

**THE ONENESS OF THE  
RACE IN ITS FALL  
AND ITS FUTURE**

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The Oneness of the Race in Its Fall and Its Future by Eugene Bersier

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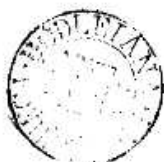


THE  
ONENESS OF THE RACE

*In its fall and its future.*

By EUGENE BERSIER,  
OF PARIS.

Translated from the French  
BY  
ANNIE HARWOOD.



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## The Oneness of the Race in its Fall and its Future.

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#### *ORIGINAL SIN.*

"But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God and the gift by grace, which is by one man Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many."—ROM. v. 15.

ON the banks of the Nile and the Euphrates, in the places now solitary and desolate, where once stood famous cities, there are found year by year traces of ancient civilisation. Stones still remain there, covered with inscriptions before which science stands silent, baffled and ignorant; for ages they have kept in their mysterious characters the secret of ancient days, which the future has yet to decipher. Hordes of conquering barbarians have swept by them, looking at them only in dull, savage wonderment. Arabs have pitched their tents around, or slept in their

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sheltering shadow, without a thought of the departed greatness of which they are the memorials. But let a few more years pass, and the penetrating eye of some scholar of genius will decipher, in these almost obliterated characters, the history of the first ages of the world. The past will spring in renewed life out of those dark deeps, in which it seemed for ever buried; strange revelations will astonish our descendants; and these stones, mute to-day, will tell to the men of the twentieth century what hopes and thoughts were cherished in the world two thousand years before Christ.

This idea presented itself to my mind, as I was thinking of those great truths of revelation, which lie for ages undiscovered and yet are destined one day to flood the world with light. Such are the truths of the oneness of God, and the oneness of the family of man, written in the first pages of Genesis, and yet ignored through ages of paganism and barbarism, till Jesus Christ came to reveal them anew to the world; such are some of the grand elements of gospel truth, over which a veil has hung for eighteen centuries, and which are only now first apprehended by the human conscience, and recognised as the ideal to which its highest aspirations tend. Who dreamed, in the dark days of the middle ages, of the new lights



which were to arise out of those inspired pages? Who would have thought that in them the modern world would discover not only the charter of spiritual enfranchisement, but the secret of all progress and of all social and political reformation?

The subject we are about to treat has suggested this train of reflection. There is a truth which seems to be the discovery of our age, and which, rightly understood, is, we are told, to throw new light on all the problems of philosophy, history, and social order. This is what is called the *solidarity* of man. By this term is meant that mankind forms one body, not in a figure of speech merely, but as an actual fact; that in his physical, intellectual, and moral nature, man is linked to his fellows by bonds close, intimate, and strong, which need to be clearly recognised. Science affirms that a child who throws a pebble into the ocean produces a vibration which, passing from molecule to molecule, extends to the very ends of the world; and it asserts on good grounds, that the same law of transmission prevails in the domain of intelligence and of will. This is what is meant by the law of *solidarity*.

Now this truth, which is spoken of as new, was eighteen centuries ago contained in the writings of St. Paul; it is the doctrine which underlies and ex-

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plains the whole epistle to the Romans; it is the very truth which he, the old Jew, old Pharisee, old sectary, placed in the centre of history as the sole explanation possible of the destinies of mankind.

Let us now enter directly on this great subject, and follow in our study of it the order observed by St. Paul himself. We shall treat first of this truth as we trace it in the *FALL*, by which we may be led, secondly, to see the operation of the same principle in *REDEMPTION*.

St. Paul in the opening of his epistle to the Romans boldly faces the universal fact of evil—evil to which he gives its true, Bible name of sin. He describes it in graphic characters; he tears asunder all the veils behind which human pride seeks to shelter itself; he shows the presence of evil, not only in those exceptional excesses and monstrous forms, those unnatural crimes which he brands with such holy indignation, but in the very source of the life, deep rooted in the soul, poisoning all the thoughts, desires, and affections of the human creature, and producing its natural fruits—suffering, condemnation, death.

Whence then, he asks, comes this terrible calamity, this universal evil? Turning to the page of ancient revelation, he does not hesitate to answer that the

one, first, transgression has brought upon us sin, and death its due reward: "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin."

This is what is called the Scripture doctrine of *original sin*, a doctrine disputed, ridiculed, attacked by every weapon of scorn and satire, but which I, a disciple of St. Paul, accept without shame or hesitation, not blindly, but with a firm and logical conviction, because to me it seems, of all the proposed solutions of the problems of evil, the only one which recognises all the gravity of the case, which escapes fatalism, which assigns an adequate cause for our misery, while it leaves unshaken that foundation of moral order—human responsibility.

There may be some who repudiate this doctrine with preconceived disdain or invincible repugnance. I would beg them to consider, first, that Paul has some right to be listened to by them, were it only on this ground, that he was one of the greatest spiritual emancipators of humanity. I would ask them to remember further, that if faith has its prejudices, it is at least possible that incredulity may also be prejudiced; that before allowing themselves to be offended by a word it would be well to examine what that word really signifies; and that those who claim the most unbiassed regard for truth ought to be the