

and the necessity of severe bodily labour to secure sustenance from it, show us that the benevolence exhibited in nature and in man's condition is not unmixed. Though some limited regions are exuberantly fertile, the larger part of the earth yields up even a mere sustenance only after the severest labour. And the vast majority of the race can do nothing more than to obtain food for the body. The artificial state of most societies does, indeed, keep the lower classes much more depressed than a better state of the world would bring them into; but at the best, nature unites with revelation in attesting the truth of the sentence passed upon man, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread."

Nor is this necessity for severe labour confined to the cultivation of the earth, but extends to all kinds of human pursuits. Success, as a general fact, can be secured only by vigorous industry; and often, in spite of their most honest and persevering efforts, men fail of securing even a competence for the support of themselves and their dependants.

Some will say that all this arises from a necessity in the very nature of the case. But does not such a view limit the divine power and wisdom? Could not God have prepared a world more paradisiacal than the present, where the earth should spontaneously yield her fruits, and pour out her hidden treasures at man's feet? Who will deny this? Why, then, has he not done it? Because obviously a race so prone to evil as man, so incapable of maintaining his integrity in the lap of ease and indulgence, needs all this severe discipline to keep him where he ought to be. Here, then, we see a reason why God must mingle seeming severity with benevolence.

The same thing is seen, in the fourth place, in the confined and depressed condition of the human mind in this world, and in the multiplied obstacles in the way of its cultivation and enlargement.

What a clog to the intellect is a body governed by gross appetites, and often stopping the ingress of truth, or perverting its aspect, by disordered and imperfect senses! Nearly one third of the time must that intellect sink into oblivion, while sleep recruits the physical powers. And nearly another third of life must be given to the wants of the body; and as we have seen, the great mass of men are obliged to devote nearly their whole time to serve the necessary wants of the body. What