

he, as a special favour, remained unaffected by the general law. The penalty of disobedience was, that he would forfeit this enviable distinction, and be subjected to death more revolting than the brutes. The reward of obedience was a continued immunity from evil, and a final translation, without suffering, to a more exalted condition. And certainly the nature of the case furnishes a strong presumptive argument to show that man did thus stand exempted from the decay and death which reigned all around him. If not, what weight or meaning would there be in the penalty? If he had not seen death in other animals, how could he have any idea of the nature of the threatening? And we may be sure that God never promulgates a penalty without affording his subjects the means of comprehending it.

I have already intimated that I could hardly see why there exists in all organic natures a tendency to decay and death, except in the will of the Creator. May not that tendency result, like the varieties among men, from some slightly modifying cause implanted by the Deity in the nature of the animal or plant? And if so, might not an opposite tendency be imparted to one or more species, so that the decay and death of the one, and the continued existence of the other, might be equally well explained on physiological principles? If this suggestion be admitted, it would not be necessary to resort to any supernatural or miraculous agency to show how sinless man in paradise might have stood unaffected by decay, the common lot of all other races. It must be confessed, however, that it is not as easy to see how, by any natural law, he could have been proof against mechanical violence and chemical agencies; there we must admit miraculous protection, or a self-restoring power more wonderful than that possessed by the polypi.

These views receive strong confirmation from the history of the tree of life, that grew in the garden of Eden. The very name implies that it was intended to give or preserve life. That it had in it a power to preserve life is evident from the sentence pronounced on man. "And the Lord God saith, Behold, the man hath become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now, lest he should put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and live for ever, therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden." Now, it appears