punishment was denounced only against eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil: For “ the Lord commanded the man saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shaft not eat of it ; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” To the word *death* in this passage divines have affixed many and different meanings. By some it is supposed to import a separation of the soul and body, while the latter was to con­tinue in a state of conscious existence ; by others, it is taken to imply annihilation, or a state without conscious­ness ; by some, it is imagined to signify eternal life in tor­ments ; and by others a spiritual and moral death, or a state necessarily subject to sin. In any one of these accepta­tions it denoted something new to Adam, which he could not understand without an explanation of the term ; and therefore, as it was threatened as the punishment of only one transgression, it could not be the divine intention to inflict it on any other.

The abstaining from a particular fruit in the midst of a garden abounding with fruits of all kinds, was a precept which at first view appears of easy observation ; and the penalty threatened against the breach of it was, in every sense, awful. The precept, however, was broken notwith­standing that penalty ; and though we may thence infer that our first parents were not beings of such absolute perfec­tion as by divines they have sometimes been represented, we shall yet find, upon due consideration, that the tempta­tion by which they were seduced, when taken with all its circumstances, was such as no wise and modest man will think himself able to have resisted. The short history of this important transaction we have in the third chapter of the book of Genesis, ver. 1-6.

To our readers, on referring to this passage, the conver­sation between the serpent and the woman must appear to begin abruptly ; and indeed it is not possible to reconcile it with the natural order of a dialogue, or even with the common rules of grammar, but by supposing the tempter’s question, “Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden ?” to have been suggested by something immediately preceding either in words or in significant signs. Eve had undoubtedly by some means or other informed the serpent that she was forbidden to eat of the fruit on which he was probably feasting ; and that information, whether given in words or in actions, must have produced the question with which the sacred historian begins his relation of this fatal dialogue. We are told that the woman *saw* that the tree was *good for food;* that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to *be desired to make one wise;* but all this she could not have *seen,* had not the serpent eaten of its fruit in her presence. In her walks through the garden, it might have often appeared pleasant to her eyes ; but previously to expe­rience she could not know but that its fruit was the most deadly poison, far less could she conceive it capable of con­ferring wisdom. But if the serpent ate of it before her, and then extolled its virtues in rapturous and intelligible lan­guage, she would at once see that it was not destructive of animal life, and naturally infer that it had very singular qualities. At the moment she was drawing this inference, it is probable that he invited her to partake of the delicious fruit, and that her refusal produced the conference before us. That she yielded to his temptation, need excite no wonder ; for she knew that the serpent was by nature a brute animal, and if he attributed his speech to the virtues of a tree, she might infer, with some plausibility, that what had power to raise the brute mind to human, might raise the human to divine, and make her and her husband, ac­cording to the promise of the tempter, become as gods, knowing good and evil.

Full of these hopes of raising herself to divinity, and not, as has sometimes been supposcd, led headlong by a sensual appetite, she took of the fruit and did eat, and gave to her husband with her, and he did eat.

Sect. V.—*Immediate consequences of Adam's Transgres­sion and Fall.*

The covenant, which, on the introduction of our first pa­rents into Paradise, their Creator was graciously pleased to make with them, having been broken by their violation of the condition on which they were advanced to that super­natural state, the historian tells us, that “ lest they should put forth their hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live for ever, the Lord God sent them forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence they were taken.” Had they been so sent forth without any farther intimation respecting their present condition or their future prospects, and if the death under which they had fallen was only a loss of consciousness, they would have been in pre­cisely the same state in which they lived before they were placed in the garden of Eden : only their minds must now have been burdened with the inward sense of guilt, and they must have *known* themselves to be subject to death ; of which, though not exempted from it by nature, they had probably no *apprehension* till it was revealed to them in the covenant of life which they had so wantonly broken.

God did not however send them forth thus hopeless and forlorn from the Paradise of delights which they had so re­cently forfeited. He determined to punish them for their transgression, and at the same time to give them an oppor­tunity of recovering more than their lost inheritance. Call­ing therefore the various offenders before him, and inquir­ing into their different degrees of guilt, he began with pro­nouncing judgment on the serpent in terms which implied that there was mercy for man. “ And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field : upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shaft thou eat all the days of thy life ; and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed : it shall bruise thy head, and thou shaft bruise his heel.”

That this sentence has been fully inflicted on the ser­pent, no reasoning can be necessary to evince. Every spe­cies of that reptile is more hateful to man than any other terrestrial creature ; and there is literally a perpetual war between them and the human race. It is remarkable too, that the *head* of this animal is the only part which it is safe to bruise. His tail may be bruised, or even cut off, and he will turn with fury and death on his adversary ; but the slightest stroke on the head infallibly kills him. That the serpent, or at least the greater part of serpents, go on their belly, every one knows ; though it is said, that in some parts of the east, serpents have been seen with wings, and others with feet, and that these species are highly beautiful. If there be any truth in this story, we may suppose that these walking and flying serpents have been suffered to retain their original elegance, that mankind might see what the whole race was before the curse was denounced on the tempter of Eve ; but it is certain that most of the species have neither wings nor feet, and that many of the most poisonous of them live in burning deserts, where they have nothing to eat but the dust among which they crawl.

***Obs.*** I. See Bochart, ***Hierοzοicοn,*** lib. i. cap. 4. Bruce’s Travels.

***Obs.*** 2. To this degradation of the serpent, infidels have objected, that it implies the punishment of an animal which was incapable of guilt ; but this objection is founded in thoughtlessness and ignorance. The elegant form of any species of inferior animals adds nothing to the happiness of the animals themselves ; the ass is probably as happy as the horse, and the serpent that crawls as he that Hies. Fine pro­portions attract indeed the notice of man, and tend to impress upon his mind just notions of the wisdom and goodness of the Creator ; but surely the symmetry of the horse, or the beauty of the peacock, is more properly displayed for this purpose, than the elegance of the instrument employed by the enemy of mankind. The degradation