

fallen being into a higher state of life and blessedness; or, if he perversely spurned the offered boon, of sinking him down to the deeper wretchedness which is the just consequence of unrepented sin, without even the sympathy of any part of the created universe.

Finally. This subject throws some light upon that strange mixture of good and evil, which exists in the present world. We have seen, indeed, that benevolence decidedly predominates in all the arrangements of nature; and we are called upon continually to admire the adaptation of external nature to the human constitution. A large portion of our sufferings here may also be imputed to our own sins, or the sins of others; and these we cannot charge upon God. But, after all, it seems difficult to conceive how even a sinless man could escape a large amount of suffering here; enough, indeed, to make him often sigh for deliverance and for a better state. How many sources of sufferings there are in unhealthy climates, mechanical violence, and chemical agents; in a sterile soil, in the excessive heats of the tropical regions, and extreme cold of high latitudes; in the encroachments and ferocity of the inferior animals; in poisons, mineral, vegetable, and animal; in food unfitted to the digestive and assimilating organs; in the damps and miasms of night; and in the frequent necessity for overexertion of body and mind! And then, how many hinderances to the exercise of the mental powers, in all the causes that have been mentioned! and how does the soul feel that she is imprisoned in flesh and blood, and her energies cramped, and her vision clouded, by a gross corporeal medium! And thus it is, to a great extent, with all nature, especially animal nature; and I cannot but believe, as already intimated, that Paul had these very things in mind when he said, "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain until now, and waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God;" that is, for emancipation from its present depressed and fettered condition. In short, while there is so much in this world to call forth our admiration and gratitude to God, there is enough to make us feel, also, that it is a fallen condition. It is not such a world as infinite benevolence would provide for perfectly holy beings, whom he desired to make perfectly happy, but rather such a world as is adapted for a condition of trial and preparation for a higher state, when both mind and body would be delivered from the fetters that now cramp their exercise.