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 un-
dergo 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 be-
ing 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 im-
mortal 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 individ-
ual that death was introduced here. But
did transgression bring in all these dis-
eases 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 gen-
eral 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 par-
taking of a certain kind of fruit. But,
says one, I should think there is no harm
in eating fruit. There would not be un-
less God gave a command upon the sub-
ject. 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 be-
ing, and your own conscience would tell
you it was an evil thing. It is an evil for
any individual to injure another, or to in-
fringe upon the rights of another, inde-
pendent of any revealed law; for the sav-
age, 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 par-
taken of every tree, without any remorse
of conscience; just as the savage, that
never has heard the revealed will of God,