

Wherever the Bible comes it brings *light*, and makes men in proportion responsible. Thus he that knoweth or has the means of knowing his Master's will, and doeth it not, shall be beaten with *many* stripes: but he that knoweth not and has not the means of knowing his Master's will, shall be beaten with *few* stripes. He that doeth wrong, knowing it to be wrong, committeth sin; as saith the apostle, "To him that *knoweth* to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." The people that crucified Christ, although they did not know him spiritually, yet they *knew* they were doing wrong. The enemies and persecutors of the church knew they were doing wrong; and although some have followed their vile affections so as to think that in killing the apostles of the Lamb they did God service, yet they arrived at this state through wilful ignorance; they did not like to retain God in their knowledge. Hence it appears, that human accountability is according to the light that is possessed, or may be obtained. While the law is the rule of judgment, it bears, at the same time, a *twofold* relation to man. It relates to each man, first, in his relation to Adam. Men, considered as the descendants of Adam, are in a state of vileness, guilt, and death. In this light it is written concerning them, that "there is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that doeth good, no, not one;" that they have altogether become unprofitable; that all have sinned, all

are guilty, and every mouth must be stopped. Viewing men in this sense under the law, the law worketh wrath, gendereth to bondage, and is the ministration of death. Thus, in Adam all sinned and died; death passed upon all, infants not excluded.

But there is another relation which the law of God bears to man, and that is, that it not only relates to man as fallen in Adam, but it also relates to each man as a *separate*, responsible individual, possessed of reason and moral capacity, that is, a capability of knowing, as far as matters moral and civil are concerned, right and wrong. It is for the good or bad use of these powers that he is accountable to God, and therefore such shall be judged according to his personal works; the punishment of each will be according to his works. This principle will stand good with reference to those who have the Word of God, and to those who have not the Word; as saith the apostle, "As many as have sinned without the law" (without the light of the Word) "shall perish without" (the letter of) "the law;" (Rom. ii. 12;) and as many as have sinned in the law, in the light of the Word, shall be judged by the Word. The heathen, as we have said, know, or ought to know, that there is a Supreme Being, and that he ought to be supremely regarded. All that they do contrary to this, will be to their condemnation; "for," saith the apostle, "they are without

excuse;" (Rom. i. 20;) and those who have the letter of the Word know that God ought to be supremely regarded. All that they do contrary to this light which they thus have will be to their condemnation. Again we observe, that the first commandment includes the whole law, and indeed the whole gospel too; but we shall have to speak of gospel matters by and by; we are now attending to law matters. The first commandment, then, we say, includes the whole law. "Thou shalt have *no other* gods before me." God ought to be supremely regarded, both by those who have not, and by those who have the letter of the law; but the heathen, when they knew God as their creator and preserver, glorified him not as God; they did not like to *retain* God in their knowledge; and those who have the Word rebel against the light, loving darkness rather than light. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and thy neighbour as thyself;" but instead of this, man has each preferred himself, not only before his fellow-creatures, but before God. To prefer myself before my fellow-creature, so as to injure him, or, should he be in needy circumstances, to neglect to do him all the good that I have in my power, would be a violation of the first commandment, because it is God that says, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." If I violate this command, I prefer the devil's law to that of the law of God; and as keeping the whole law of

God consists in making God in every sense the object of supreme regard, so if in any sense I violate this great and rightful principle of supremacy, I violate the whole law, simply because no one commandment is separable from divine supremacy. The *whole* law derives its authority and infallibility (for neither jot nor tittle can fail) from divine supremacy.

Be it then again repeated, that the law of God bears a twofold relation to man. By the first relation death passed upon all men; in the second relation it passes sentence upon each one according to his personal works. Now let us look a little farther into the law in this its relation to each man as a separate responsible individual, and we shall find that nothing but a life and conduct in general accordance with the law agrees with that natural light possessed by men. Men know they are responsible, not only to God, but to one another; and hence if a man be living in the practical violation of the second table of the law, he is punishable by his fellow-creatures. Indeed, even the first table of the law could not, under the Jewish dispensation, be practically violated without corporeal punishment. Hence the man that was stoned to death for gathering sticks on the Sabbath day. This also was to be the fate of those who brought in idolatry or blasphemed the name of the Lord. Now, mind, they were not to be thus punished because they fell in Adam,

nor because they were dead in sin, (under the sentence of dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return,) nor because their hearts, as are the hearts of all men, were “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;” they were not punished because of their state by nature, as the posterity of Adam; no, the law punished them as separate responsible persons, and that for their practical, open, and wilful violation of the law. Thus, we see the twofold relation of the law of God to man. In the first relation judgment *is* already passed upon all men, but in the second relation judgment is *not* yet passed upon all men; hence, there is a judgment day *to come*, when every man shall be judged according to his *works*. This principle of responsibility branches out into all the relations and associations of human life, and is proportioned to the rational and moral light which is, or ought to be, possessed. There is, however, a seeming (not a real) exception to this rule in the case of those who die in infancy; for it may be asked, By what works are they to be judged, seeing that while in this world they know not right from wrong. This is a fair question, and shall have as plain an answer as the writer can give. Let it be remembered, that where the Word of God is silent, it is well for us to be silent too. Secret things belong unto God; yet as infants are noticed in the Word, I will venture to show my opinion, which is, that all that die in infancy are saved, but not on the ground of

non-responsibility, or any supposed innocence they possess. No; for if the law of God has no hold of them in what, for the sake of clearness, I have called its second relation to man, yet the law holds them as fallen in Adam, unclean, and under sentence of death; and from this state there is but one way of deliverance, that is, by the finished work of Christ. This dissolves their relation to the first Adam, and brings them into all the plenitude of saving mercy. I conclude, therefore, that none can die in infancy whose name is not in the book of life; for if a sparrow cannot fall without the will of God, I cannot think that an infant can die without the will of God. I confess that I have no means of *proving* that *not* any of the non-elect can die in infancy, yet it must be allowed that "God worketh all things after the counsel of his own will," from the creeping insect to the highest angel; and therefore it is not incredible that he should so order matters that none but objects of mercy should die in infancy. Mind, I am here showing merely my opinion. The prophecy concerning those infants slain by Herod, I think, clearly shows that some infants are saved; yet there is no one scripture to prove that one infant is lost. While those who are lost are spoken of as being condemned *for* and according *to* their *personal* works, it is therefore my opinion that all who die in infancy are saved. None but those whose names are in the book of

life can be saved. This naturally leads to the conclusion that not one of the non-elect can die in infancy. Infants died in Adam, sinned in Adam, and in Adam were condemned; are conceived in sin, shapen in iniquity, and born as wild asses' colts; but that eternal oneness which they have with Christ delivers them from all the guilt and misery of the fall. Unto the first Adam they become dead,—dead to sin, and dead to the law. Their relation to the first Adam, as before observed, is dissolved; their register is not on earth, but in heaven; they live not in old, but in new covenant relation; not after the law of works, but after the power of an endless life. From first to last they are saved by grace. Thousands of infants being drowned at the deluge, the many destroyed in Sodom and Gomorrah, the many that have met with death by famine, war, earthquakes, and by other violent means, are no argument, in my mind, against their salvation. These circumstances were the destruction only of the body; but upon the final destiny of men we shall speak in a future part of this little book.

Having shown that though the law does not hold infants chargeable with personal works, yet it holds them as fallen in Adam, therefore they, as well as adults, need the Saviour. Here we see, that their dying before their mental and moral powers are developed does not interfere with the principle we have laid down, namely, that every

man will be judged according to the light which he has, or ought to have. This responsibility, again I repeat, branches out into all the relations and associations of human life, on the ground of man being a *rational, moral*, responsible creature. On this ground, the Word of God has to do, in a way of exhortation and reproof, even with unregenerate men. Animals commit acts of violence, and we very naturally check them, and even make them fear to repeat those acts of violence ; but we cannot check them *morally* ; that is, we cannot refer them to the authority of their Maker, simply because they have not rational or moral capacity, therefore are not morally responsible. But men do possess, notwithstanding their fallen state, rational and moral capacity ; therefore they are responsible to God, and to one another, according to the two tables of the law. These three things, then, are clear ; 1st, That the law of God has a twofold relation to man ; 2nd, That man is accountable to God according to the natural, moral light which he does or ought to possess ; 3rd, That this responsibility branches out into all the relations and associations of human life.

This leads to the second question of our subject, namely, Is it the duty of all men to believe the Word of God ? Now, if I say it is, I should say no more, or at least mean no more, than that which is confirmed by the Word of God. Two

persons may declare it is the duty of all men to believe the Word of God, and each, at the same time, have a very different meaning. We must therefore look closely after our meaning. If you cannot exercise any faith in what I am saying, do, if you can, exercise a little patience, while I give the question in the affirmative, and then explain my meaning. Well, then, it is the duty of all men to believe in God. Put the question into another form, then see if it does not bring its own evidence with it. Ought not God to be supremely regarded? No one can deny this. Again; Ought men to act contrary to the light they have? No one will say, Yes, to this. Well, then, it follows, that they ought, as far as they know, to supremely regard their Maker. The creation declares the supremacy of God; the heathen ought to acknowledge this, and accordingly it is their duty so to do. Ought not those who have the written word to supremely regard its Author? that is, as far as the natural light which they have shows them right from wrong. If it be not their duty to believe in God, and, as far as they know, follow that which is morally right, why then it cannot be their sin to follow that which is morally wrong, for "where there is no law there is no transgression;" and, if we take away this one great principle, namely, that it is the duty of all men to supremely regard their Maker—take away this principle, and we have no authority to even reprove any one for any deed

of violence whatever. Hence the heathen legislators have always felt the necessity of giving to their laws an air of divine authority, in order that the people may make it not merely a matter of custom, but a matter of *conscience* to obey those laws. So if it be not the duty of men to do that which they know to be right, then there is no *solid* ground to reprove for what we *feel* and know to be wrong.

The things of creation call upon the heathen, as rational, moral, and responsible beings, to exercise a certain kind of faith, repentance, and consistency of conduct; so the Word of God calls upon men in general to exercise faith, repentance, and consistency of conduct. Here, then, are the "eternal power and Godhead" shining forth in creation and in the written word, the united voice of which is, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Now mind, and mind it well, that this generally accords with, and answers to, the consciences of all men. They feel that they ought to supremely regard the Most High, their consciences *accusing* or *excusing* them, according to what they do knowingly wrong or knowingly right. Now mind again, (for this is a very material part of our subject,) that this general call is NOT to bring about either the regeneration or the salvation of their souls. No, this general call has much less important ends in view, as we shall presently see.

Salvation is accomplished by the work of Christ.

regeneration is brought about by the absolute power of the Holy Ghost, and that according to the order of eternal election in Christ, and infinitely surpasses in importance and glory the duty matter of which we are now speaking ; yet as this general call is by men substituted for the special call, and natural faith and repentance put in the place of that faith and repentance which accompany salvation—seeing this strong delusion is very popular, it will be well to understand this matter clearly. Let us proceed patiently and carefully, and never mind a little repetition. If we can but get at the real truth of the matter, we shall find something not to be despised ; for “ he that handleth a matter wisely shall find good.”

The object now is to notice the *objects*, *nature*, and *ends* of this general call. As to the objects of this call, they are not addressed as objects of eternal love, eternal redemption, or eternal salvation ; no, nor yet in their federal and natural relation to Adam ; for in this their oneness with Adam judgment is already passed upon them ; therefore they are *not* addressed as in union with Adam, nor as in union with Christ, but they are addressed as separate, rational, moral, responsible creatures, each one must bear his own burden. This is the position in which they are addressed, the call, or, in other words, the voice of divine supremacy, claiming supreme regard. We, as creatures, feel in our consciences the justice of this claim. The

ends this call has in view are reformation of life, and mitigation of future punishment. Now, after these assertions, let us come to *proof*. We must begin with Matt. xi. 20 ; “Then began Jesus to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they *repented not*.” Mind, it is not said he upbraided them because God did not give them repentance, but because they repented not. There is the repentance of reformation, and the repentance of regeneration. Man is not reprovèd for not having faith and repentance from on high ; man is not reprovèd because his name is not in the Lamb’s book of life ; man is not reprovèd for not possessing the Holy Spirit ; man is not reprovèd because he is not interested in eternal salvation. There is not one instance, from Genesis to Revelation, of men being reprovèd for not being “heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.” If, then, men are not *reprovèd* for not being saved in Christ, how monstrous must be that doctrine which tells us that men, at the last day, will be condemned for not accepting salvation. As man is not condemned or reprovèd for not being “saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation, let us see *for* what he is reprovèd and condemned. He is reprovèd and condemned for doing what he *knows* is wrong, and that wrong consists in not supremely (as far as he knows) regarding his Maker. It was no doubt clear to all that Noah’s commission to build

the ark was of God, clear to all that God had commanded him so to do; therefore they ought to have humbled themselves, repented of their ungodly deeds, and cried to their Maker for mercy. Instead of this, they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, but hardened themselves in their sin. They knew they were doing wrong; Noah was a witness against them; therefore it is said "he condemned the world;" that is to say, light came to them concerning the wrongs they did, together with the deluge that should come upon them for doing what they knew to be wrong. They were not condemned for not doing what they had no capacity to do, for "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit, neither *can* he *know* them;" but they were condemned for doing what they knew was wrong; so that they must have felt that they were, for what they had wilfully done, condemned justly. The Holy Spirit strove in Noah to keep him at work until the ark was finished. When the flood came his faith was in this matter lost in sight. Here, then, the world was condemned, not as the fallen posterity of Adam, nor because they were not one with Christ, but because they wilfully did that which they knew to be wrong.

Again. The men of Sodom were sinners before the Lord exceedingly; they knew they were doing wrong. Although it does not appear that any extra warning of their approaching destruction

was given, yet they knew that divine supremacy prohibited all ungodliness, and they were therefore without excuse. If they had humbled themselves and repented, they would not have been destroyed. This we may gather from the words of one that could not err. If his miracles had been done in Sodom, what then? would the people have become regenerated and accepted to eternal life? No; "the city would have remained to this day." (Matt. xi. 23.) Here, then, is the voice, not of quickening grace, but of divine supremacy. Here is the repentance, not of regeneration, but of reformation. Here is the consequence of reformation; the city would have continued. In proportion, therefore, to the light which they have, or ought to have, is their responsibility to God. Wherever the light of nature or revelation is hated, opposed, and wilfully beclouded, so, in proportion, do men augment their condemnation. Hence said the Saviour, "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light;" not their condemnation as the posterity of Adam, but the condemnation of them as rational, moral, separate, responsible persons. This is the condemnation of every man, that he acts contrary to the light which he has. If this Scripture meant what it is generally thought and asserted to mean, namely, that man is condemned for not receiving salvation—if this were its meaning, it would, perhaps, have read

somewhat like the following: This is the condemnation, that salvation is come into the world, but men would not accept it; that light is come into the world in order to show men the way to heaven, but men will not go; that light is come into the world to show to men that fallen nature, the world, and the things thereof, are dust and ashes, yea, a mere dunghill, and that there is a way in which they may become kings and princes for ever, but they will remain in disgrace, and refuse to enjoy the offered dignity. If this Scripture read somewhat after this manner, one might be tempted to think there was some truth in the assertion, that man is condemned for not accepting salvation.

Let us look again at this Scripture; "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light." Now, mind, it does not say light came into the world and offered salvation, or eternal life; not a word to this effect. Admit the principle before laid down, namely, that the law has a twofold relation to man, that it holds each man in a separate individual responsibility, according to the light bestowed, then comes the plain truth of the matter, namely, that men are individually condemned for acting contrary to the light which they have. This is the individual condemnation, that he wilfully acts contrary to that light which is come into the world. Here, then, men are

viewed, not as the posterity of Adam, nor as objects of salvation, but as being possessed of rational and moral powers, and individually responsible for the right or wrong use of these powers. These powers have their province, and beyond their province the Scriptures nowhere call upon them to go. The departments in which these natural powers are called upon to act are rational and moral, but not spiritual. In this department natural powers can do nothing; for no man can receive anything, except it be given him from above. Federal union to Adam, and covenant union to Christ, we shall notice towards the close of this work. We are now showing that man, in addition to his fallen state in Adam, in which state judgment is passed upon all men, and apart from saving union to Christ—apart from these two opposite positions, there is *another* position occupied by men—a position of separate individual responsibility. In this position he is spoken *of*, and spoken *to*, in the Word of God. And now come the questions, What is said *of* man in this position? and, What is said *to* him in this position? It is this, that every man shall be judged according to his works; every one must bear his own burden. God will not call them to account for not being his children, heirs of himself, and joint heirs with Christ; but he will call them to account and to answer for that which they did *knowingly* wrong; therefore the voice of

divine supremacy, sounding through creation, calls upon the heathen to avoid the practice of that which is morally wrong, and to follow that which is morally right, so that they are without excuse. As the voice of divine supremacy calls upon the heathen in the sense before noticed, so the same divine supremacy, by the written word, calls upon men to forsake the wrong and follow the right. Hence John exhorted the covetous pharisees to liberality, the roguish publican to honesty, the turbulent soldiers to peace and contentment. Daniel exhorted Belshazzar to break off his sins by righteousness; Ezekiel (xviii.) exhorts the Israelites to supremely regard the Most High; Moses sets before the people good and evil, they were to choose which they would; Christians are exhorted to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; but if it be not the duty of the unregenerate to believe in the supremacy of their Maker, and act as their light shall give them to see right from wrong—if it be not their duty thus to regard their Maker, then if we reprove our children for disorderly conduct, they may, supposing them to be in a state of nature, turn round and say, We have nothing to do with the claims of our Maker; we have nothing to do with his word; the word in no sense speaks to us; therefore, as it is *not* our duty to act according to the light given us, why, then, we commit no sin in doing what you call

wrong, for if to hearken be not our duty, then to turn a deaf ear is no sin. But we leave the doctrine of *irresponsibility* to be advocated by fiends and Atheists; which doctrine, if carried out, would drive human society to destruction. All the real comforts of life stand upon this great principle of individual responsibility to God and to one another; and the more this responsibility is felt and acted upon, so much the more is the moral state of society bettered. All the calamities of the Jews proceeded, not on the ground of being in a fallen state, as a part of the posterity of Adam, nor on the ground of their not spiritually and savingly receiving the truths of God, but because they acted, in a moral sense, contrary to the light they had, because they acted contrary to this great principle of individual responsibility to God and to one another. In proportion as this principle was their rule, so did they prosper. It is upon this principle that the Lord appeals to them thus: "And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah! judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?" (Isa. v. 3, 4.) He acted for them providentially, and by the prophets pointed out right from wrong. The Lord called, and they wilfully refused to hearken; (Jer. vii. 13;) he showed them the right way, and they refused to walk therein. In a word, he gave them every possible advantage, as