man, and after the proved ruin of the first, would not have been effected. O richer far is the harvest of glory reaped for the living God, yea, and of deeper and fuller blessing to us, through the ruin of man and consequent redemption in Christ, than if the creation had for ever remained sinless!

God did not forbid man an evil thing in itself; it was only evil to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, because of the Divine prohibition. Had there been no test of obedience, then the waiting creation must have anxiously and vainly enquired: Who is God? Who is the Creator? or else, regarded man as

the absolute sovereign of all ; hence the importance of the test imposed in the garden. The man had not to reason, but simply to obey the divine command, and obedience is the first duty of the creature, and an obligation altogether independent of circumstances—whether of innocence, sin, or holiness. If a sinful man, as such, cannot obey the Will and Word of God, he is none the less responsible to do so. If the responsibility ceased with his lack of power, then there would be no just ground for judgment, either now, or at the “great white throne.” And here it may be well to remark, that conscience, which is the moral capacity acquired when man gave himself up to Satan, and which distinguishes between good and evil, possesses no authority in itself. The revealed Word and Will of God is the source of all authority, and is the guide, light, and strength of conscience. This, however, is somewhat modified in the case of the heathen, and where no positive revelation exists; *there* conscience pronounces upon good and evil, and is thus constituted an authority and ground of judgment, but only, be it carefully observed, where the law and the Scriptures are entirely unknown (Rom ii. 12-16).

The Apostle of love and life, in giving a moral

definition of the world, sums it all up in two characteristic words, *lust* and *pride* (1 John ii. 16) —the desire to *get* what God has withheld, and the desire to *be* what God has not made you. Man set up to have a will of his own, and to assert it, too, and this forms the very essence of sin; is its very root. And what is human history, but the story of man's acting in self-sufficiency and independence of God? Thank God! the reverse side shows *Him* patient in goodness and long-suffering in mercy. All the moral features of man in the flesh were displayed before the expulsion of the guilty pair from the garden. Self-will, lust, and pride had their birth before the world properly began, before the banishment from paradise. Cain, the *first* born of the human family, was conceived and begotten in sin outside paradise. It was he and not Adam who began the world as it is. Adam sinned directly against *God*; Cain added to that by positive sin against his *brother*, denying too that class and kind of responsibility, saying, "Am I my brother's keeper?" What a deplorable picture of man! The father hiding himself away from God, and the son killing his brother. The world commenced its truly awful history, by rejecting God as good, by accepting Satan as its

god, by hatred of the pious Abel—the man of faith, and by violence and murder.

THE LAWLESS PERIOD.

Now, for sixteen centuries and a half—from the Fall to the Flood—which we would style the age of conscience, or *lawlessness*, if you choose, succeeding generations gathered around the tree of responsibility, and eagerly ate of its fruit. The pre-Noachic world found it to be unto *death*; yet God, at the very commencement of the world's history, rejected the sacrifice of Cain. Why? Because he was a sinner? No; for a sinful world was loved by God (John iii. 16). Cain wrought and toiled, and, as the result, gathered an offering beautiful in his own eyes, but the fruit thereof was plucked from the tree of responsibility, and Cain was rejected — a plain and distinct testimony that *his* family and *his* world, on *his* ground, could find no acceptance with God.

Abel, on the contrary, offered to God the life of another, with the fat thereof, in token that his life, with its attached responsibility, was forfeited, and that life and acceptance with God were alone founded on the ONE who would put

away sin by the sacrifice of Himself; in other words, that life and responsibility alone meet in Christ for the believer. For 1,656 years, human will was rampant, unchecked by law, civil government, or other outward curb; man was left to display himself. The tree bloomed, blossomed, and bore fruit—alas! what was produced was but *corruption* and *violence* (Gen. vi.)—the former was the evil God-ward; the latter was man-ward. The same evils are reproduced at the close—corruption is witnessed in the mystical Babylon, and violence in the Beast (Rev. xvii.) “Hew the tree down” was the solemn sentence, but in doing so, once again God ordained life and safety, through the Ark, the remedy of His own providing.

What an intensely interesting record is furnished us, of this the first period of human history. The brief season of innocence is not history proper, *that* dates from the Fall. Can anything be produced like those five early chapters of Genesis—from iii.-vii.—so graphic, so simple, so condensed? Why, it is the oldest narrative, the only narrative, and *the* divine account, moreover, of the old world's history—a world left to itself, to recover its balance if it could; a world without promises, without covenants, without civil

government, without law ; no miracles wrought, no special interference of God, but the prophetic testimonies of Enoch and Noah, the long-suffering of God, and the working of the Spirit of Christ, for at least 120 years. Surely the moral history of these times furnishes abundant material for answers to the three Divine questions : WHAT HAST THOU DONE ?—Sinned against God and man. WHERE ART THOU ?—Away from God, and building up a world of pride and iniquity. WHAT ART THOU ?—Lost, and rapidly and surely nearing judgment.

This period, then, commenced with the sacrifice of Abel, and closed with the typical teaching of the ark, while the testimony and walk of Enoch came in between. Most blessed God ! Saviour God, the provisions of Thy grace are the witnesses to Thy love—Thy love to Thy ruined creatures !

THE GOVERNMENTAL PERIOD : OR, HISTORY OF AND
CHARACTER OF ITS RESPONSIBILITY.

We will now take a rapid survey of the period lying between the flood and the call of Abram. By what characteristic title will we speak of it ? Suppose we term it the *Governmental Age* or

Period. Now we enter upon the dispensational dealings of God, which date as an epoch from the establishment of the world, under the governmental authority of Noah—the first man ever invested with magisterial power.*

“The world that was being overflowed with water perished ;” plain statement this as to the universality of the flood (see also Gen. vii. 19). The preserved remnant of eight souls of which Noah was head and representative, was the new stock to re-people the earth. None of the old responsibilities under which man was placed were, or could be, abrogated ; but besides, additional and weighty responsibility was added, because of the new relationships in which men were set. The nature of the relationship determines the character of the responsibility, but the latter exists so long as the former continues. And here it may be well to inquire : Where was the evil lodged which, after the lapse of sixteen centuries and a half, and after the desolating waters of the flood upon the old creation still existed ? Was it in the circumstances in which

* The authority conferred upon Adam (Gen. i. 26), upon Noah (Gen. ix. 1-3), upon Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. iv. 22), upon Christ (Psalm viii.), although differing in character and extent, is yet in each instance immediately derived from God, for all power is of God (Rom. xiii. 1).

men were placed, or in the mere externals and surroundings of life? Nay, the besom of destruction had swept creation clean and clear of all, save the sheltered few in the ark. The tree itself was bad—irrecoverably so. The roots of evil are tangled and twisted round the very fibres of man's moral being. The source of man's badness and irremediable condition is in his depraved will, in his unsubject mind, which neither can nor will submit to God (Rom. viii. 7, 8).

It is said: "Men cannot believe the Gospel—they lack the power." The proposition would be more fully and truthfully stated thus: "Men are responsible to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, but they *will* not;" you say, "He is bound in fetters of sin, and so he cannot come to the Saviour." Why then does your powerless captive not invoke the aid of Him who came to "proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound?" Shall we tell you? It is because he hugs his chains and does not choose nor will to be delivered. The supper of grace—last meal before the midnight of judgment—was refused by *all* the invited guests. Why? Not because they *could* not come, but because they *would* not (Luke xiv.) The waters of life are free to whosoever *will*.

Most touchingly did the Lord say to the Jews of old, "Ye *will not* come to Me that ye might have life." Instead, therefore, of cavilling at the sovereign elective purposes of God in the calling of some who, like the mass that perish, had neither claim upon grace nor the will to be saved, let us each see to it, that life and salvation, full and eternal, are ours in immediate and conscious possession.

Previous to Noah, *individual* relationship and responsibility as in Abel, Enoch, and others, was the principle which God recognised, and on which He acted; but in Noah *household* relationship, with its corresponding responsibility attached to the paternal head, was first disclosed: "Come thou and all thy house into the ark, for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation" (Gen. vii. 1). The importance of this principle in the introduction of the household into an external place of blessing and privilege, on the individual faith and responsibility of its head, cannot be too highly estimated and valued. It was a principle established by God for the blessing and good government of families, and one which obtained when mankind at large was the subject of divine dealing, as also under Judaism, and especially so under

Christianity (Acts xvi., &c). The Bible is full of it. Wherever this household* relationship to God is practically owned blessing is the sure result. Where are the mass of professing Christians as to this truth? It has been deliberately abandoned save by a few. The sanctification of our children from earliest years, as Jeremiah, John the Baptist, and might we add Samuel and Timothy, should be the desired blessing—alas! it is now a rare one. Would that the responsibility of the Christian head and parent were more truly felt and lived out before the Lord (Prov. xxii. 6; Eph. vi. 4). The house of God is the sphere, introduction into which is by baptism (Acts ii.), where training of the child and its Christian character are developed.

But there is a third character of responsibility flowing from an entirely new principle in which God set mankind. *Civil government*, or magisterial authority, was instituted to curb the natural violence of man, and to maintain the authority of God on earth, and which yet (Gen.

* We may remark that the various "households," referred to in "The Acts," are *Gentile* households. The family relationship to God on the personal faith of both, or even one, of the parents, was an admitted principle under Judaism, but to Gentiles the principle had to be proved.

ix. 1-6.) remains in full force. It is not a Jewish truth, but one of universal application. The Christian, however, is not called to the exercise of magisterial or other governmental authority, but is taught cheerful subjection to, and prayer for the governing powers, however tyrannical, or whatever their character may be (Rom. xiii. 1-7; Titus iii. 1; 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2). We enjoy a rich boon in the quiet and peaceable life, under the sway of the beloved Queen—the sovereign of these realms—and surely the Christian, who above all should own the Lord's authority in His Word and government of the earth, ought not to sanction the trampling down of the safeguards and bulwarks of society. Capital punishment as part of God's civil government for man on earth has not been repealed by Him who alone has the right to do so. The judicial oath, which even the blessed Lord respected (Matt. xxvi. 63, 64), and other institutions of divine ordering, are being rapidly disowned as obsolete institutions. The barriers are breaking down and soon the storm of anarchy and infidelity will burst upon us; the tide is gathering and will quickly roll in upon an apostate Christendom. What do men or Governments care for the authority of God? Christians

above all others should respect the laws of the country under which they live—obedience to these powers and laws is subjection to God and His Word (Rom. xiii.; 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14). Sorrowfully we have witnessed the marriage laws of this country trampled upon by Christians, and other human appointments practically set at nought. Is this to honour the Word of God? There is abundant evidence that the word to Titus is as needful now as then: "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work" (Titus iii).

This was a period too, in which Satan displayed unusual activity. In order to frustrate the plan of God which was to distribute the race throughout the earth by families, Satan brought in the principle of concentration, and effected on the plains of Dura the first general confederacy amongst men. A human centre of unity in the "tower" and of concentration on a universal scale in the "city," commenced in Babylonia; but God frowned on the impious attempt, and confounded the *one* language then spoken,* and

* God's claims upon man—the law—was published in the Hebrew language, but His grace to man at large, and the glories of the Lamb, are proclaimed in many tongues (Acts

separated into distinct nationalities the *one* family of man. The Christian alone can account for the present and irregular distribution of mankind into nations and peoples, the result of the judgment of God upon the Babel attempt.

What a flood of light is thrown upon these questions in the first nine verses of the eleventh chapter of the book of Genesis. It may here be observed that chapter x. shows the general result of the dispersion of the race; it affords a satisfactory answer to the notion which has gained credence with many to their exceeding loss, that we Gentiles are descendants of the scattered and lost ten tribes. Our progenitor is *Japheth*, eldest son of Noah, whose descendants were the Scythian races, the Greeks, Romans, Britons, and generally those who were to inhabit the *Isles* (verses 1-5); *Ham*, the youngest, was prophetically appointed as the father of the various African races and nations, also the Canaanites, Philistines, and generally the more subject races (verses 6-20). *Shem*, the second of the three brothers, has the Persians, certain Arabic nations, and *all* Israel—Judah as well as Ephraim, and the Messiah according to the

ii. and Rev. vii). Probably there will be a return to one universal tongue in the millennium (Zeph. iii. 9).

flesh, as his descendants (verses 21-31). The chapter also is invaluable to the historian and student of the prophetic Word. The interesting fact that *all* the nations whose names are here recorded, although difficult to identify in some instances, are yet to re-appear representatively or in their descendants, in the future Jewish crisis, has been much forgotten ; a little attention given to the subject would have saved historians from the rash assertion that many nations are totally extinct, and have for ever passed off the scene of responsibility. There are national or collective responsibilities, as well as individual ones, and *both* will be enquired of by Christ in a day not far distant.

Satan suffered a total defeat in his effort to unite the race against God. The distribution of mankind into nations and tongues, having distinct and independent interests is an effectual check upon any general gathering of men as such, until allowed in the last development of evil at the close of the future era of glory (Rev. xx. 7-9); *then* the promise to the woman's seed, the Second Man in the bruising of Satan's head will be fully accomplished (Gen. iii. 15). It will be remembered that God linked Himself to the fallen creation, establishing a covenant of

goodness with it—the rainbow in the cloud being the token (Genesis ix. 9-17). Now Satan determined, if possible, to break up the relations of the Creator with “all flesh,” to snap the link and separate man governmentally from God; hence after the flood-judgment, and after the dispersion of the race at Babel, Satan introduced into the world the most fearful and degrading of all evils—Idolatry. He first lowered the character of and conception of God in the mind of man to what was merely human, then lower still “to birds,” and yet again, “to four-footed beasts;” is there a step yet lower in the scale of moral degradation? Yes, the heathen and philosophers of the ancient world “changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to . . . *creeping things*” (Rom. i. 23). Ah! the point is reached at length. The thought of God is shut out completely from the conscience and mind of man, and Satan himself is deified and worshipped as the serpent, the most abject of “*creeping things*.” Serpent worship was at one time universal over the whole earth. Its traces are everywhere found; in the British Isles, France, China, Africa, Russia, India, all over Asia. Frequently the serpent was associated with the sun in joint worship.

Sometimes serpent-idolatry gave place to sun-worship. Rapidly idolatry spread, so that even the highly favoured Shemitic race was surely sinking into the awful abyss (Jos. xxiv. 2). Satan gained his point. Demon-worship became universal, and the external governmental link with God on man's side was lost. All again is universal ruin and wreck. Adam deliberately chose Satan instead of God in the garden, and now the world has banished God from its thoughts and conscience, and worships as divine the declared enemy of God and man. This period, which, like the foregoing, commenced with sacrifice, closed up in an idolatrous and rejected world, hence Abram is called out to head a public witness against it—an event fraught with the gravest consequences to both Jew and Gentile—to the world at large.

Did men learn during this first of the dispensational periods to unite the two principles of life and responsibility? Was life and acceptance with God reached as a result? O what a terrible answer to the general responsibility of man, is furnished by God in the close of the age of *conscience*, by the judgment-flood, and in the *governmental* period, which at its end was divinely rejected, and only spared from immediate

judgment on the ground of Noah's sacrifice. The old world left to itself perished, and the new world dealt with by God went right off into idolatry. The tree of responsibility spread its roots more firmly, covering with its ample shade individuals, families, nations, and the world at large, who all partook of its fruit; all produced was *moral death*.

THE AGE OF PROMISE ; OR, THE HISTORY AND CHARACTER OF ITS RESPONSIBILITY.

How will we designate the succeeding period which dates from the Call of Abram, and on to the promulgation of the law? Will we style it the age of *promise* to man (Gal. iii. 16), and of *public testimony for God*? (Rom. xi.)

Previous to the deluge, the unity of the race had not to be proved; it was a palpable fact; there were neither tongues nor nations. Satan kept in the background, but filled the earth with corruption, and led on the ruined world to assert a proud, independent will of its own. God, as the moral governor, and in righteousness, wrapped up the whole scene in one huge winding sheet—a remnant alone preserved. Then on the ground of Noah's sacrifice, which surely pointed to Calvary's

victim, founding in death a new and righteous ground of relationship with God, the blessings of the new world were secured, while man's sin was as fully recognized (Gen. viii. 21). This was followed by the institution of civil government for the repression of evil, and God establishing a covenant with the earth—which was to be a perpetual one ; then He spans the heavens with the rainbow—the sign that the earth will continue under blessing till destroyed by fire. Then in the providence of God the world is parcelled out into nations, and the whole world system of to-day established. What next follows? Satan having reduced man to the lowest of all misery and wretchedness, now comes boldly before the world and sets himself up as its God.

O what a picture of hopeless ruin ! Man has drifted away from God to the public acknowledgment of Satan and demons—the prince and leaders of the opposition to divine authority, and who, while on their way to their appointed doom (Matt. xxv. 41), ceaselessly labour to thwart the counsels of love, and to drag the race down to their eternal ruin. Alas ! these hearts of ours are capable of any piece of folly or wickedness. Satan, the liar and murderer, has been deliberately chosen by the world instead of

the God of truth and life. Barabbas,* the murderer, was the accepted man of the people, while the Lord of glory was the nation's rejected.

Now we are brought to a standstill. Idolatry is universal; the world has sold itself to Satan. Certainly if the world-system which God had in providence established will not have Him, He cannot have it. On the other hand, to go on with evil would be to deny Himself as *light* (1 John i. 5). Will He therefore execute summary judgment and so vindicate the majesty of His name and character? Triumphantly we reply, that He will *not*, so long as the heavens are arched by the rainbow. Could the Israelite confiding in the Word of Jehovah, be stricken on the terrible night of Egypt's doom with such a Word searching the depths of his soul: "When I (Jehovah) see the blood I will pass over you" (Exod. xii. 13)? No more can the fallen and degraded creation be buried in one common destruction, while God looks upon the "bow" and remembers "the everlasting covenant" with all flesh (Gen. viii. 16). But God did judge the idolatrous world. Ah! what a God is ours! How rich are His resources! How endlessly

* Barabbas means, *Son of the Father*; the Jews preferred him to Jesus, the true *Son of the Father*.

diversified are His ways of grace ! He morally judged the whole scene of iniquity by the introduction of a *new* and hitherto unknown principle in His dealings with men. By glory and the authority of His Word* He called one of the demon worshippers out to Himself, *out* from the entire system which He had just set up in His providence. God did not destroy the ordered system, nor break it up, but called Abram to leave it altogether ; not to improve it, but to disown it. How peremptory ! How precise in terms was the call ! “Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will show thee” (Gen. xii. 1).

Abram then, was called out from the surrounding darkness, and constituted the depository of promise. The thoughts of God are communicated to the man of faith. Heaven displaces Canaan ; and grace is announced rich, full, free, sovereign in character, and eternal in results, instead of governmental goodness to man. Both grace and government, however, are running on, but in their application, the world enjoys the governmental blessing of God under the Noachic covenant, which is for *time* only ; while the uncondi-

* Compare Acts vii. ; Gen. xii. 1 with 2 Peter i. 3.

tional blessing under Abraham is enjoyed by the household of faith—a blessing *eternal*. The principles of grace and of civil government do not unite and centre in the Christian or in the Church. Government was committed to the *Gentiles*, while grace is as truly characteristic of the *Church*.

But Abram was not only called *to* blessing, but to *be* a blessing (Gen. xii. 2), and for this end he was constituted the head or stock of a new race, and the root of the olive tree* of testimony on the earth (Rom. xi). Thus we have three headships revealed: Adam, of the race fallen; Abram, the father of all who believe; Christ as risen, of the new creation race. We have also a double headship in Christ; namely, creation and the body (Col. i. 15, 18); as also a double aspect of the fatherhood of Abram—the Jewish nation; hence he is the *first* in Scripture termed a Hebrew (Gen. xiv. 13), and also head of the family of faith;

* The *olive*, consequent upon the judicial setting aside of Israel in meantime, represents Christendom as the responsible witness for God on earth: the *vine* was Israel ecclesiastically—Jehovah's fruit-bearing system in responsibility; the *fig* was Israel nationally. *Testimony*, *Fruitfulness*, and *Profession* are respectively represented by those three trees.

thus he is the *first* one of whom faith is spoken of (Genesis xv. 6).

It is affirmed that promises were made to Adam when fallen ; the women's seed, the bruiser and conqueror of the serpent, being alleged as the first of all the promises. But is this theology or Scripture ? Let us see. The Lord God set up the *bema* or judgment seat in the scene of ruin, the garden, and after tracing the evil to its source—the serpent, gave judgment accordingly (Gen. iii. 14-19). The serpent was cursed and doomed to perpetual degradation (verse 14) ; millennial glory will bring it no relief (Isa. lxxv. 25) ; and then comes a promise to the *Second* Man, or woman's seed of final triumph over the enemy and his power (verse 15). But to whom were the words addressed, to the man or to the serpent ? To the latter, undoubtedly. That the listening Adam had faith in the glorious revelations thus given, however dimly announced, is evident from the fact that while *death* had now enveloped the creation in its folds, Adam gazed beyond, even into that deathless region where God and the Lamb are the light thereof ; he named his wife "Eve"—mother of all *living*. Then the woman comes up for judgment (verse 16), and the governmental consequences to her

as witnessed in daily life are too apparent to require comment ; under Christianity the sorrows of childbirth are conditionally (“*if* they continue”) alleviated (1 Tim. ii. 14, 15) ; the place of subjection is also assigned to the woman ; this under grace is firmly maintained (1 Cor. xi. 3-10). Lastly, the ground is cursed for man's sake, and he sent to labour in it by the sweat of his brow, and thus procure a subsistence (verses 17-19) ; under Noah the ground was made more productive, and could be wrought with less toil, while under grace the resources of creation are unrestrictedly placed at man's disposal (1 Tim. iv. 4. 5). There is nothing in all this of eternal consequences in weal or woe to the human race. Governmental judgment and for time, is the point of chapter iii. of Genesis. The eternal issues of good and evil were afterwards unfolded in the Scriptures.

The first person to whom promises were made, and in whom they were deposited, was Abram (Gal. iii. 16). “There is no promise to Abram *and* his seed as to our blessing, but there was to be a seed like the stars for multitude, but that is not ‘one.’ What you get in Genesis chapter xxii. is, ‘Because thou hast done this thing,’ when Isaac was offered up, ‘and hast

not withheld thy son, thine only son, in blessing, I will bless thee, and in multiplying, I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore, and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies, and *in thy seed* (this now is the *one* seed—Christ) shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice.’ The promise was given to Abram and confirmed to Christ, the seed : it was never given to Abram and the seed, but confirmed to the seed. The offering up of Isaac was the occasion, for then the promise was given in resurrection, and it is confirmed to the seed when we come to the Lord. In Galatians iii. change the order of the words, ‘Now to Abraham were the promises made, and to his seed,’ which is Christ.”—*Bible Treasury, vol. ix., page 259.*

One other point. The promises become more full and rich until they culminate in chapter xxii. figuratively Christ in resurrection—the source of all blessing, and heir of all things—this as typified in Isaac; *made* to Abram (chapter xii.), *confirmed* to Christ (chapter xxii.) And what yields such sustainment to the heart, and lifts one far above the evil around, is the fact that the blessing is absolutely unconditional. God is

the promiser ; Christ the seal and confirmation of all, and we believers the subjects of blessing. About 430 years *after* the promises were given, and long before their accomplishment, the law came in by the bye—a provisional covenant entirely. The blessings under the Abrahamic covenant depend upon the faithfulness of God ; those of the Mosaic covenant rest upon the fidelity of the people. The former will be made good, because God is the promiser ; the latter never were, because man's obedience was in question. The former was the fruit of sovereign and Divine goodness ; the latter, for the moral testing and trial of the people.

Now, in Abram the Lord sets the tree of life before the faithful, and that *publicly* before all. God's grace is displayed. Previously, the tree of life had been hidden away in the paradise of God, and the Abels, and Enochs, and Noahs had been secretly called to eat of its life-giving and life-sustaining fruit. The one family of mankind gathered around the tree of responsibility, ate of corruption and violence, and perished in the flood ; then afterwards the nations flocked around the *same* tree, and idolatry of the most degrading kind, accompanied with civilization of the highest character, was the

result. The world sold itself to Satan; *that* was their responsibility. But now having demonstrated to mankind, that life could not be gained as a human result—that death and misery were the fruit of all man's labour; God *publicly* calls believers—whether Jews or Gentiles—to repose under the ample shade of life's tree, and eat of its living fruit. We have had earth's *nations* dying around the tree of responsibility; but, O what a prospect! there through the vista of ages, I see the living gathered around the tree of life (Gen. xii. 3). Wait yet a little moment, dear child of God and heir of eternal glory, and thou wilt personally enjoy a scene where all is life and there is *no responsibility-tree* (Rev. xxi.)

THE PERIOD OF LAW, OR THE HISTORY OF AND CHARACTER OF ITS RESPONSIBILITY.

We cannot surely have the least difficulty in assigning a character to the next period, which is from Moses to Christ. We term it the reign of *law*.

In Abram we have *life*, in Moses we have *responsibility*, but in Christ the union of both, hence the next stage of our journey will bring

us to the long-delayed meeting of life and responsibility centring in Christ. In Abram we have *life*, in Moses *responsibility*, while in Christ both unite. Here, then, during the Jewish period of fifteen centuries we have a formal proof submitted by God Himself, that the responsibility-tree can only yield, to a sinner, the fruit of condemnation and death. Theology has wrought sad havoc here. Learned D.D.'s, men otherwise able and competent, have made mistakes such as would cover a school-boy with confusion. Systematic theology is not only destructive to the vitality of Divine truth, but has done an incalculable amount of mischief in pressing the mind into a narrow ecclesiastical groove, and in blinding the spiritual judgment to the perception of some of the clearest statements of holy Scripture. Thus it is said that the law was given to mankind—to the race. Yet the time, place, and people to whom the law was addressed, marks its speciality; a redeemed people out of Egypt (Exod. xx. 2), and *not* the Gentiles, before or after Moses (Rom. ii. 12-14; v. 13, 20) had the law given them as their peculiar heritage. It is further affirmed that Christians are under the law as a rule of life and duty—the measure of Christian respon-

sibility, and this in face of plain and distinct Scripture to the contrary, "Ye are not under the law, but under grace;" "Ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ;" "Now we are delivered from the law." Death to the law there must be if acceptable fruit is to be borne unto God (Rom. vii. 4). Romans iv. does not more effectually dispose of the law as ground of *justification*, than does chapter vii. set it aside as the measure of *walk*. If married to the law and to Christ, you have committed spiritual adultery. How, then, can we be undividedly for Christ? Is it by setting aside the law, nay, but by dying to its claims and authority. The law is not dead, but "ye are dead" (Rom. vii.)

Then, we are treated to any number of theological distinctions. We are told, for instance, that the *moral* law is obligatory on the Christian, while the *ceremonial* law was ended in the death of Christ; that the believer is not under it for justification, but for the guidance of His life. Where does the Word of God warrant such metaphysical subtleties? "As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." It is invariably spoken of as a concrete thing, as a whole. According to Scripture, and according to the signification of law, it must

have a certain result to all under it, no matter who the persons may be, and that effect is declared to be *death* and *condemnation*; the only exception was the Lord Jesus, because in Him there was nothing to condemn, nothing in Him but what delighted in the law. "In Christ" risen from the dead, as having ended in His death Adamic life and responsibility for the believer, is the *ground* of all Christian duty, and the life of Christ on earth, the *measure* of walk and life (1 John ii. 6). We are further and very gravely informed too, that Christ's law fulfilling was substitutionary—was for us, and that it constitutes *our* righteousness before God, and this is distinguished as *active* obedience, from His death, which is termed His *passive* obedience; positive gain is said to be ours, as the result of the former, while negative results are the effect of the latter. These statements are destructive of true Christianity and of the grace of God. Where is the Gospel if these statements are true? Where the peace and rest of our souls? Is it anywhere said, that Christ fulfilled the law for any, even for the Jew? No, He was made the law's curse for the Jew: in His life? Nay, but on the tree (Gal. iii. 13). He was also made sin for us: Gentiles are here

especially regarded (2 Cor. v. 21). But that the law was substitutionary at all, is a statement without a particle of Scripture to support it. Besides which, if life and righteousness could have been produced on the principle of law-keeping, it would not have been divine life and the righteousness of God, but *human* life and *legal* righteousness ; but neither, argues the apostle, are the fruit of law-keeping, nor could they be. It is not true, moreover, that the death of Christ is merely negative in its effects. Does 1 Peter iii. 18 ; Col. i. 20 ; Isa. liii., etc., present positive or negative results ? Lastly, it is affirmed that the conditional promise of life by the law (Lev. xviii. 5), was the ground on which Adam stood in innocence. Nothing could be more false. "Do this and live," was not the language of paradise ; rather was it, "do and *die*," instead of "do and live." He did live, and had not to do anything in order to live. The tree of life was not fenced round, or guarded, or access denied to it, or conditions attached to it, in anywise previous to the fall ; it was absolutely free, but yet it was left untouched by the man ; then, after he sinned, God guarded all access to it, as *then* partaking of its fruit would have rendered the man immortal in

misery, and turned earth into hell. Life is ever the gift of God (Rom. vi. 23), but if fettered by conditions, it would cease to be so. It was given us in Christ Jesus in eternal purpose ; promised, too, before the world began, and hence entirely independent of the course and issue of creature responsibility (Titus i. 2 ; 2 Tim. 1, 9).

Life and responsibility were the earliest questions raised by God, and in the course of ages innumerable attempts have been made to unite the two principles, in other words, to obtain life by satisfying responsibility. But, see : the shores of time are strewn with the wreck of every ship launched for such a purpose. Adam fell in the presence of divine goodness, and then God would turn the hopes of man to the seed of the woman, who, as the Second Man, would replace (not represent or set up anew) the first before God. But the mass of mankind refuse to found their hopes on God's promised object of faith—which, if believed on, would be life and salvation to them. Desperately they cling to the sinking vessel. Ah ! it is useless. Conscience and responsibility cannot be met by a ruined sinner, and even if it could, it would still leave untouched the question of eternal life ; *that* is the gift of God. The race immediately

succeeding Adam plunged into sin, and covered the earth with corruption and violence, and so God swept it away in judgment. Again, the world was set up in responsibility, but quickly gave up the knowledge of God (in tradition, sacrifice, etc.), perverted the testimony of creation to His power and God-head, and turned to idols—giving Satan that place of reverence, fear and worship due alone to God.

Then we come to the call of Abram. He is to separate himself from country, kindred, and the strong associations of nature, and to be a testimony against an idolatrous world while passing through it as a stranger, thus not of it, and as a pilgrim, for he is journeying to a heavenly country. In the garden God spoke of deliverance for man through the woman's seed. It was but dimly announced however (Gen. iii. 15); now it is distinctly declared to Abram "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. xii. 3), and confirmed to Christ (chapter xxii.), who is thus shown to be the seed of the woman, and the seed of Abram. These promises whether to or of the Second Man—the repairer of the breach and the fountain of life—are *absolutely unconditional* and so do not raise the question of righteousness for God, nor of man's responsi-

bility at all. The solid and imperishable foundation of blessing for all, and for eternity, is thus shown to be apart from any question whatever of the creature or of His doings, and is founded solely on what God *is* and on what He has done. To the saints of old it was promised; to us it is accomplished fact (Rom. iv. 16-25).

Having had the tree of life witnessed to, in the rich and unlimited grace deposited in Abram, we have, 430 years after, the other tree to which responsibility was attached. Now the question of human righteousness will be raised and settled. Will man's responsibility under the law earn life? Will God, nay, will natural conscience even be satisfied with the measure in which that responsibility is met? A law is given holy, just and good. It was a perfect rule for man on earth. It was not at all a revelation of God, of His character, or what He is to man; *that* would be to confound law and gospel. "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Had the law been accomplished by Israel, it would have secured a legal righteousness, long life, and a certain amount of blessedness on earth. But redemption, God in grace revealed, eternal life, Heaven, God known and loved, and His Son believed

on, with a standing in the glory of God in divine righteousness, would have been truths and blessings utterly unknown. The law addressed itself to a sinful man ; it supposed lusts and will, and forbade them. It took up man as a failed responsible creature in all the relations in which he had been set. Now the historical account by Moses, as well as the doctrinal statements of Paul, conclusively prove that man could not, and would not, fulfil the righteousness demanded by the law. Measured by that perfect rule he was found sadly wanting. The law was prohibitory in its character save the fourth commandment ; the word " not " occurs eleven times in the ten words.*

From the deliverance out of judgment by the blood of the Lamb, till Mount Sinai is reached, the people were the subjects of pure grace. They feared on the western banks of the Red Sea, and God stilled their fears by cutting a passage through death itself, and leading them on in triumph to the other side ; there the first song recorded in the annals of all history was sung by the emancipated host. After the first song

* The reader will find it helpful to refer to his Greek Testament, so as to distinguish "*the law,*" from "*law,*" the latter treated as a principle merely. In our version they are not accurately defined.

comes the first lesson of the wilderness. The people murmured for water: the Lord in grace showed Moses a tree, the cross of Christ surely, which sweetened the bitter waters of Marah (Exod. xv). But again they murmured, and charged God with bringing them into the wilderness to *kill* them with hunger (chap. xvi.); nay, "He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna" (Deut. viii. 3). He suffered them to hunger that His love might provide a feast for them in the wilderness. Angels' food (Ps. lxxviii. 25), the bread of God too in figure (John vi. 33) was supplied to the hungry, murmuring host of Israel. Once more the people complain; before at Marah, now at Rephidim, saying, "What shall we drink?" Moses, perhaps in some irritation of spirit, represents the chidings of the people, but God in patient grace answered their murmurings, by causing the rock of Horeb to send forth its gushing streams (Exod. xvii.): this was followed by conflict with Amalek, in which Israel was victorious, so long as intercession was carried on; this is accomplished for us on high by a power which never fails. Then comes the beautiful picture of the millennial days (Exod. xviii.) into which we do not now enter.

In the third month of deliverance, the people encamped before the mountains of Sinai, and then God proposed to bring the people into special favour and nearness to Himself, and accomplish their greatness as a nation on the ground of their obedience. The terms were accepted—the people three times pledging themselves to full and unqualified obedience. Then the blood—the solemn witness of death—is brought in to sanction the claims of the covenant upon man, while God in covering the scene with glory intimated that all was secured on His side (chap. xxiv.) Alas ! the people were not ready, and so the blessing was postponed. Christ has met the ruined responsibility of His people, and will bring them into favour under the Abrahamic covenant, which is one of pure promise—of absolute grace. O what an answer to the claims of God ! what a rebuke to their own self-sufficiency, is witnessed in the naked people dancing around the golden calf, the witness of their shame and idolatry. Pure, unmixed law never entered the guilty camp. Would it have been a time or place to have published, “Thou shalt have no other gods before Me,” to that idolatrous throng ? Why, the terms of relationship which the people had so eagerly promised

to fulfil are all broken already, and hence the mediator brake the tables of stone, and on the intercession of Moses the people are governmentally pardoned. The law is given anew, and the name of the Lord revealed—law and grace combined (chap. xxxiv.) The second tables of stone are hidden away in the ark—the word hid in the heart of Jesus (Ps. cxix. 11) and God is concealed behind the veil. The patterns of heavenly things were also revealed, so as to sustain the faith of any broken-hearted Israelite till God's Lamb would replace all by His person and work. The *first* tables found a nation of idolaters, and brought them under the ban of Jehovah's displeasure. What was the effect of the *second* tables of testimony? The apostle tells us that they proved a ministry of death and of condemnation (2 Cor. iii. 7, 9). Nothing could be more plain, nothing more decisive, on a comparison of chapter xxxiv. of the Book of Exodus with the third chapter of Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians than the following:—1. Life cannot be gained by man on the ground of responsibility. 2. Righteousness is equally unattainable. 3. Man cannot bear the glory of God even when reflected from the face of Moses. God has now set His glory in

the face of Jesus, and from yonder risen man the Spirit is ministering life, righteousness and glory.

The law has clearly demonstrated the impossibility of man satisfying the requirements of God's holy law. Man has been fully proved. The question has been openly raised, and with a people—the best sample of humanity producible—can a sinner work himself into life? Can he accomplish a righteousness for God? Assuredly not. There are *four* things produced by the law: death, condemnation, transgression, and knowledge of sin. The law laid bare the heart of man; it uncovered the roots and sources of evil; it was the strength of sin and death to the conscience (Rom. vii.) It could not correct or improve, but only condemn, much less could it impart a new nature, man's absolute need for God and the Kingdom.

But let us briefly pursue the history.

THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS

shows the establishment of the priesthood—the normal means of God's appointment for the maintenance of the people in their relations towards God, but on the very day of its insti-

tution it broke down in the house of Aaron (chap. x.)

THE BOOK OF NUMBERS

gives us the walk and service in the wilderness, and exhibits the testings of faith, with the result that all, save Caleb and Joshua, utterly fail.

THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY

shows the renewal of the covenant with the people, adding fresh commands besides those published at Horeb (chap. xxix. 1). The motives urging to obedience are of the most tender and touching kind. None save Christ ever stood in perfection on the ground of Deuteronomy-obedience. Christ quoted from the early chapters of the book (Luke iv.); Peter from the central part (Acts iii.); Paul from the latter portion (Rom x.)

THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

reveals the people established in the land, but coming short of the purpose and counsel of God. They stopped short in the career of victory and conquest, and only actually possessed a portion of the land, although all was theirs in right and title.

THE BOOK OF JUDGES

is the sorrowful record of the people's unfaithfulness in the land, but on the other hand of Jehovah's patient grace in raising up for His afflicted people, from time to time, Deliverers or Judges—in all, fourteen. These deliverances find their counterpart in the various revivals, as under Luther, Whitfield, and others.

The historical beginning of God's people will be found in *Genesis*; their deliverance is recorded in *Exodus*; their positional sanctification is the subject of *Leviticus*; their testings in the wilderness are written down in *Numbers*; their obedience is the main point developed in *Deuteronomy*; the triumphs of faith is given us in *Joshua*; and their abounding evil and unfaithfulness to Jehovah is fully narrated in *Judges*.

THE BOOK OF RUTH

is the eighth book in the Bible, and presents in type, the roots of God's purposes respecting Israel, and shows their reception in the latter day on the ground of sovereign grace alone. Having sinned away every distinctive privilege, Israel will be left as destitute of right and title to blessing as

any Moabite, who was debarred from ever entering the congregation of the Lord (Deut. xxiii. 3), *then* the Lord will take them up in pure grace; their responsibility being then out of the question.

In the six books which follow; *Samuel*, *Kings*, and *Chronicles*, we have unfolded the preparatory process; also, the establishment, history and consummation of the kingdom in Israel. The law is still the central thought in these books, however, but it is there viewed in relation, *not* with the people as such, but through the intermediate links of priest, prophet and king. The priest was set to sustain the people in their weakness and infirmity under the law; the prophet to recall them to their faithfulness and allegiance to Jehovah and the law; the king was responsible to maintain the authority of the law. In the family of Eli the priesthood, set up to meet failure, itself failed, and thenceforth ceased to be the link between Jehovah and the nation, although individual faith still used it to profit (1 Sam. ii.-iv.) Then the prophet in the family of Samuel also failed in maintaining the relation of the people with God (1 Sam. viii.) Did Solomon, the richest, wisest, and most powerful of monarchs, maintain governmentally

the blessing of the people? In the very zenith of his glory and prosperity he turned from Jehovah to idols, and transferred his heart's confidence from God—the true defence of His kingdom to the cavalry of Egypt—the strength of that land (1 Kings x. 26-29 ; xi. 1-10). The kingdom was rent in twain as a consequence of Solomon's sins. *Israel*, or the ten-tribed nationality, spite of the testimony of Jehovah by miracles and prophets, lapsed into the most frightful idolatry, and after existing as a separate kingdom for about 250 years under nineteen kings—all bad—was finally destroyed by the Assyrians. *Judah* subsisted for about 390 years under twenty sovereigns, and was recalled again and again by numerous prophets to the long-forgotten law of Jehovah, while some of her kings—truly God-fearing men—did much to maintain the authority of Jehovah in the midst of the people. But Judah sought out many lovers, and followed her guilty sister Samaria—yea, exceeded her in wickedness and idolatry. Then the crown fell from the rebel brow of Israel, and God delivered Judah and Jerusalem into the hands of the triumphing heathen. Babylon became the capital and centre of governmental authority on earth, and from

thence, as an epoch, we date the commencement of the times of the Gentiles (Dan. ii.)

After a captivity of seventy years, a remnant of Judah were permitted to return to the land of their fathers, and to build their ruined city and erect anew their temple, but under Gentile auspices and favour. "The Books of the Restoration," as they are sometimes termed, are five in number, and as follows:—Ezra and Nehemiah are historical, the former dealing with the *ecclesiastical* state of things, the latter unfolding the *civil* condition; Haggai and Zechariah are prophetic; these prophets greatly encouraged the people in recommencing and finishing the building of the Temple (Ezra v. 1); lastly Malachi, in which is unfolded the moral condition of the remnant people—a state characterised by utter forgetfulness of Jehovah, and contemptuous treatment of His claims. This last book of the Old Testament *opens* with a declaration of Jehovah's unchanging love to Israel, and *closes* with a call to remember their ruined responsibility (chap. iv. 4). God delights to love. It is His very nature to do so; but He cannot forego His claim of righteousness upon man. That claim He has vindicated in the cross for all who believe—that claim He will

yet vindicate at the great white throne in the judgment and doom of the unbeliever. The closing book of the Old Testament, therefore, leaves the people as it finds them, without holding out the least hope of restoration or recovery till the Lord come.

Now the perfection of the creature was to love God wholly and supremely, and then his neighbour as himself (Luke x. 27), not taught as commandments; but this was the very essence of the system—its kernel, so to speak. Is not the history from Horeb to the Cross the history of responsibility and the divine account that man did *not* love God and did *not* love his neighbour? Man has been placed in every conceivable position of responsibility. He has been set in midst of domestic, social, and governmental relations, but he has failed in them all. His duty as a creature has been written down for him on tables of stone and in books—a law given him by which he could measure his responsibility and blessedness as a man on earth. Account, too, has been taken of his state of sin; so priests were given to sustain, prophets to recall, and kings to maintain the authority of Jehovah and of the law, but the vine taken out of Egypt and cultured with such care only produced “wild grapes”

(Isaiah iv.) Man has been fully tested—Jews and Gentiles, individually and collectively, governmentally and ecclesiastically—and the history has been written down in tablets that will never perish; the *cross* is the end of mere creature responsibility for all who believe, and it morally terminates the course of the responsible man.

GRACE OR THE COMING OF THE SON.

At the close of 4000 years, Jehovah's last resource to awaken, if possible, any latent good in man, was then disclosed. God in love and lowly grace entered the world. As man He wept with men, as Jehovah He healed disease, as Emmanuel He dwelt with us, as Messiah He would accomplish the predicted glory of Israel. The heart of God was brought down to man; His love to their misery. The defilement of Samaria was rebuked by the light (John iv.), but the sinner like her guilty sister of the eighth of John, found herself hidden in the bosom of Jesus. Love rose in holy triumph over the need and misery of man. The land of Emmanuel from one end of it to the other was trod by the feet of the Son of God, and filled with the living witnesses of His grace. O the heart of God has throbbed

in this wretched world! No love like His! Intolerant of evil, withering in exposure of pharisaical hypocrisy, terrible in rebuke to the determinedly self-righteous. But a love most patient and unchangeable amidst insult, rejection and sorrow. Heart-broken sinners (Matt. xi. 28) and wearied saints (verse 29) found rest in His arms and heart. There was *one* heart the sons of men could trust, and so the bosom of Jesus has become the pillow for many a weary head and the rest of many an aching heart.

Now does the vine yield its fruit to the Son of God's delight (Matt. xxi.)? Let us see; they trampled upon the law, they killed the prophets, and now that God's bosom has given out its treasure, they spit upon His face and pierce His brow with thorn. God turned man out of paradise, and now man turns God in flesh out of His own world. The *righteous* John they would not have, and bartered his life away for a dance (Mark vi.) Love personified in Jesus was utterly rejected and Himself sold for the price of a slave—thirty pieces of silver (Matt. xxiv. 14-16), the resources of grace are exhausted. God manifest in flesh has walked in divine goodness, and tabernacled amongst men, and the result is that man will not have God at all. He

would rather hug his chains and live in his misery, than have a deliverer, *if* that Saviour be God. Man is proved to be the bitter, determined enemy of God.

What then is the value of Adamic responsibility before God? Has the tree of responsibility, first planted in paradise 4000 years before the cross, borne the fruit of life and righteousness? If, beloved reader, you are on *that* ground—I do not say you are unsafe, nay, you are *lost*. Man is not going down, he has gone. “Condemned already,” and this is exactly the point where the gospel meets you. The disciplinary dealings and probationary trials of man are all over, and the only thing that can now avail for God and for eternity is redemption and a new nature. “Ye must be born *anew*.”

LIFE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNITE IN CHRIST.

Now we have a solution of the difficulty which has puzzled theologians, which has created the rival sects of Arminians and Calvinists, and which men in all ages have sought to solve. How can the question of human responsibility be reconciled with a standing in life and righteousness before God? If the history of the first

man demonstrates the fact that he is so thoroughly under the power of evil, that the very presence of God in love on earth was unbearable, and He must be got rid of at all costs, how self-evident is the utter impossibility of obtaining life on that ground! Two certain results must follow if God be God. *Judgment* thorough and unsparing must make good the righteousness of God's claims upon the sinner, and *love* sovereignly bestow life.

Now the cross is man's answer to God's love, but it is also the answer of God to the ruined responsibility of man. There the storm of divine wrath swept on and over the spotless and undefiled one, there was perfected the sin of man, and there rose to its height divine goodness; there every moral question was divinely settled. There Satan was vanquished, sin judged, and God glorified. Ah! amongst the counsels of God and the facts of time, the cross is beyond all in moral grandeur. But why does Peter say, "who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the *tree*:" why say the "tree" and not the cross?" The responsibility of man had run its course for 4000 years. Now at the end of the world—morally so—Christ appeared to deal with the responsibility-tree, not to get

from it, but to condemn it utterly, root, fruit, and branches. He identified Himself with it, took up the fruit of 40 centuries' growth, and presented all before God. The tree was ripe for judgment. The Lord charged Himself with the responsibilities of all His own, suffered in their stead, and went down under the weight of God's wrath upon sin, crying out when the work was done, "*It is finished.*" What a solemn sanction is given to the law, to its claims, to its curse, to its authority in the death of Christ; there too the Jewish law-breaker and the equally responsible Gentile have been morally judged! Man is not recoverable; the cross demonstrates *that*.*

Christ then, has taken the whole consequences of our responsibility upon Himself, and put all away, glorifying God in the work. Now He is raised from the dead, and in His work and person we are set down in the glory of God, in divine righteousness and in the enjoyment of eternal life. Thus in Christ and in Him only can you conciliate the two principles of responsi-

* We should distinguish between man the *race*, and men *individual*. "Thou turnest *man* to destruction, and sayest, Return, ye children of *men*" (Ps. xc. 3). *Man* is totally irrecoverable. *Men* through sovereign grace are recoverable.

bility and life. Until the cross they were always apart and treated of separately ; thus in the law we have the one, and in Abram—430 years before—the other. But in Christ they unite : on the cross He meets the responsibility, and as risen He bestows life.

“ Now in the place where He was *crucified* there was a *garden* ; and in the garden a new *sepulchre*, wherein was never man yet laid ” (John xix. 41). Here we have the cross, garden, and sepulchre—all telling of the work and triumph of the Second Man. It was in a garden where the two trees stood (Gen. ii.) where Satan too overcame the first man (Gen. iii.) 4000 years roll on, and once again we have a garden containing a cross and a sepulchre—*on* the one He terminated the history of the first and responsible man, *out* of the other He rose—the head of a new and eternally living race before God. He came into the world a man for *men* ; He went out of it a man for *God*. “ The tree of the knowledge of good and evil ” has its answer in the *cross*. “ The tree of life ” is answered in the *resurrection*. Defeat in the first garden ; victory in the second ; *there* Satan the conqueror, *here* Christ the victor ; *there* death came in, *here* life comes out ; *there* Adamic

responsibility before God began, *here* we see its termination for the believer; *there* sin came in, *here* it is put away for faith.

So here the past ways of God are taken up in the cross and resurrection of Christ, and the result is infinite gain to us. We will arrange the results in loss and gain so that the reader may judge :—

LOSS BY THE FIRST MAN.

Man's paradise forfeited, Gen. iii. 23, 24.
 Sin entered and innocence sinned away, Gen. iii.
 Conscience in the knowledge of good and evil.
 Death and separation from God.
 Law could not procure righteousness from man.
 Man in Adam and by works alienated from God.

GAIN BY THE SECOND MAN.

God's paradise gained, Luke xxiii. 43.
 Sin put away and holiness obtained, Heb. ix. 26.
 Conscience purged according to God's knowledge
 of good and evil.
 Life and everlasting nearness to God.
 God's righteousness bestowed upon man.
 Man in Christ set in the glory of God.

CHRIST'S AND THE CHRISTIAN'S PRESENT
POSITION.

Christ has been raised from the dead—where the judgment of God put Him, and set down before God—where the glory of God has set Him. Now Christ as Son having perfectly pleased the Father, in manifesting Him in love and moral ways, and as man glorified God in His nature on the cross, has thereby constituted Himself a creditor upon God. The first man was a *debtor* to God; the Second Man is a *creditor* upon God. Here is the claim and the ground of it. “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself and shall straightway glorify Him,”—that is, personal and immediate glory is the demand, not of love, but of righteousness. Accordingly Christ takes the place on high, which His work on earth merits. Is it the presence of the Father? there love has set us. Is it the glory of God? there righteousness has seated us. In the dignity of His person and in the value of His work, He has there acquired a place for Himself and for us. What a unique place we are set in, and if we have not more fully developed the believer's standing, not

in an acquired and legal righteousness, which after all no law could win, but in divine righteousness, and set according to it in the life and glory of the Second Man, it is because we would have the believer enjoy it, drink deeply into it for himself.

CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITY: ITS GROUND AND MEASURE.

Responsibility we have already observed flows from the relationship the person is set in. What then is the ground and measure of Christian responsibility and obedience? Having died in the death of Christ to sin (Rom. vi. 7); to law (Rom. vii. 4); to flesh (Rom. vi. 6); to the world (Gal. vi. 14); we are risen in His resurrection, alive in His life, and united to Him where *He is*. Our responsibility therefore as Christians flows from *that*; and the measure of our obedience and walk (not the law, for to that we are dead) is CHRIST. In Christ's death our *old* life of responsibility is closed up for ever; in His resurrection our *new* life of responsibility begins. His place as man before God measures our blessing, while His walk on earth is the measure and pattern of ours. He hath left us

“ an example that we should follow His steps;” not the law, or conscience, or Scripture even, but CHRIST, who is out of the reach of law, and who ever liveth in deathless regions of glory; it is He who is the definition of our position before God, and also measures our walk before men. In Him we live. “ He that saith He abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked.” How distinctly! how firmly! how unswervingly Christ manifested God on earth—walking in love, and then in death offering Himself as a sweet smelling savour to God! The Father could not withhold the expression of His heart’s delight; nor could the Spirit longer wait, but immediately on the Son identifying Himself with Jehovah’s interests, and people on earth, the Father breaks out with what was in His own heart, and the Spirit, as the Spirit of Holiness sealed Him (Matt. iv.) In this blessed path He is set before us as *example* (Eph. v. 1, 2). The truth is, that as Christians, God has made Christ everything to us. He is our life (Phil. i.); He is our pattern (Phil. ii); He is our object on high (Phil. iii); He is our strength (Phil. iv). His path on *earth* awakens our affections. His work on the *cross* is the peace of our consciences. Himself

in the *glory* the strength of our souls. Himself in the *air* (1 Thess. iv.), the hope of our hearts ; and Himself possessed our everlasting triumph (Rev. v).

Life and responsibility unite in the Lord Jesus Christ. Adamic responsibility is closed up in His cross. Christian responsibility is founded on His resurrection.

CONCLUDING APPEAL

If, beloved reader, you are in Christ Jesus, then your walk is to be according to new creation order (Gal. vi. 16). God cannot own anything short of His beloved Son, both for your blessing and responsibility. You are set in the heavens in the Son of the Father—"Ye in Me," such is your glorious position, and now your one business of life is to walk as Christ, to express Christ—"I in you" (John xiv. 20). The responsible man is gone—"crucified with Christ"—that the new man before God alone might live (Gal. ii. 20).

But if, dear reader, you are yet on the ground of your personal and unanswered responsibility, then let us tell you frankly that you are *lost*. It is for the believer *alone* that life and respon-

sibility centre in Christ, for thee they are as wide apart as ever. Thou art not on thy trial—thou art “condemned already.” The judgment of the great white throne has been anticipated in the judgment of the cross for all who believe. But for every soul of Adam’s race who rejects the work of Christ, there remains nothing “but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation” (Heb. x. 27). No sinner can ever unite or conciliate those truths—life and responsibility. Oh unsaved friend! thou hast never tasted the fruit of life eternal. Yet both the “tree” and “river” of life are free to thee. O that thou would’st eat, then thou would’st “never die”! O that thou would’st drink, then thou would’st “never thirst”! Is paradise with its no night, no curse, no tear, no death, nothing to thee? Has its ever open pearly gates, its jasper walls, and golden street, and the thrice blessed Lord of Glory and Lamb of God as fresh from His cross—“as it had been slain,” no power to win thy heart? Are the baubles of earth worth more in thy estimation than the crown of gold, the harp of God, the palm of victory, the robe of white? Is hell not worth escaping? Is heaven not worth gaining?

But the closing act in the drama of life will

come, and thy history with its known and unremembered actions, its motives, thoughts, and counsels, its words, prayers, and resolutions will be faithfully disclosed. God will be the revealer of all, and memory and conscience will set their seal to the divine accuracy, to the unerring truthfulness of these God-written records of human responsibility. "And I saw a great white throne and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth, and the heaven fled away: and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God [lit. the *throne*]: and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works" (Rev. xx. 11-15).

Here we have the final scene of all. The throne—great and white, denoting *vastness* and *purity*—is set up, and the wicked *only*, those then morally dead, appear before it. The saints will be there to judge (1 Cor. vi. 2, 3), and the angels to execute the judgment. This awful judicial assembly will hold its sitting in ETERNITY, for the earth and heaven will have passed away. The wicked will be maintained in space by omnipotent power, no sheltering rocks and hills

to screen them from the gaze of the Son of Man who will judge (John v. 27). Instead of the two trees which stood in the garden of the first man (Gen. ii.), we have the *same* truths represented by the "books of works" and the "book of life." An irrecoverably bad *nature* which man cannot help, for he was born into the world with it, will *not* form the ground of judgment, but the responsible actions are alone in question, hence the books of works (see also Eph. v. 5, 6) are opened and judgment passed accordingly. But was the sovereign gift of life not presented to the ruined and responsible man? It was. Was it accepted? The book of life is opened—its pages are carefully scanned: Alas, alas! grace too had been rejected. Judgment is thus placed on a two-fold ground—first, according to works; second, by the rejection of grace.

May the Lord, in His abounding grace, preserve the reader from the fearful, eternal doom—*cast into the lake of fire.* Amen.

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