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THE PULPIT

AND INTELLIGENCER OF THE

ASSOCIATE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN

CHURCH.

CONSISTING OF

SERMONS BY THE MINISTERS

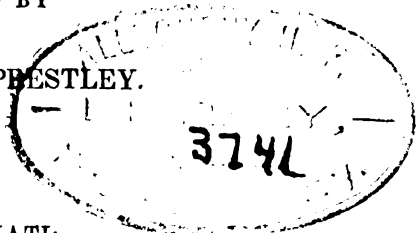
OF THE FIVE SYNODS.

AND

DENOMINATIONAL INTELLIGENCE.

EDITED BY

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LECTURE.

NATURAL CHRISTOLOGY.

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Delivered before the Students of the Associate Reformed Theological Seminary, Allegheny City, Pa. March 19, 1855.

1. That God created all things, is denied, I think, only by Atheists.

2. That he had some design in view in creating all things, ought not to be questioned by those who admit his infinite wisdom. For, that an omniscient God should act without design, is absurd. Being omniscient he could not but fore-know all the consequences that would result from his actions. Knowing these and yet acting, it follows that he designed producing them. He had therefore an end in acting.

3. That he will gain that end, whatever it be, will be denied by none who properly consider his omniscience, omnipotence, immutability, eternity and immensity. For if he know all and can do all, being immutable in purpose, omnipotent in energy, eternal in duration, and present in all the fullness of his Godhead in all places, then there "is nothing too hard for God."

4. Again, being all-wise, he is capable, not only of forming designs, but also of adopting means apposite to them. If in men it be the part of wisdom to adapt means to ends, much more is it in God. And he always does so. There is no

exception to this, in the whole course of nature. No man of an understanding mind, but sees at once, that fishes were made to live in water, birds to fly in air, eyes to see with, teeth to eat with, feet to walk with, tongue to taste and talk with, hands to handle with, and lungs to breathe with. And so it is in all the works of God. He had some end in view in the production of each, and they are all individually adapted to their respective ends.

5. One step farther: Not only are means and ends adapted to each other, but so soon as one understands what those means and ends are, *he will perceive* their mutual adaptations. Thus when one shall thoroughly examine the lungs, he will pronounce that they were made for the aereation of the blood, and that they are just fit for that, and nothing else. So, of the apparatus for nutrition—the mouth, gullet, stomach, bowels, kidneys, liver, spleen, pancreas, heart, and lungs, together with the appendages of all these,—so soon as this complex system is understood, the intelligent student cries out, “that’s it,—they were just made for nutrition; they are exactly adapted to that purpose; and they are fit for nothing else!”

6. In a word; the *Final cause in nature, when it is rightly understood is just as evident as the First cause.*—It is just as evident that all things were made for their respective ends, as that they were made at all. They not only speak to you of a Great One who formed them, but they go on to tell you what he formed them for. Listen to them, study their language. Comprehend their utterance. So shall you know their uses; for they who never yet spake falsely, will tell you.

7. But do not mistake me: I do not mean to assert that we can discover God’s purpose, or the Final cause in nature, without much study; nor do I think we can discern it in many cases, unless some one teach us. We cannot always infer God’s purpose from the mere knowledge of the means used, unless some one inform us what the purpose is. Our mind is too little to comprehend the mind of Deity. Our

line is too short to sound the unfathomable depths of His heart. His thoughts are too high for us—too wonderful; we cannot comprehend them. He is wonderful in council, and excellent in working. But what I mean is, that when we understand the work, and are instructed as to the purpose it is designed to accomplish, we will then see a perfect symmetry of means and end. Thus, if there are intelligent beings in the universe (as doubtless there are) who have no knowledge of eyes, or vision through them, they might study the eye long and well, and yet not be able to comprehend the design of its Maker. But no sooner would you tell them of its use, than clapping hands in extacy of delight they would cry out “That’s it! That’s it! It was just made to see with; and it is fit for nothing else.”

And just so it is of all the works of God. So soon as one understands them, and is told of the ends for which they were made respectively, he will see that they are most perfectly adapted to their several ends, and are fit for nothing else at all—will answer no other purpose.

8. Now as it is true of each particular work of God, when taken by itself apart, that it is adapted to some special end; equally true is it of all his works, taken as one entire system, say the globe, and all that it contains,—that God had some end in view in *its* creation, and that it too, in all its parts and operations, in its whole substance and constitution, is adapted to the end for which it was made. And it is farther true just as in the instances previously specified, that this adaptation is palpable to every discerning mind, who will examine it. It is just as evident that it was made for a grand special end, as that it was made at all. Its Final Cause is just as palpable to a competent observer, as its First Cause.

9. What then is the Final cause,—*the special chief purpose for which God has created and governed our world?* What one great end is it designed to accomplish? Whatever that end be, if we can only discover it, sure I am, we will be able to see that the world in its organization and government is adapted to its purpose. And although, in general, we have

an exceedingly imperfect knowledge of the whole field of final causes; although clouds and darkness do often rest upon the high plans and purposes of God; still in this particular instance, he has himself removed that darkness, and given us a revelation of his purpose. Again we ask "*What was that purpose?*" And the bible answers in substance:—

10. *God made this world to be a theatre whereon to MANIFEST HIS GRACIOUS CHARACTER.* He made *this* world, that on *it*, he might reveal to the adoring universe, his compassion for sinners, through an atonement. I cannot be mistaken in affirming that this is the great end (if we may credit the bible) for which God created the world. That book declares that "all things were created by him and for him,"—that is, by Christ and for Christ. (Col. I. 16.)

(1) On this passage I remark, that it represents Jesus Christ as the **First Cause** and the **Final Cause** of all things. As it was he who made all; so he made all for his own use. It was his intention, in their creation, that they should *minister to himself*—the Christ. But who is this Jesus Christ? Verily, none other than the Mediator, the Redeemer and the Saviour. He is neither absolute God, nor mere man, but God-man—Emmanuel—God in our nature—the mediator and head of the ransomed Church. Now of this Jesus Christ, the only end and aim of whose being and office-work it is to redeem and save sinners, it is affirmed that "all things were created *for him*." Not *for him*," considered as God absolute; nor yet "*for him*" considered as man merely, but "*for him*" as the God-man, the Jesus Christ—the Saviour Anointed.

(2.) By "the things which were made," we are not to understand, the *moral*, but the *natural* creation—the creation recorded in Genesis, and not the "new creation" which takes place in conversion. Therefore:

(3.) The text affirms that the world was created to subserve the mediatorial office and work of the "Lamb, slain

[in intention] from its very foundation."* It asserts that the world was made by Jesus Christ, in order that, *on it*, he might enact the amazing drama of redemption; and so, *reveal and illustrate God's graciousness*, to the awed, the enraptured and the adoring universe, thus securing a rich revenue of glory to his great name, eternally.

Other texts affirm the same truth. The spirit says that "of Christ, and to him, and THROUGH him are all things;" and that "he is the Alpha and the Omega"—the cause and the consummation of all.

Now, while these texts affirm that this world and all things therein were made "for the Saviour anointed," and to subserve the designs of God's grace, revealed in him, it is worthy of notice that many other texts of scripture teach that all were made to promote the glory of God. But while there is a discrepancy, there is a real harmony, between these two classes of texts. Put them together and they teach *that this world was made for Christ, that through him, God might manifest his graciousness, and so get glory to his great name.*

11. But is this statement of the Bible true? Is it, in very deed a fact, that God created the world to be a theatre for the manifestation of his gracious character? If so, then it is adapted to its purpose; for God never committed such folly as to create a thing, which was not thus adapted. If it be true that a wise man fits means to ends, much more certainly will the All-wise God do so. If in *most* other instances he has done so, then he has probably done so in this. If in *all* other instances he has done so, then it is certain he has done so in this.

12. We have here, therefore, a very plain and simple test, by which to try the truth of the Bible. If the world in its constitution and history, is not properly adapted to be a fit field on which to display his grace through Christ, then the Bible is *not* true. But, if it is adapted to such a display,

then the Bible is true—the works of nature themselves declaring it to be so.

13. Now we hold that the teachings of Nature and of the Bible are most perfectly at one. They declare that “the world was made *for Christ*—made to be the fit arena on which he should achieve redemption, and so reveal the grace of God. To this grand purpose has the Creator, made all things bend, in forming and governing them. This is the great centre-thought from which all the lines of creation radiate; the sublime, chief corner stone upon which he built the world. And we hold that it were just as easy to banish the idea of redemption from the Bible, as from the works of Nature. Banish this doctrine from the Bible, and you leave all dark and unintelligible; but equally dark and unintelligible is Nature, unless you study it in the light of the cross of Jesus Christ. For if the world tells that it was made by God, it also tells that it was made to be the theatre of the Atonement,—the scene of a Remedial Dispensation—the fit abode of fallen beings put under a dispensation of Grace. The Bible declares it was made for Christ; and from every rock and rill and grove and glen, from every field and fowl and fish and flower, from all the hills and plains of terrestrial nature, there comes up the deep prolonged response, “We were made for Christ: in our whole constitution and history, we are the congruous adjuncts of a Remedial Dispensation: we constitute the fit home of the fallen beings, not yet utterly cast away, but put under a Reign of Grace.” And so plain and unequivocal is the response, that the intelligent student of nature may know as certainly that the world was made for this, as that a watch is made to mark the lapse of time, or a steamboat built for transportation.

14. If these things can be made out, by an examination of the principles upon which the world is formed and governed, we shall have established a new science,—the Science of Natural Christology: or the Testimony of Nature to the truth of the Bible. From time immemorial, we have had the science of Natural Theology; and we are to blame, that

we have not also the science of Natural Christology. For not more fully does nature testify that God made it, than that he made it for Christ—made it to be the abode of lost men, not yet utterly cast away, but put, for a time, into a salvable state.

15. But do not misapprehend me. I do not mean to say that the atonement by Christ, and the salvation of sinners, could be learned from the works of nature independently of a divine revelation. I assert not that nature could *originate* the idea of the christian scheme. But when the idea is once proposed, then one may, and if he will carefully and candidly look, *must* see how all nature is just fitted to the attainment of this object. No sooner will you suggest the Final Cause of the world, to the student of nature, and point out the adaptation of the means to the end, than he will be constrained to exclaim, "I see it! I see it!" This is truth. The world *must* have been built for this very purpose. It is fit for nothing else. All the congruities of the case, show it was made for Christ—made to be the fit home of sinful beings with whom God is still dealing in patience and mercy."

Nor will the inability of nature to originate the idea of the christian scheme place its testimony to the mission of Christ, below that which it bears to the existence of God. For nature can no more originate the idea of God than it can of Christ. Had God never revealed himself, all generations had passed away without knowing or suspecting his existence. Unless he come forth from the thick clouds and darkness that are around him, and proclaim himself "the Lord, the Lord God," our darkened understandings cannot discover him, it would be utterly impossible to them. And we hold that the simple fact that our race have possession of the idea of God, is itself a demonstration that God is, and that he has revealed himself to man.

True; as soon as the idea of Divinity is once suggested, the whole universe testifies to its truth; and the man is mad who doubts it. He is not at all to be reasoned with, because he is not a subject of reason. From the depths of my soul

I pity the man, who, standing on this green and goodly globe and gazing upward into the broad, blue, glorious immensity which encompasses it, can lay his hand on his heart, and say, "There is no God." No God? Why, the very heavens into which you gaze, serene and smiling as they are, as if moved to madness by the boldness of the blasphemy, hurk back in response, "a lie;" and all the earth reverberates, "a lie!" The very moment the idea of Divinity is proposed, all nature, instinct and moving in its Maker's name, grows vocal; with a thousand tongues it shouts aloud of "God."

"The living flowers that skirt th' eternal snows,
 The wild goats, sporting round the eagle's nest,
 The eagles, playmates of the mountain storm,
 The lightnings, the dread arrows of the clouds;
 The signs and wonders of the element,
 Utter forth, 'God!' and fill the hills with praise.
 Thou, too, hoar Blanc! with thy sky pointing peaks,
 Rise, O ever rise,
 Rise like a cloud of incense, from the earth!
 Thou kingly spirit throned among the hills,
 Thou dread ambassador, from earth to heaven,
 Great hierarch! tell thou the silent sky,
 And tell the stars, and tell yon rising sun,
 Earth, with her thousand voices preaches 'God!'"

But the same things which hold true in Natural Theology, hold true also in Natural Christology. For although nature cannot originate the idea of a remedial dispensation, introduced through a redemption, she no sooner finds the idea suggested than she testifies to its truth. Not more surely did all nature testify to the divine mission of Christ, during his humiliation, than it still does, now that he is glorified.

16. We, therefore, proceed to examine this testimony. Supposing that God had purposed to create a world to be the theatre of a remedial dispensation—a world on which to manifest his *gracious* character, and that he did actually create it and, in creating, adapted it to its purpose, what, I ask, would be some of its necessary characteristics? Most undoubtedly such as these:—

(1.) It would have to be the fit abode of intelligent moral beings—all the congruities of the case demand this.

(2.) It would have to be the fit abode of *fallen* beings. For if they were not lost, they could not be redeemed; if they were not sinners they could not have a Savior: if they were not ruined they could not be the fit subjects of a remedy; if they were not unworthy, they could not be the objects of grace*. Therefore

(3.) A world which should be a fit dwelling place of these sinful beings must be a cursed, doomed world. It must be the abode of pain, as well as of pravity; of suffering as well as of sin. For it were infinitely impossible that the Holy One, should create, for sinners, a home free from sorrow—a home of perfect bliss. As God is justice and Holiness, the very exigencies of his God-head require that he should frown upon the wicked. Be it far from God to deal after any other manner. That he should treat the wicked as the righteous; that he should smile, with equal complacency upon them both—that be far from him; shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? Indeed, it were an incongruous, a monstrous, and a horrible thing, that he should lift upon the unholy, his unclouded smile†. What communion hath light with darkness? What concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath God with sinners?

It is clear, therefore, that a world which is to be the home of sinners, must not be so constituted as to be the perennial abode of perfect bliss and beauty. It must darken, rather, under the frown of his displeasure; it must be the dwelling-place of pain and sorrow. But it must be observed:

(4.) That these beings, though fallen and miserable, are not yet utterly cast off. They are not yet doomed and sealed up to destruction. He has not yet withdrawn from them, all kindly feeling, all friendly regard, all purposes of mercy. To them he is about to reveal—probably for the first time, in the infinite sweep of ages and worlds—his gracious character! It is his purpose to put them into a saveable state:

*We are to distinguish between the goodness, the mercy, and the grace of God. His goodness is to all, his mercy to the miserable, and his grace to the unworthy. †See Preacher for June.

(I use this term in no Arminian sense,) to give them the opportunity, through Jesus Christ, of regaining their forfeited place in his favor and family. And so, the world which is to be their dwelling, during this trial-state, must be built in harmony with these designs. It must not be bereft of *every* trace of God's benignity. It must not be given over to the full power of the Curse; nor be entirely filled with lamentation. It must rather contain such partial manifestations of divine goodness, as may be fitly shown toward those with whom God is, for the time, dealing in forbearance; and towards whom She is waiting to be gracious, Strip the world of every token of his regard—pour the terror of his whole wrath upon it,—give it up to the unrestrained ravages of his awful Curse, and, at once, you turn it into hell—an unfit place for them; for sinners, though they be, they are not yet damned. They have been put under a dispensation of grace. Their God is waiting to be gracious. The sunlight of his smile still struggles out, through the lowering cloud of his displeasure; and they find their horizon neither light nor dark. Their light and their darkness are commingled. There is both bitter and sweet, in their cup of mixture. Their state is a state of blended good and evil; of mingled pain and pleasure.

Here then were just such a world, and such a state, as behooves to be allotted to fallen Moral Agents, put under a dispensation of Grace. They behoove not to be perfectly happy, for pure blessedness comports only with perfect rectitude. Nor yet is it *possible* they should be entirely miserable, for that can only be felt by those from whom God has entirely withdrawn his love, and who are utterly and evermore cast away.

If God therefore ever undertake to display his grace to a race of fallen beings, in the manner proposed by Christianity: they must have some home in which to live, while the work is consummating. That home must not, in the fitness of things, be bathed in the serene and sempiternal brightness of the beatific vision, for its inmates are sinners. Nor yet must it welter in the purple fires of all his Wrath, for that would

be inconsistent with the very nature of his gracious feelings and purposes. Their home and condition, therefore, in order that it correspond with the nature of the Salvation-scheme, must be a state of, neither pure good, nor pure evil; but one in which the good and the evil are, for the time, commingled.

17. Now the point to which we wish your attention is, that our world is, just such a place as this: and mankind are in this very condition. Man, and the world, are so adapted to each other as to produce just such a state of things as the congruities of the redemption-scheme require. Everything, on our earth and in it, is capable of yielding man pleasure and of doing him harm. But nothing is capable of giving us perfect pleasure, or of doing us pure good; nor can any thing inflict perfect misery or produce unmitigated evil. Man and nature are so adjusted, that *every* good has some evil in it, because we are sinners; and *every* evil has some good in it, because, God, through Christ, has introduced a remedial scheme. We have enjoyments here; but they do not approach that deep, calm, broad river of Joy, that wells out from the throne of God and the Lamb in Heaven. And we have pains and sorrows and heartaches here; but they approach not that black, burning, bottomless gulph of exquisite misery and of damned despair, in which do welter and stifle the doomed outcasts of vengeance. We have beauty here: but it is a sickly flower, in a foreign soil: its native home is Heaven. We have melody and majesty on earth; but Oh, how dwarfed and diminished beside the anthems and the Alps upon high. Nor, on the other hand, is our condition so wretched as that of the lost. We are not surrounded by such cheerless, hopeless, horrid gloom. We are not turned and tossed, so ceaselessly upon the wild waves of passion and of unrest. We are not so utterly blasted in soul and body and hope. As yet, we are neither wholly received into the favor of God, nor wholly cast away, but are simply put into a salvable state; and Nature is constructed in harmony with his condition.

We neither enjoy the cloudless smile, nor endure the ray-

less frown of our God; and the world, and the things thereof, are the fit expression of the feelings and the purposes of his heart. Everything, is capable of doing us good, but that good is invariably mingled with evil. And everything is capable of doing us harm, but not in a single instance without conveying a substantial good. I might fill many volumes with illustrations of this: but must be content with the merest hints and allusions.

(1.) Nothing is more certain than that *we enjoy no perfect pleasure*—no good which is not inseparably wedded with evil. “Vanity of vanities,” is written upon every created thing. The teeming earth yields up her harvest for the nourishment of man, but she does it tardily, grudgingly, and to the hard big brown hand of labor only. The mountains are one immense magazine of wealth; but it is wealth buried and sealed up among the everlasting rocks; and there must be many a weary step, and many a groan, before it can be brought forth and made to minister to our desires. And so it is with every thing that gives us pleasure, or that does us good. There is still some inseparable adjunct of pain, some immediate taint of evil upon them all. Incurable, I say; for God has made it so. In building the world, to be the home of fallen beings, of beings whom he foresaw would deserve his frown, it was not meet he should store it with those perfect blessings where-with he beatifies his sinless children. Accordingly our blessings are not perfect. None of them are. It is inherent in all nature that sorrow tread hard upon the heels of joy, perpetually. The rose is fragrant and beautiful; but it hides a grieving thorn beneath its tinted downy petals. Knowledge elevates and ennobles the soul; but it breeds a sense of want and weakness and ignorance, it is difficult and painful of acquisition, and is liable to be perverted to the worst of ends. There is jovial exhilaration in the feast, and wine, and song; but disappointment, fatigue and languor follow; often remorse bitterness and burning of spirit. The same sun and showers that fertilize and beautify the earth, that clothe its pastures with flocks and its vales with corn, and set them a singing and

shouting for joy, do also produce those miasmatic exhalations that spread pestilence and death on the wings of the wind, over the whole of doomed and desolated territories. No, no! Our blessings are not perfect—not one of them. They are not spontaneous, satisfying, and perennial, like those of heaven. They all have a weft of evil; they are attempered to pain; they are yoked with sorrows: they are partial, reluctant, occasional, shortlived, and unsatisfying—still leaving an aching void in the bosom, which they cannot fill. Every pleasure has a substratum of sorrow—the golden and gorgeously embossed frame-work of all our fruitions is ever tessellated with our tears. How often has the proud wretched heart exclaimed—

“The harmony of things—this hard decree
This unradicable Root of pain,
This boundless Upas; this all-blasting tree
Whose root is earth, whose leaves and branches be
The skies, which rain their plagues on man like dew,
Disease, death, bondage, all the woes we see,
And evn the woes we see not, which thro’ through
The immedicable soul with heartaches ever new.”—BYRON.

(2.) And as it is with the good, on the one hand; so it is with the evil on the other. Neither is it unmingled evil. It is not perfect misery; for that were inconsistent with our being put under a reign of Grace. For sinners though we be, and therefore miserable; yet God purposes to offer us mercy, through Christ; and therefore he has framed this terrestrial home of ours, in accordance with these designs—all nature shows he is merciful and waiting to be gracious.

The curse of the violated Law, is partially suspended, for the time being. God has suspended it in order to introduce the Remedial Scheme. And knowing that he would do these things, and put lost man into a salvable state, he did, in the very beginning, so constitute the whole course of nature, that our home should not be the abode of unmingled sorrows, like the prison of the lost. Nor do we suffer a single such sorrow during our whole terrestrial existence. The Curse is partially suspended so long as we are in this, salv-

able state, nor does it ever, in a solitary instance, fully exert its power. Either the constitution of man, or of nature, must be changed, before it *can*. In their present constitution, pure evil cannot come upon man; but in every object we are called to sing of mercy as well as judgment—of mercy *in* judgment.

Is not this so? Are not all evils yoked with good? Has not *every* sorrow a warp of blessing? Is not pain, in all its forms, overruled for our profit? To say nothing here, of its ethical uses; not to tell how it weans man from earth, convinces him of sin, and makes him humbler and wiser and better—I say, to leave all this out of the account; still, pain is overruled for great temporal good to man.

Indeed, pain and suffering, fruit of sin, and curse of the Law though they be, are necessary to our continued existence on the earth; and without them the race would speedily perish from its surface; insomuch that, in the present constitution of things they are as much of a blessing as a curse. Not a sorrow, but what viewed in another aspect, is a blessing in disguise. And, strange as it may seem, pain is as necessary to our existence, as food, or water, or air. The pain of oppressive labor is sometimes very great; but were there no sense of fatigue, how often, in the midst of great excitements, would men continue their efforts without sleep or relaxation, until overtaxed nature would sink in death. Labor itself is a part of the curse, and yet for the time, this curse is so far suspended, or overruled, that reasonable labor contributes stamina, health and vigor, to body, and mind, and heart. Hunger and thirst, though sometimes inflicting excruciating tortures; yet what are they, but loud imperious calls from life's exhausted reservoirs, demanding to be replenished, e'er life itself become extinguished. Disgusting as may be the fœtor of a bog, or an opened charnel house, yet what is it but nature's alarmed and violent outcry, that you are in the neighborhood of danger and must flee away. Had we no sense of sickness or pain, who would know that his constitu-

tion was diseased, or how or where to apply the remedy? * What are chills, and fevers, and pains, and all the ills that flesh is heir to, but so many signal banners of suffering, unfurled on the bilgeing ship of life, to proclaim its danger and call for aid? Nay but for pain and suffering, we could never, raise young children to maturity at all. Would they not run continually into danger to life or limb, without knowing they were doing so? How often would they, when unwatched, burn their fingers, instead of torches, for the sake of a blaze: and maim, and haggie and hew each other into grotesque shapes, merely for sport.

It is true, we have much pain and sorrow in the world; and they are the consequences of sin. But it is also true,—and we should be glad and grateful for it—that, in consequence of the introduction of a remedial dispensation, this pain, is, for the time being, overruled, and made conducive to valuable ends.

I could continue to give illustrations indefinitely. Every object, and every event, furnish them. But I have given enough. I have shown that the world is just fitted to be the field for such a work as Christ came to do. It is *not* the fit abode of sinless beings—they deserve a Paradise; it is not the fit abode of sinners utterly cast away from his favor—they deserve a Hell; and this world is neither the one nor the other. It is neither a place of pure pleasure, like Paradise, nor of pure pain, like Tophet. But it is a place of mingled good and evil, suited to be the abode of fallen men, put under a dispensation of Grace; and hence this is the purpose for which it was made. [See paragraph 3.]

There is not an object in creation, nor an event in Providence, either purely good or evil, in its results to man—not a single one. Not one, but what has enough that is evil, in it, to show that God is frowning on us for our sins; and not one but has enough that is desirable in it, to show that he has not clean withdrawn his mercy, but is still waiting to

*The medical journals give a well authenticated account of a man who actually came to his death, from his inability to feel pain.

do us good, and receive us back again into his favor: and as this can only be done through Christ, they all point to him, and declare they were made *for* him—made to be the consentaneous coadjutors in a scheme of grace, of which he is at once the Head and Centre.

Nor was this overruling of pain for good an afterthought with God—a mere happy expedient to get out of an unforeseen difficulty. Foreseeing man's fall, and purposing to put him into a Salvable state, the world was created with adaptiveness to the uses which it was to subserve. Indeed it was to display his gracious character, through the medium of an Atonement that both we, and our world were originally created. And when man had fallen, and been put under an economy of grace, God had not then to change the constitution and course of Nature, to suit the new order of things. There is no evidence or intimation of such a procedure, either in nature or revelation; but as we will see, there is evidence, in both, to the contrary. From all eternity the whole plan and history of our globe were before him. He had an end in view, in the creation of our world; for creation is but the means to an end: and, as God is wise, they are adapted to that end [see paragraphs 2 and 3]. For that end does the world exist, and to that end is it governed.

19. It is an opinion, which has sometimes sought countenance from the bible, that Nature* was different at first in its organic structure, from what it became after the entrance of sin. But does the Bible say so? Does it give, even a dim intimation of such a thing in all its accurate and instructive pages? That the world before the fall, was free from disorder and death and pain, and spread out landscapes of loveliness and happiness like those of heaven, and that after the fall, all became marvellously and miserably changed, is an idle fancy, for which the inspired record is not responsible. On the contrary it furnishes intimations and grounds for inference that such was not the case. The statement of the Bible that after the Lord God created innocent man, he planted a garden eastward in Eden, as a residence for him, implies the fact that the world at large, was not their fit abode;

*Of course I mean *terrestrial* Nature. Other worlds may, each be made to for some particular end, subordinate to the grand Final end of all ages and worlds, which is the manifestation of Divine Glory.

but that favored spot, and it alone, by special, perhaps miraculous, preparation, was the only suitable place on the whole globe, for the residence of primeval man: whilst all the rest of the world was, from the very beginning, what it yet is, and was from all eternity designed to be, the abode of mingled pain and pleasure, of mingled good and evil; else why make this special, this miraculous preparation of a Paradise in Eden? Nor, when man sinned, does the bible intimate that there was any change in the constitution of the world. It simply affirms that he was driven from a place in which he was no longer fit to live, into a place which corresponded with his fallen, but salvable condition, and which might therefore, be said to be under the same curse with the man for whom it was made.

Besides, if what good hebrew scholars have told us be true, that Adam gave names to the animals expressive of their nature, then the animals, even *before* the fall, were the same carnivorous ferocious venomous things they now are; and so, among the animals, death was in the world before sin; and consequently, except in one miracle-made Garden, the world was, from the beginning, just what it now is, and what, from eternity, it was designed to be—the home of mingled good and evil, a home upon which the curse, for the time, is partially suspended.

That this is so, is still farther evident from the physiological structure of the animals themselves. Many of them *were made* to be carnivora, and could not be subsisted except on flesh. Not more surely was the eye made for seeing, the wings for flying, the fin for swimming, than were many families of birds, beasts and fishes made for living on flesh; and they could not so live without the death of what they fed on. Nor will any one having the least acquaintance with the subject imagine that the change in the structure and habits of carnivorous animals. For that were impossible. It were just as easy to change four into five, as for God to change a graminivorous, into a carnivorous animal, in any other way than by a second creation—a thing which we are assured

has not happened. But if the Carnivora and the Ophidia existed before the fall, then does nature join with the Bible in refuting the unauthorized assumption, that the world before that event was, all over, one great Paradise of glory and joy. And it unites with it also in showing that "all things WERE MADE for Christ"—planned and made to be the fit theatre upon which he was to achieve redemption, and reveal the gracious character of God.

Besides all this, it is a fact which all geologists know. (and I cannot tell why theologians ignore it) that death was in the world many years before man was created at all.* From the time the creative fiat first went forth, and the Spirit of God began to brood upon the void, dark and formless deep, on down through all the steps successively taken, to the very moment when he created man, there was going on a work which had for its aim, to build up a theatre for Christ, upon which he might display the gracious character of God.

Nay! the work of preparation for this new display of the divine character, was not only carried on in the first constitution of our world. It commenced in periods indefinitely earlier than the earliest records of our geology; and in other worlds than ours. Perhaps the first step in this ineffably grand and terrible drama, was taken when the angels fell. Probably it began in the empire city of the Eternal, and under the very eye of the great I AM, when Beelzebub reared the standard of revolt, and, being bound in chains of fire, was cast down to hell. And ever since, by beings high and low, in heaven, earth and hell, it has been, and is now being pursued. And the construction of the world, *as we now see it*, was but one step in the consummation of the mighty scheme.

20. If any one object that the narrative in Genesis (3, 17) represents the ground as cursed on account of man's sinfulness, I answer: Lo it was. It was cursed *proleptically*, in its

*Still there is very much Apochryphal speculation among Geologists, about the age of the world. Professor Christy, of Oxford, has sufficiently shown this in his Lectures and Letters—which eminently deserves to be read.

very creation; and the curse was formally denounced, after sin had actually entered. It was with the First Adam as it was with the Second. For as Jesus Christ was, from the the foundation of the world, counted as the Lamb slain, and the whole machinery of grace put in operation, and many sinners saved, and all this, long before the Second Adam had actually wrought out Redemption, so it was also with the First Adam. God who knows the end from the beginning, had, in view of Adam's fall from the very outset *constituted* the world a "cursed" world, and placed it and all its tribes (man and Paradise alone excepted) under the bondage of corruption, liable to decay and death. Now, as life comes by righteousness, and yet by anticipation, came thousands of years before the righteousness was rendered; just so, though death came by sin, (Rom. 5, 12.) yet it reigned from the very beginning of their existence, over plants and the inferior animals, though the sin had not yet been actually committed.

There was the same prolepsis of condemnation and death in the first Adam, as of justification and life in the second Adam. From the foundation of the world, life came by Jesus Christ, though he had not yet died: and so, from the third creation Epoch (or third great creation day, Gen. 1, 1—13.) death ravaged, though Adam had not yet sinned.

21. Nor is it a legitimate subject of enquiry to ask, "What would have been the consequences, if our first parents had not fallen, and how could the narrow precincts of the Garden have contained the teeming millions of their unfallen posterity?" For, in turn, it might as well be asked; how the world itself could contain the swarming multitudes of men, beasts, and birds, and reptiles, and fishes, and insects, that have lived, and shall yet live, had death never entered, to thin their ranks. No doubt, if Adam had not sinned, or if any other part of the divine plan had failed, it would have thrown everything into confusion; because each part is linked with every other, and dependent on it. But we should bear in mind that it was absolutely certain that as "the determinate Council and Foreknowledge of God," that Adam by

a most free act of his own will, would sin. And the supposition that God did not foresee the fall, or that it was not certain beforehand, or that in the eternal Counsel of God, he did not adopt this melancholy futurition, as an essential part of his grand far-reaching scheme, is really too silly to demand a moment's attention.

22. In the view now presented, you have the solution of what, on any other hypothesis, will be found to be serious difficulties. Natural philosophers have complained, long and loudly against Moses, because, as they have been taught to believe, he teaches that animals and, perhaps, plants too, as well as man, were made subject to mortality by man's sin. "Whereas (say they) nature, that elder scripture, writ by God's own hand, testifies that all these things, by a necessity of nature, are subject to death, and must die, whether man had sinned or not; and that it is absolutely certain that they died, by millions, years and ages before man was created at all." And they further object that "were there no death, the world could not possibly hold us all."

But the whole difficulty grows out of a misapprehension of what the bible says. It does *not* say that there was no pain or death among the animals and vegetables, before man sinned. It simply teaches that if Adam had retained his integrity, he and his offspring would never have died. It does not even affirm of *man*. that he was *naturally* immortal: or that when he sinned he had to be subjected to some physiological change in order that he might be capable of dying. It does not teach that sin made any change whatever in the structure or functions of any animate or organized existence on earth, except the human soul. Nor is it at all necessary to suppose any. Its simple and sublime statement is, that God created man in his own image, holy and happy, and, by covenant, engaged to keep him so forever, on condition that he would not eat of the fruit of the Tree that grew in the midst of the Garden. If any rashly affirm that this necessarily implies that Adam was *naturally* immortal, inasmuch as the promise exempted from death, on condition of obedi-

ence, let me refer him to Enoch and Elijah, and to all those who shall be in the flesh at the second coming of our Lord, for better instruction. Had Adam been constituted as we now are, still there would have been no necessity of physical death, had he kept his innocence; nor when he sinned, any necessity of physical change in order that he might become mortal.

23. But if any one gainsay the views now advanced, in reference to the primeval constitution of the world, and its living population; if he say that before sin entered, there was no pain, disease, or death upon the globe, of any kind whatever; if he maintain that the world was one vast continuous Paradise, from pole to pole, and from shore to shore, containing no carnivorous animals, or poisonous reptiles, or decaying plants; if, contrary to Genesis, and Geology, he maintain a second creation, after the fall, when the Carnivora and Ophidia were, for the first time, introduced upon the stage, and all organic nature reconstituted and subjected to a new set of laws; if he affirm, without scripture or reason, that man's rebellion, wrought vast physical changes upon the globe and all that inhabit it, introducing the war of elements and the decay of races, where all before had been serene, immutable and immortal; if, contrary to the bible, he say the world was *not in the outset, made for Christ*, nor suited to be the temporary home of sinners put, by him, under a dispensation of salvation, but made for sinless beings,—then I cheerfully waive all I have advanced on these topics, as not at all necessary to my argument. At least, you will admit that the world is *now* such as I have described it—a world so constituted, as to be to man, a home of mingled good and evil. That it is such a world, is undenied and undeniable. And equally undeniable is it, that it was God who made it so. *When* he made it so, whether before or after the fall, is not essential. But at *some* time, and for *some* cause, he gave it its present constitution. That he had some end in view, some object to gain, in giving it its present character, it is impossible to doubt, if we admit him to be wise.

Now *what is that end?* The bible says it was made *for Christ*; that is, made as a fit *field* on which to display grace, through the Atonement. And we think we have shown that it is precisely adjusted to this end, *and to no other*—that it is a fit temporary abode of intelligent moral Agents, fallen from their integrity and under the frown of God, but rather, for the time, dealt in patience and mercy.

24. If my limits permitted, I could very much fortify these views, from a history of the works of Providence. I could show not only that all things were made for Christ, but also, that *they are managed for Christ*. Take away this idea of redemption from the history of God's Providence, especially from the history of his dealings with the human race, and you can no more understand that history, than you can the history in the bible, when that idea is away. Profane history is just as really connected with the carrying out of the remedial scheme, as sacred history. And the light of Calvary, is just as necessary to an intelligent perusal of the former as the latter. "When the most High divided the nations their inheritance, When he separated the sons of Adam, *he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel;*" and the migration of the tribes, the founding of colonies and cities, the rise and reign and ruin of Empires, the progress of the sciences and arts, the various phases and developments of religion and civilization in different age and countries:—these all, and all things else connected with the histories of our race, can only be truly understood, when viewed in their connection with the church of God, and the economy of Grace. All power and rule have been given to Jesus Christ; and from his cross there goes forth a silent, secret, far-reaching influence, which moulds and forms all human history. That the grace of God may be gloriously revealed in the salvation of sinners, is the Final Cause of all terrestrial Providences. Grace is the key with which to unlock the hidden wisdom of the past, the chart and compass and sounding-line with which to explore the coming wonders of the future. Grace is, at once, the corner

and the key-stone in the Temple of History, sustaining the whole fabric, binding it into one compact and grand whole, and without which the whole structure, destitute of foundation, unity, and coherence, would tumble into ruins—a chaos of isolated, aimless, meaningless, fragmentary details.

CONCLUSION.

1. It is time, we think, for the introduction of a new science—the science of Natural Christology. Sound learning has advanced far enough, and Christianity, assaulted on every side, expects it at our hands. We have had Natural Theology enrolled, for many centuries, as a distinct science. And what an immense and interesting study it is! Immense and lovely as the works of God—all Nature testifying to God its Maker.

But then all terrestrial Nature, does also testify of Christ and the Atonement; and it is time that we should listen to the testimony. If each thing existing tells of the hand that made and upholds it, so does it declare, by its adjustments, and connections that it was made to subserve the interests of Christ. Theologians have all along declared this truth, and appealed, for proof, to the bible. Looking at the subject merely in the light of revelation, they have taught that the world is to the church, as the scaffolding to the building; that the former has been created preserved and sustained, for the sake of the latter. But science has already furnished ample materials for the confirmation of the same thing; and all we lack is a proper exploration and arrangement of these materials. And when learning and genius shall have expended as much time and labor upon Natural Christology, as they have upon Natural Theology, the former will as triumphantly vindicate the divine mission of Christ, as does the latter the eternal existence of God.

For if from the thing made, we may argue backward to the First Cause, so, with equal certainty, may we argue forward

to the Final Cause. If, contrivance and design, in the works of nature, proclaim a Contriver and Designer, so do they proclaim the thing designed. And just as an analysis of the works of Creation and Providence, is but an *a posteriori* proclamation of God the Creator, so, a synthesis of them, is but an *a priori* proclamation of Christ the Redeemer. Just as an inspection of the alimentary canal shows not only who made it, but also what he made it for; just as the nervous system not only declares that God made it, but also, that he made it to be the instrument of motion and sensation; so does the entire world declare, not only that God made it, but made it to be the fit field for the display of grace, to a race of fallen moral Agents. And as this can only be done, by a holy God, through the vicarious atonement of the Lamb slain, therefore the entire science of Terrestrial nature, is one great attestation to the divine mission of Emmanuel—one great prophecy and proclamation of the Son of God. But:

2. This view of the eternal design of God, as manifested in nature, serves to correct a grievous error into which shallow men, and partizan expounders of the lively Oracles have sometimes fallen. There are those who seem to think the fall of man was something unforeseen and unprovided for; and therefore conceive of the Incarnation and Atonement as an *afterthought* with God—a happy expedient to retrieve an unexpected and an unwelcome catastrophe. But it needs not to say how unscriptural and unreasonable is all this, for even Nature herself exclaims against it. The great globe, with a thousand tongues, declares, that the fall *was* foreseen and the Remedial Dispensation decreed from everlasting; and the whole course of creation and providence planned and executed in conformity therewith. Nature, trumpet-tongued, testifies that “Christ was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was; that the Lord possessed him in the beginning of his undertakings, before his works of old, she declares that when God prepared the heavens see Gen. 1: 8,) he was there: when he set a compass upon

the face of the deep; when he gave the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment; when he appointed the foundations of the earth; then was this Jesus by him, as one brought up with him; he was daily his delight * * * Rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, and his delights were with the sons of men." [Prov. 8; 22—31.] Even in those remote ages, he rejoiced as he saw the field of his future achievements, preparing for his occupancy. And the great God, as stone after stone went up in the building, daily *delighted* in that Son for whom the structure was erecting. Nor

3. Can we conclude without noting how christianity and philosophy go hand in hand, mutually upholding each other. Nor can we fully understand the one, only as we get acquaintance and intimacy with the other. Both nature and revelation were constructed with reference to the Cross, and to be fully understood must be studied, as connected with, and dependent on it. And being both constructed with the same hand, and with the same design, they should be studied together. Like the Old Testament, and the New, they reflect light upon each other. And no man, whether as a philosopher, or a theologian can ever become truly master of his field, whose logic impiously assumes to separate what God has joined together. All Nature has one First Cause—God, and one Final Cause—Christ; and therefore to be understood, Philosophy and Theology, Nature and Revelation, must be studied together. Creation, Providence and Redemption are the congruous components of one grand, eternal, far-reaching scheme. They are a Trinity of operation, aiming at a Unity of result. Like the "three that bear record on earth—the spirit, the water and the blood—they agree in one—God's graciousness, and therefore, to be understood, they must be studied together. And

4. If these things are so, let men especially flee to Christ and be saved. If the present life is a trial-state,—if the present constitution of things is soon to pass away,—if those who improve the opportunities given them are shortly to be

entirely restored to far more than the primeval holiness and happiness of heaven—and if those who obstinately persist in refusing the remedy which God has graciously provided for their ruin shall shortly perish—if God shall shortly cease all his efforts to bring them back to himself—if he shall soon withdraw all tastes and tokens of mercy from the incorrigible, how strong the argument for a speedy return to God! Foreseeing our ruin, and resolving to give us the offer of a remedy, he has constituted the great globe, so as to be our fit abode during all that period in which he is waiting to be gracious.

Let no one fear to return. For not only is the whole bible^o full of invitations, and entreaties, and oaths of welcome; but all nature too is testifying that God's mercy is not yet clean gone; that his grace has not yet failed; that the fountains of his goodness are not yet sealed up; that mercy is still rejoicing against judgement; that God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his evil way and live; that the Lord, the Lord God, the great architect of nature, the Former of all bodies and the Father of all spirits, is "a merciful and gracious God, long suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, and able and willing and waiting to save to the uttermost all those who will truly accept the remedy which he has provided. It is for this end he has partially suspended, for the time, his curse due on account of sin, and gives us, everywhere, in all things, the gleamings and the glowings forth of his goodness and grace, O, timid, trembling sinner! anxious for your soul's salvation, and wickedly distrustful of the willingness of God to save *you*, rejoice! rejoice! Every blessing and privilege you enjoy in this terrestrial existence, is a fresh proof that the God who gave them to you, has not yet utterly cast you off, but is waiting to receive you back. Ye! know O man, that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance; and do not, after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasure up wrath against the

day of wrath, and the revelation of the righteous judgments of God.

And as no one should fear to come; so *let no one presume to refuse*. Although the curse is, for the time, restrained in its forthgoing, still we may see and taste enough of it, to convince us that it is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God!

5. This subject is calculated to put honor upon the Ministry of Reconciliation. We have heard some complaints of late—perhaps not entirely unfounded—of its hardships and privations. But I must protest against the prominence which has been given to this shaded part of the picture. So much has been said and thought about it that men are in danger of forgetting, or undervaluing the minister's many great and peculiar blessings, privileges, and joys. Take it all in all, and there is no employment, this side Heaven, in which a truly good and consecrated man, may be so useful, or so happy, as in the work of the christian ministry. There is no work like it. It is in harmony with the astonishing work of Christ, with the ineffable condescension and grace of the Spirit, the deep desires of the Angels, and the whole constitution and course of Nature. Heaven and earth, spirit and matter, the powers of the world to come, and the powers of the world that now is, the whole drift and sweep of things above, below, and around; all, all co-operate with the true Ambassador of Christ, and he derives sweetness, and aid and comfort from them all. Let all men know assuredly that he who desireth the office of a Bishop, desireth a good work; and let them, especially the young, learn to covet it; for in the presence of that Eternal God, before whom I stand, with my whole soul, I do declare, that there is not on earth, another employment like it—so honorable, so useful or so happy.