

principle alone; and He acts virtuously, not because He is bidden, but because virtue hath its inherent and eternal residence in His own nature. Instead of deriving morality from law, we should derive law, even the law of God, from the primeval morality of His own character; and so far from looking upwardly to His law as the fountain of morality, do we hold it to be the emanation from a higher fountain that is seated in the depths of His unchangeable essence, and is eternal as the nature of the Godhead.

18. The moral hath antecedency over the juridical. God acts righteously, not because of jurisdiction by another, but because of a primary and independent justice in Himself. It was not law which originated the moralities of the divine character; but these moralities are self-existent and eternal as is the being of the Godhead. The virtues had all their dwelling-place in the constitution of the Divinity—ere He stamped the impress of them on a tablet of jurisprudence. There was an inherent, before there was a preceptive morality; and righteousness and goodness and truth, which all are imperative enactments of law, were all prior characteristics, in the underived and uncreated excellence of the Lawgiver.