

heavens above," says the Lord, "and look upon the earth beneath; the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner." In like manner! What! The earth and the heavens to die? Yes, the material heavens and earth must all undergo this change which we call death; and if so, the earth must be alive as well as we. The earth was so constructed that it was capable of existing as a living being to all eternity, with all the swarms of animals, fowls, and fishes that were first placed upon the face thereof. But how can it be proved that man was an immortal being? We will refer you to what the Apostle Paul has written upon this subject; he says that by one man came death; and he tells us how it came: it was by the transgression of one individual that death was introduced here. But did transgression bring in all these diseases and this sorrow, this misery and wretchedness, over the whole face of this creation? Is it by the transgression of one person that the very heavens are to vanish away as smoke, and the earth is to wax old like a garment? Yes, it is by the transgression of one; and if it had not been for his transgression, the earth never would have been subject to death. Why? Because the works of the Lord are so constructed as to exist forever; and if death had come in without a cause, and destroyed the earth, and laid waste the material heavens, and produced a general and utter overthrow and ruin in this fair creation, then the works of the Lord would have ceased to endure according to the promise, being imperfect in their construction, and consequently not very good.

But what was this sin, and what was the nature of it? I will tell you what it was; it was merely the partaking of a certain kind of fruit. But,

says one, I should think there is no harm in eating fruit. There would not be unless God gave a command upon the subject. There are things in nature that would be evil without a commandment: if there were no commandment, it would be evil for you to murder an innocent being, and your own conscience would tell you it was an evil thing. It is an evil for any individual to injure another, or to infringe upon the rights of another, independent of any revealed law; for the savage, or that being who has never heard of the written laws of heaven—who has never heard of the revealed laws of God with regard to these principles—as well as the Saint, knows that it is an evil to infringe upon the rights of another; the very nature of the thing shows that it is an evil; but not so in regard to many other things that are evil; which are only made evil by commandment.

For instance, here is the Sabbath day: a person that never heard the revealed law of God upon the subject, never could conceive that it was an evil to work on the Sabbath day; he would consider it just as right to work on the first day of the week, as on the seventh; he would perceive nothing in the nature of the thing by which he could distinguish it to be an evil. So with regard to eating certain fruits; there is no evil in it of itself, it was the commandment of the Great God that made it an evil. He said to Adam and Eve, "Here are all the fruits of the garden; you may eat of them freely except this one tree that stands in the midst of the garden; now beware, for in the day you eat thereof you shall surely die." Don't we perceive that the commandment made this an evil? Had it not been for this commandment, Adam would have walked forth and freely partaken of every tree, without any remorse of conscience; just as the savage, that never has heard the revealed will of God,