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A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_bib-sacra\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php)

THE  
BIBLIOTHECA SACRA

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ARTICLE I.  
THEODICY.

BY PROFESSOR JACOB COOPER, D.C.L., LL.D.

CAN THE EXISTENCE OF EVIL BE RECONCILED WITH A  
PERFECT CREATOR AND GOVERNOR OF THE UNIVERSE?

THE presence of evil everywhere mars the beauty of our glorious world. Each part of the house, so skillfully fitted for man's residence and use, is polluted by his sinful touch. For through man the effects of sin reach every part of sentient nature; causing the whole creation to groan and travail together as the consequence. Whatever affects the one which stands at the head of creation must be felt to its remotest members.

But it is chiefly among rational creatures, who alone can be guilty of sin, that we see its withering blight. By it they are weakened in their powers for action, diminished in their capacities for happiness, and abridged in the period of their existence. It destroys the harmony between their material and spiritual natures which is necessary to their efficient action, and thus appears to defeat the purpose for which they were created. Were the effects of sin confined to this life, the conditions would be less grievous. If man after suffering during this brief period were rescued from further misery by an unending sleep, the in-

jury inflicted would be relatively small. But as the present life, on every rational view of the world's destiny, is simply preparatory, a disciplinary stage, and the experiences gained are in their effects to be projected into an everlasting existence, the dark problem of sin shows its full import, and renders an explanation both more difficult and desirable.

THE PRESENCE OF EVIL A STUBBORN, UNDENIABLE FACT.

The prevalence of evil in the world at large and in our individual nature is a stubborn fact. No subtlety can eliminate its existence; no sophistry can deny the wretchedness which it causes to each rational creature, or to the lower orders of beings, whose destiny is affected by man's conduct. It is, therefore, the height of folly to charge any system of religion with the lamentable result because it asserts or explains the fact. We cannot fail to see that the existence of evil as a reality is independent of the reasons which may be devised to account for it. This is equally true in the case of every scientific fact in physical nature. The impossibility of disclosing and explaining the ultimate causes for any phenomenon has nothing to do with its actuality. Ultimate causes elude our search, and mock our attempts to evade their action. If we try to explain them away, they continue their activity with perfect indifference to our theories or wishes. Even so in regard to the presence of evil as a malign force, marring the conditions under which we all have to live. Yet, if we take a pessimistic view of the world, and say that our condition is so bad that it cannot possibly be made any worse, the facts which meet us testify that such is not the case; for there is happiness in the world, even for those who are most depraved. They have many comforts and many sources of enjoyment, which continue until, by persistent evil courses, they have reduced their own nature to its worst possible condition, and made their own surroundings so bad that

they seem to admit of no restoration. But it is also true that many who, by patient continuance in well-doing, should be happy, are still miserable. This may be the effect either of the evils which they have not fully eradicated from their own nature, or from the bad conduct of others with whom they are associated, and from whom they cannot be wholly dissevered. And all may experience the effects of sin long after they have ceased its commission.

DENIAL OF EVIL, OR REPROACHING GOD WITH ITS PRESENCE, DOES NOT CHANGE ITS REALITY.

Shutting our eyes to the fact of its presence, reproaching our Creator with forming a system of government under which such a fact is possible; or, what is much the same, charging a scheme of revealed religion with evils which it admits, tries to account for, and to obviate, are foolish in the extreme. For these cavils in no wise disprove the stubborn fact patent before our eyes, and testified to by our consciences in the workings of our own nature. The relation of the creature to the Creator certainly is not changed by the complaint, Why hast thou made me thus? or denial that there is any Maker or intelligent Ruler of the universe. Our desires, or our beliefs, or our obstinate resistance, cannot change the fact that we are in some relation to this Power; and that we have to work out our destiny subject to the conditions of our environment. We are amenable to the laws of physical nature, which we can neither reverse nor evade. They control us, whether we will or no. If we are obedient to them, they insure our comfort. But, to obey them, we must know them; and, as we increase that knowledge and utilize it by application the more we make the laws which govern our world conducive to our welfare. Analogy justifies us in expecting the same in our moral relations. For we are under some kind of a moral system as surely as we are under a physi-

cal. There is a Power which rules for the reward of well-doing and the punishment of sin, even as there is in the management of the material world. It matters not for our argument, whether that Power be immanent and impersonal, or personal and transcendent; there is a supreme energy embodied in the law to bring about the result, "that it shall be well with the righteous, and ill with the wicked." The individual moral agent is somehow connected with a system, and this superintended by a personal Lawgiver, or an immanent force which possesses all the attributes of personality, acting according to fixed laws of reward and punishment. These execute themselves as surely as the laws which regulate the powers and materials constituting the physical universe. There is evidently a government of some kind working out results as surely in the one system as the other, no matter whether personal or impersonal.

THE CREATIVE POWER, EITHER BENEVOLENT OR  
MALEVOLENT.

Now this Power must be either malevolent or benevolent. And, in answer to the question, Under which kind of government are we placed? it is a significant fact that the more brutal, ignorant, and cruel a people, or a single person, may be, the more tendency there is to picture the Ruling Power as malevolent. This may be seen in the conception and worship of the lowest savages, and the notions of the most depraved characters among civilized peoples. In every case the conception of the Ruling Power is formed after the model of the thinker.

THE CREATION AND GOVERNMENT OF THE WORLD RE-  
QUIRES OMNIPOTENT POWER.

The presence of evil seems anomalous in a world created and governed by a holy God. For there can be no crea-

tion without infinite power; and the formation of anything *de novo* includes in the act all the energies which it subsequently manifests. Hence there can be nothing originated by the development, growth, or exercise of power, which was not potentially in the thing when first formed. Accordingly, omnipotence must be involved in absolute creation, whether that be considered as the formation of something out of nothing, or the transference of force into phenomenal form. At bottom there is no difference between these apparently diverse acts. For, if something be made absolutely out of nothing, the act of creation must include the embodiment of all the powers included in the thing formed. It is merely exercising the power by a new method, or in a place where it was not before. For, unless that power existed somewhere which is adequate to produce something where nothing existed before, then nothing would be produced.

WHY, THEN, IS NOT GOD THE AUTHOR OF SIN, SINCE  
HE MADE THE WORLD ACCORDING TO HIS  
GOOD PLEASURE?

Thus the question meets us squarely, How can there be any evil in a world created by a perfectly holy God? For, before there was any world formed, there could be no evil in it; and there could be none in him who made it. This holy Being can have no possible sympathy or affiliation with it; and, as he possesses all power, could certainly prevent its introduction in the thing he creates. For the creation of something—no matter when in the far-off ages, the remoteness of the act has no bearing on the act itself—involves the idea that there was a time at which this took place; and therefore a time antecedent to that action. Place ourselves in imagination in this antecedent period, and we think of the eternal God as possessing in himself all the fullness which subsequently, by the act of creation, is

employed in the production of the visible universe. Before the process began, not only did omnipotence possess all fullness, some of which is by his own act disintegrated or distributed into the objects created, but foresaw and designed all that should take place. Moreover, he must in this ante-creation period have been alone. He was certainly without interference from any other power, even if such power was eternal like himself. For there could not be two omnipotences; and, if there were an inferior power which had the privilege of creation, this must have been derived from him who possessed the supreme authority. So, whatever was done by the inferior is in effect done by him who bestowed the creative energy, or permitted its exercise.

#### CREATION AN ACT OF PURE FREEDOM.

When we have placed ourselves at the beginning, so to speak, of creation, when it was an act of free volition, we can see, that, first of all, the question would be, Shall there be any creation? The Supreme, possessing in himself all potency, and standing alone, can create or not as he pleases. All possibilities were open to Almighty power; all methods and plans of action in the compass of his omniscience. Perfectly unlimited in the range of possibilities, it would of necessity be voluntary whether there should be any creation at all, or whether it should be in accordance with one plan or another. There was no compulsion on an agent having absolute freedom in himself. For it is inseparable from Almighty power to create or not, or to create in one way rather than another of the infinite possibilities.

#### THE PRESENCE OF EVIL IN THE WORLD THOUGHT TO BE AN INSOLUBLE ANOMALY.

It has been thought to be an anomaly difficult or impossible of solution, that a holy God, possessed of wisdom, and

power to do everything that he wished, and under no constraint to make a world at all, should make one containing the possibility of evil. For he must have foreknown that this would be the theater of untold wickedness and misery. The question meets us, Does he by the act of creation will the sin which he foresees will be committed, and the misery which is the inevitable consequence of this sin? The mind shrinks back in horror from such a thought. Even the heathen poet<sup>1</sup> could not conceive of God as being the author of a sinful act. There must then be some way of explaining this anomaly, how a holy and omnipotent God created a world which should be blighted by the pollution of sin and the misery it engenders.

GOD, WHILE ABSOLUTE, CAN ACT NEITHER ABSURDLY  
NOR CONTRADICTORILY.

Though an absolute God is subject to no conditions except such as would involve a contradiction or absurdity, yet creation itself must be limited in the range of possibilities. God could not, with reverence be it spoken, create another being equal to himself. And, if he could, that would imply two omnipotences, which is an absurdity; or else the exhaustion of the first Power in creating another equal to itself. Creation, then, necessitates that the thing made be inferior to the maker. For every act of voluntary evolution consists in imparting a portion of the power possessed to the thing formed. Certainly all could not be imparted without exhausting the maker and leaving him empty. Hence, if there be a creation at all, it must be by the transference of some part—not all—of the power, knowledge, holiness, justice, of the maker into the thing made. Therefore the act of creating this world, including man, involves necessarily that the thing formed should not be perfect. For, if perfect, then the vessel of the potter

<sup>1</sup> Pindar, Ol. i. 84, *ἀπλοταυμ*.



equals or surpasses the maker. The analogy of human industry makes this plain. No agent can put all of himself into his work. If he did, this would be equal to the sum total of his energies; and by their employment he would have exhausted himself, and never could do more. So, however excellent a man's work may be in the arts, however great his services in science or statecraft, and whatever be the beneficial results to mankind, the man must still be superior, the work cannot be equal to the workman.

THE MAKER CANNOT PROJECT ALL HIS PERFECTIONS  
INTO THE THING MADE.

So in moral conduct. We admire the great acts of virtue, of unselfishness, the consecration of the choice spirits that have blessed the earth with their beneficence. But they are still greater—greater than all their acts, greater than all the world on which they have bestowed their moral energy. For here, as in every other case, no one can transfer himself wholly into his creations. So, if we reason from human industry to the Divine action,—and we must not lose sight of the fact that this is our only possible method,—we are estopped from the possibility that God could create anything equal to himself. There is much looseness of thought and speech in the use of the word "perfect." We call a thing perfect when it completely meets the requirements of its place in nature or human employment. In these cases, in strictness of speech, it is only *adequate*, not *perfect*. This quality can be applied to but One. Everything else is measured by a standard of relativity. Some degree of excellence is the highest of which we can conceive. So in the measurement of any quality or act. It may be as perfect as its kind admits. It may even exhaust all our conceptions. But our compass is not the measure by which that which is absolutely perfect is

to be tried or compared. While we are shut up to the methods of human thought for conceiving the Divine nature, we must be conscious that this transcends our powers. In precisely the same way we think of infinite extent or duration. We can conceive of certain amounts of each, and measure them by our standards of space and time; but with a consciousness that they both extend utterly beyond our grasp. As our measurements of each come short of the reality, so everything in the universe, except the Supreme Being, comes short of actual perfection.

IF THERE BE A CREATION, THE WORK MADE MUST BE  
INFERIOR TO THE MAKER.

Hence, if there be a creation, God cannot, without destroying his own nature, make anything absolutely perfect, since that would require it to be equal to himself. And if it be not thus absolute, there is some lack; something in which it comes short of the perfection of him who made it. And, if not complete in all its parts, it is not secure from becoming worse. For, where there is any defect, it is possible for that to increase or decrease; increase if the conditions are such that this defect can enlarge or multiply itself. The *negative* quantity when acting on itself can be fruitful in producing more of the same kind. In pure numbers we call it a *positive* quantity; but this represents its own kind, not a sum above the mark of zero or nonentity. It is the multiplication of a minus of that which is placed above the null mark. For the multiplication or addition of one sum, which is in itself less than nothing, cannot add to the positive amount of any concrete thing. So a defect in the moral character of the thing created by infinite love and power—and unless the creature were absolutely perfect it must include such defect—contained in itself the element or capacity of reproduction, if it have an

existence at all, as surely as the positive quantities for good in the excellences of the same creature.

IF IMPERFECT AND FREE TO ACT, IT COULD MAKE ITSELF BETTER OR WORSE.

For the like could not produce the unlike. Defect could not produce excess; nor could imperfection in character produce excellence. Accordingly, if the Creator exerted his power in the evolution of a world, and in the formation of moral character as an attribute of intelligence, it must be accompanied with the power of self-reproduction. But the metaphysical necessity of the case requires that, if a creation be formed, it must be of beings not absolutely perfect, possessing a nature containing defects as well as excellencies. And hence, if free agents, they are capable of exercising either their excellencies or their defects. By the one course they would become better, by the other worse, according to the process of development to which all created nature seems to be subject. Such freedom is inseparable from moral character. There can be neither virtue nor vice unless man has the power to do himself harm. And that power working upon an imperfect nature,—the only kind, as we have seen, that could be created, provided any creation were formed,—it can make this worse or better indefinitely.

IMPERFECTION IN CHARACTER DOES NOT CONSTITUTE SIN.

But the defect in the character which results from the necessity of creating it inferior to the Maker himself, does not constitute sin. A man may have a defect which he by determination never allows to develop into the actual; and certainly he is not guilty of the act he does not even desire to commit. And if he be not the author of a sin which he does not even desire to commit, *a fortiori*, God is not the author of what is never actualized. There is a possibility that the defect will never lead to actual sin, since the free

agent can surely prevent this if he chooses. But if he does commit sin, this must belong to him who is clothed with the power to prevent its occurrence. If not, there would be no difference between the potentiality and its exercise. If he does that which he has the power not to do, which will entail misery on himself if he does, and from which he is warned by the most positive command as well as assurance of the consequences, then it is demonstrably clear that the Creator of such a free agent is not the author of his acts or their consequences.

IF THE CREATURE IS MADE SO PERFECT THAT HE CANNOT SIN, HIS ACTS HAVE FOR HIM NO QUALITY.

Still further, if the character be made so perfect that there is no possibility of sinning, while on this supposition no transgression could take place, yet the actions of this agent would have no moral quality, so far as he is concerned. They would be good *per se*, it is true; since every act, as well as every factor of the creation, has its own essential nature. But such acts would be just as much the effect of necessity as those of the most ultra fatalism ever conceived. Thus we see that, unless there were some defect in its character, and therefore danger of its being exercised, while there could be no sin, at the same time there could no quality of virtue inure to the agent. For his nature is already fixed. It cannot be made better by his own action, and hence there is no development or building up of character. The man under such circumstances is not a free agent; there is neither place nor power for him ever to exercise a choice, to select the good or eschew the evil. The goodness of the act would not be voluntary; and therefore would belong, not to him who had no choice in its exercise, but exclusively to that Power which rendered it impossible to do anything else. Therefore to create man so perfect that he could not commit a sin would

render him a necessary agent, quite as much as is a link in material causation. Accordingly, nothing which he might do could improve character or claim merit.

TO GIVE THE CREATURE FREEDOM OF ACTION DOES NOT  
COMPEL HIM TO DO WRONG.

So the main objection brought against every system of revealed religion, that it involves the presence of evil, and makes God the author of sin, is found to be unreasonable. For we find that a creation requires that the thing formed must be defective, and, if so, liable to go astray. Or, if guarded *ab extra* to such degree as to render a lapse impossible, the action so necessitated would have no reference to the actor, would not make him good, however excellent his action might be in itself; nor permit him to develop character for himself of any kind. For there would be no possibility of building up this, unless there were such a choice between motives that by acceptance or rejection the action could belong to the agent. For there must be an alternative to any line of conduct, in order to give it a moral quality. We have to deal with, not an imaginary, but a real world; not with a state of things wholly different from those by which character is developed. If there are to be such qualities as righteousness, virtue, merit, as the result of good action, there must be a condition by which these things are possible. And this can only be where there is an alternative which may be embraced by a free choice. If the work of man on earth is to build up character, if his experience is disciplinary, by which he constantly becomes better fitted for greater good and a wider sphere of action, then he must have the responsibility of choosing for himself a course different from one which appealed to the lower qualities in his nature. For these involve the possibility of wrong-doing inseparable from a personality which contains at least some elements

of imperfection. And all created things, both material and spiritual, must contain such elements.

GROWTH IN CHARACTER INSEPARABLE FROM FREEDOM OF ACTION.

Again, if the character of a created being were made perfect at first, there would be nothing left for such to do in further development, because it would be excluded from all free-will action. For this is necessary in order to change the actor in one direction or the other. He could neither be made better by another nor improve himself. So there could be no growth, and consequently no responsible experience. But the analogy of nature teaches us that the great business of every creature is growth, until it reaches the limits of its possibilities. It is not enough that the talent be preserved intact, laid up in a napkin, to be called for at the Master's instance. He demands that it be rendered back to him with additions. And these accretions are to be the fruits of the actor's personal efforts, for which he gets praise or blame. These efforts could not be made if there were either no power to do wrong, or capacity for choice. The man who brought back only the one he received would certainly be on a par with the others so far as merit is concerned, if none had any power for increment. If one were so endowed that he must, *per force*, increase to the utmost bounds of growth; or, on the contrary, he could make no gain, in either case the result would, so far as merit is concerned, be certain in advance. No reckoning could be made with any justice or propriety, provided the element of uncertainty be excluded. If the personal industry have no effect, or if he be under such constraint that there could be no variation in the result, this would exclude the reason for commendation for success or censure for failure.

THE CREATURE MADE PERFECT WOULD THEREBY HAVE  
HIS DESTINY FIXED IN ADVANCE.

The result would be equally fixed in advance—fixed without the actor's intervention or voluntary effort. There could be no evil wrought if every character were perfect, and no good in the world as the result of the creature's efforts. Hence there would be nothing which the creature could do in shaping his own character or destiny, since he could make it neither better nor worse, and neither increase nor diminish his own happiness. Thus a moral scheme which involved no liability of becoming worse, would be open to the objection that it excludes every possibility of becoming better. The creature would be as much under the despotism of Fate as though he were forced to do evil continually. Of course the result would be diametrically the reverse in its influence on the general condition of the universe. But whatever was effected would have no relation to the actor and his character. The creation would be completed when it was first formed. The creature would be completely developed before it had any opportunity for growth. For it could have no growth when it was already mature; and hence could never become any better, since it was made perfect at the start. Neither could there be any place for personal improvement when the individual had his work done for him; nor ground of merit for that which was as good as it could be made before he was intrusted with the responsibility of its management.

NECESSITY FOR THE WORLD TO BE IMPERFECT WHEN  
FIRST CREATED.

So we see that the making of a perfect world involves an impossibility in the act of creation, and excludes any human agency in the formation of character. But, as the principal business of man is the discipline of his

powers by the exercise of his own choice, this would be excluded if he had no choice. For he could have no responsibility, and no merit for preserving intact something which he had no power to injure. And so the two objections constantly raised against the notion that an omnipotent and holy God could not, or would not, create a world which had any imperfection, are shown to be groundless. Equally so is it proven that the creation of a system of moral government where there was no possibility of doing wrong would exclude the idea of responsibility. Hence there could be no personal action on the part of the creature in developing growth of character, or on the possibility of increasing in happiness by the proper discipline of his own personality. The universe would be at a standstill; and no one could become virtuous by his personal action, if there was in the constitution of his character no possibility of becoming vicious.

#### INDIVIDUALITY INVOLVES SEPARATE ACTION.

The process of creation involves the formation of something distinct from the Power which makes it. Such is the tendency visible by analogy, our only guide in forming a conception of this work. However subtle and close the process of the ego projecting itself in thought, still the result achieved is distinct from the agent which elaborates it. The workman may impart his genius,—all his powers and capacities were that possible,—into any creation; but the relation of contrast between him and his finished product is complete. Nature is made up of distinct individuals, despite the fact that the material of which they may be formed may be similar in every degree from the faintest resemblance to indiscernible differences. But grant that the material is continuous,—as water, gases, pure elementary substances,—still a distinct portion, and occupying a separate space, are the characteristics of everything from



the molecules or atoms, the minutest organisms, whether of inert matter, or endued with life up to the most complete.

#### EACH INDIVIDUALITY HAS ITS SEPARATE PLACE IN NATURE.

Each of these is independent of every other; each has its own place in nature, its separate function; and each, both in action and reaction, has its own individuality. Were this not the case, there would be no difference between things. Not only would they be alike, but they would be one with each other; though necessarily, as the thing made, they would be diverse from the maker. But as it is absurd to say that all things are the same, and have no differences which divide them off into distinct entities, we must admit that the process of creation is intended to effect separate organisms which in turn have separate functions. Each of these has its place to fill, its work to do, its growth and development to make. It is endowed with energies and capacities as a necessary result of its formation; and these suited for its own place, and as a component part of the creation. Then it must work out its destiny both as to itself and its environment. This destiny will be of different grades of importance,<sup>1</sup> from the atom or molecule up through the crystal, the plant, the animal. It will develop a more intricate organism according to the capacities with which it is equipped. There is a purpose to be effected which it, and no other, can achieve; and there are

#### DIFFERENT GRADES IN THE SCALE OF PERFECTION.

If it were absolutely perfect, then it could do all that its maker had done, because it would necessarily contain all the attributes which he possessed, and so would usurp his place. If it fell short of this endowment, it might be subject to failure, either partial or complete. We see this ex-

<sup>1</sup>Hegel, Encyclop; Die Organ. Welt.

emplified, not merely or chiefly in monsters, but in every part of nature; each thing comes short of perfection. There is no diamond perfectly cloudless. There is no gold absolutely pure; either native or from the most scientific smelting. This truth is metaphysically necessary in the case of every concrete thing. It is defective in its original structure, not for its own special purposes, but as adequate to meet all purposes combined; for it has not received all that Omnipotence could put into it. He has freed a part of his energy, and made it suitable for accomplishing the special end for which it was formed as a part of the creation. We see this plainly in the individual existence, function, and development of all organized beings. They can do their own work, but not everything. But the distinctive existence, the separate action, becomes more conspicuous at a rapidly increasing rate, as we come up through the plant, which is stationary at its root; through the animal, which has locomotion, and therefore change of place according to volition.

INCREASES WITH THE COMPLICATION OF STRUCTURE,  
CULMINATING IN MAN.

The more complicated its structure and subtle its functions, the more integrated it becomes; the more thoroughly master of itself, and responsible for its welfare. And when we arrive at the climax in man, we find the greatest unity in diversity; the most independence in personal action, and the greatest power of projecting its character and influence beyond its own bounds for the control of others who have a less degree of these distinctive characteristics. While man has the most of all varieties of structure and function, both in his material form, and still more in his mental and moral powers, there is an increasing evidence of his imperfection.

THE MORE PERFECT A MAN IS, THE MORE CONSCIOUS  
HE IS OF HIS IMPERFECTIONS.

In truth, the more perfect he is, as compared with other things, the more imperfect he appears according to his own standard. For, as his horizon increases, each part becomes more defectively known, because his powers are limited. And these limitations become more apparent in the greater variety and difficulty of the work he undertakes. Hence the greater a man really is, the less he is in his own estimation. For while the universe around him is infinite in extent and capacity, of necessity, its boundaries stretch farther than his power to grasp even the faint outlines. But each part of the universe, however complete with reference to its place and function, is imperfect; and, if imperfect, it is not as complete as though it possessed the attributes necessary to conceive, to create, and to govern the whole. So the fact of its creation as a part involves the necessity of its imperfection. Besides, if this were not the case, there could be no growth. The plant would be complete before it began to increase, and therefore it could not increase. The animal would have the qualities of its kind in unlimited extent, and could never become better by careful nurture or breeding. But this is the chief end of their being, and, at the same time, a means for the development of the higher intelligence under whose guardianship they are placed. They expand, develop, improve in strength or some other quality, until they progress as far as the nature with which they are endowed will permit. Here they must stop because of the necessary limitations in the degree and kind of qualities with which they are endowed, and which fit them, not for every grade, but for their station in the hierarchy of being. They are intrusted with this development to engage in the struggle for existence, provided they are separate entities; but each has a bound beyond which it cannot pass. So with human na-

ture as a constituent, though the highest in the order of creation.

MATERIAL ORGANISMS NECESSARY AGENTS OF AN EXTERNAL INTELLIGENCE.

But, while purely material organisms have a separate existence, and each one its own locality and function, yet they act as they are acted upon; or, if they have any will power, this is not discernible, and may be treated as non-existent. They are necessary factors in a chain of sequences, of which the prime mover must be transcendent; a personality starting them in motion. But whether their causality be immanent or transcendent, their movements are determined for them. And this must be so from the prime move which is outside of the succession, whether each acts in concert with others, or entirely alone. For they act from a force which has been imparted in some unknown way, compelling them to work in obedience to a fixed law. With this action they have nothing to do, save as necessary agents, because they are not endowed with a self-conscious personality. Hence the action of such agents being determined for them is the necessary expression of the laws of their constitution and function and can have no moral quality. This is plain, because their movements are predetermined by a succession of forces which compel them to act in a certain way, without any choice on their part; or even knowledge why they act, or whether they act at all. This will be admitted as regards inorganic nature, because there is no consensus of parts by which a combined force could be directed toward a definite result. With organized matter, the case might be different. For here there is a definite structure, which seems determined for a specific work; and the outcome of its action may be predetermined by its adaptation and place in nature. But there is no evidence of independent action,

of originating a movement, or resisting it when caused *ab extra*.

NO MORAL QUALITY IN THE ORGAN WHICH MERELY  
TRANSMITS POWER.

Hence, whatever be the action, it is not that of the organ, which is merely the instrument of transmitting the force, without any predetermination on its part to act, or of any outcome as the consequence. Accordingly, however good the act be in its nature or effects, yet there being no purpose, no will for one act more than another, it is therefore neither good nor bad. For there is put into the organs all they can contain, or employ to effect a purpose. Therefore the force which makes them and controls their movements either directly or indirectly, is responsible for what they accomplish. If this be good, then that power is the sole cause; and if bad, precisely the same. As to themselves there is no knowledge nor will, no purpose, no foresight; and consequently what they do is, so far as they are concerned, entirely neutral. They simply obey an external power which, without their knowledge, effects its purposes through them. There can be no responsibility when the actor, whether inorganic or not, is merely the transmitter of force to accomplish a purpose exclusively derived from, and effected by, another. But as we rise in the scale of being and intelligence, we reach a place where necessary action ends, and responsibility begins. It may not be possible to tell where that line is drawn. Dividing lines in nature cannot be seen any more in concrete things than in geometrical drawing. But while we cannot fix the exact place, yet we can say, of parts of continuous quantity, and force as its function, "Here is one kind"; and at a distance greater or less, "Here is a different one." Responsibility begins somewhere,—a fact admitted by all in the treatment of other beings testified to by all in regard to our own conduct.

## WHERE RESPONSIBILITY BEGINS, NECESSITY ENDS.

We arrive at an organized being that not only acts, but knows why it acts. For its action is self-determined. It is the result of deliberation and choice. This case is certainly different from the link in the chain, or the nexus in the succession of causes. The ability for independent action has been in preparation throughout the various grades of endowment, until at last we come to a being that is possessed of self-development and creative powers. For he consciously transfers or embodies a part of his intelligence, his purpose, his will, into the act which is creative of character. Before this power was possessed, the act was good or bad in its consequences. But, as this was pre-determined by another personality, that, and not the act, or the organ through which the power was transmitted to produce the act, was exclusively the author; and therefore responsible. The knife that stabs, the gun which shoots, the subtle poison which does the assassin's work, are never called into court to plead guilty or not guilty. The same drug might be used in proper quantity to quiet undue heart action and save life; the keen blade used by the murderer for his diabolical deed might be employed by the surgeon to eradicate the malignant tumor. However doubtful the result of the application, these agents have nothing to do with guilt or innocence, except as they testify by the unstified voice of their constitution that they were employed by a responsible being to effect his purpose. The responsibility being transferred from those which are powerless, the helpless agents of another, to that one who by his knowledge of their powers could utilize their effects for his purpose, we fix this where it belongs; and with the utmost confidence and propriety, say who did the deed, and attach the guilt accordingly.

[TO BE CONCLUDED.]