

Now, the theory which I advocate asserts that this peculiar condition of the world resulted from the divine determination, upon a prospective view of man's transgression. It may, therefore, be properly regarded as occasioned by man's transgression, but not in the common meaning attached to that phrase, which is, that before man's apostacy, the constitution of the world was different from what it now is, and death did not exist. This theory supposes God to have devised the present peculiar mixed condition of the world, as to good and evil, in eternity, in order to give man an opportunity to rescue himself from the penalty and misery of sin; and in order to introduce those who should do this into a higher state of existence. The plan, therefore, is founded in infinite wisdom and benevolence, while it brings out man's guilt and the evil of sin, in appalling distinctness and magnitude.

But, after all, how little idea would a man have of the entire plot of a play, who had heard only a part of the first act! How little could he judge of the bearing of the first scene upon the final development! Yet we are now only in the first act of the great drama of human existence. Death shows us that we shall ere long be introduced into a second act, and affords a presumption that other acts, it may be in an endless series, will succeed, before the whole plot shall have passed before us; and not till then can we be certain what are all the objects to be accomplished by the introduction of sin and death into our world. And if thus early we can catch glimpses of great benefit to result from these evils, what full conviction, that infinite benevolence has planned and consummated the whole, will be forced upon the mind, when the vast panorama of God's dispensations shall lie spread out in the memory! For that time shall Faith wait, in confident hope that all her doubts and darkness shall be converted into noonday brightness.