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# DEMONOLOGY:

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SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE OF DEVILS.

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## PREFACE.

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'Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.' Such is the explicit injunction of an inspired Apostle. He addressed it to the Christians in general of his own day. The Spirit who moved him, and by whose dictation he spake, caused it to be inserted in the imperishable Records. 'It is written for our sakes,' as well as for the sake of those to whom it was primarily delivered. Its obligation is universal and permanent; and, to the end of time, it will remain binding on all the professed followers of Christ.

To be 'ready to give a reason' for our *belief*, is equally proper and imperative. We should, as rational creatures, make it our study to be able to say why we hold this or the other tenet: or, to show that it is contained in Holy Scripture, and forms part of the substance of Christianity. Otherwise, our creed, however orthodox, is not

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embraced with intelligence. We adopt it on the sanction of human authority, rather than on the ground of Divine testimony. Our 'faith stands in the wisdom of men, and not in the power of God.' In this respect, the Protestant differs little from the Papist, whose blind credulity and unquestioning obedience he condemns. Hope is founded on belief; while belief implies knowledge.

From due attention to the duty recommended, many advantages would follow. 'The Truth as it is in Jesus' would be more distinctly apprehended. Its various bearings and intimate relations; the beauty of its separate parts, and the consistency of one with another; the intrinsic excellence of each, and the perfect adaptation of the whole: these, appearing in more luminous points of view, would be more clearly perceived, and more fully understood. From millions the reproach would be removed, that 'when for the time they ought to be teachers, they have need that one teach them again which be the first principles of the oracles of God;' and, instead of being always nourished with 'milk,' the proper aliment of 'babes,' they would be capable of receiving and digesting 'strong meat,' suited to those of mature age. Comparatively rare would be the sight, not more unseemly than common, of

the old in years, young in understanding; of the sexagenarian, a child in Biblical instruction; of the proficient in the science of Nature, sadly defective in the science of Scripture.

There would also, as another happy consequence, be less danger of infection from heresy or error; and its disseminators, having smaller hope of success, might ply their vocation with diminished energy. Fewer would be the instances of the religious professor 'tossed to and fro, and driven about with every wind of doctrine:' a restless changling, without judgment or principle, fluttering hither and thither, like a bird that has wandered from her nest; ignorant of the true in doctrine or the good in precept, and attracted by the novel or the singular; embracing this or that strange opinion, which some artful deceiver by ingenious fraud, or hair-brained fanatic by incessant iteration, has obtruded on popular attention.

But, not only would Christians be thus preserved themselves from gross mistakes, or the adoption of notions contrary, in any important particular, to 'the glorious Gospel:' they might likewise be able to detect the sophisms, and expose the fallacies, of the gainsayer. If they did not succeed, by fair argument, in convincing him, they might at least,



to the satisfaction of the candid, rebut his cavils, and confute his reasonings. Often hopeless, indeed, is the attempt to 'put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:' in too many cases, death only, unless where sovereign grace intervenes, effects this result. That this may be affirmed concerning most of the broachers or abettors of heterodoxy, whatever be the distinctive appellations assumed, the past and the present furnish superabundant evidence. Yet, to exhibit to public notice their plague-spots,—to guard others, especially the simple or unsuspecting, from the vile taint of their heresies,—to prevent, on the part of the unstable or imperfectly instructed, the perversion of sentiment, or corruption of soundness in the faith: this is a work of no little utility, and those who perform it with any degree of efficiency, render a service which entitles to commendation.

To be convinced of the propriety of what we inculcate, but little reflection is necessary. Consider the treatment which Christianity has experienced; the spirit of bitter hostility displayed towards it, whether in whole or in detail. Sometimes ingenuity, aided by learning, has tried to set aside its claims, or to disprove the inspiration of its Writers, and malignantly represented it as a fraud or an imposture: sometimes, it has laboured hard to do away,

severally, its essential elements. Would we, then, either vindicate its credibility and authenticity, or defend those of its cardinal doctrines that may be attacked? Surely, such an attempt, in order to its right accomplishment, requires that we be thoroughly conversant with it. This, however lacking in many who have undertaken the task, we deem an indispensable qualification. The possession of it, too, or an acquaintance, especially in its connections, with the system of Sacred Truth, might often be of use to the private Christian, in the ordinary intercourses of life. He would thus be enabled, whensoever they were uttered in his hearing, to repel the objections of Infidelity, or correct the perversions of the heretic: at least, seeing their falsity, he would be more likely to be preserved himself, if not also by his wisdom to guard others, from their contamination.

Among the revealed verities, which the pride of Reason ignores or repudiates, is that of Demoniacal influence and temptation. Its proper place or exact importance, relatively to other Articles, in the economy of Scripture, we presume not to determine. Neither is this necessary: enough that it is taught in the Word, or incorporated with that scheme of instruction, which it has pleased the Father of lights

to communicate. On this ground, which we account the highest of all, it commands our entire and implicit credence. No other proof is obtainable; nor is any other desired. The testimony of Him 'who cannot lie,' is, on every point respecting which it is given, sufficient to preclude doubt, and to beget the firmest assurance. 'If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater.' Has He spoken in reference to any matter? 'He that hath ears let him hear.'

The subject, to the exposition of which the following Treatise is devoted, is, indeed, mysterious. It is also a fearful, and, in most of its aspects, far from being an agreeable, theme of contemplation. That, however, is no reason why it should not engage our frequent or serious attention. What is, in itself, unpleasant, may, if rightly considered, be profitable. Very uninviting, as topics of meditation, are human guilt and depravity. Yet, how worthy are they of being pondered, and how needful is the study of them! If there are malicious Beings, endowed with superior power and energy, who, though impalpable to sense, have access to our minds; Beings, whose constant endeavour is to corrupt and afflict, and who are capable, in a great diversity of ways, of injuring body or soul, the out-

ward condition, or the spiritual state: it is well, surely, to be apprized of the fact. Appalling as it may be, the habitual remembrance and practical improvement of it may, through co-operating grace, be a mean both of present security against the seduction, and of final deliverance from the annoyance, of fallen Intelligences.

Diabolical Agency we hold to be a matter so clearly revealed, as to demand the unhesitating assent of all who admit the authority of the Word. Regarding it, however, much scepticism, as well as misapprehension, prevails. It is disputed by some, who cannot reconcile it with their notions of the equity and benevolence of the Divine government: they, therefore, deny its reality. It is misunderstood by others, whose conceptions of it are exceedingly vague or inaccurate. By not a few, who profess faith in it, it is practically overlooked, or purposely neglected. Here, then, appears to be a sufficient reason for bringing it prominently into view, by making it the subject of separate and formal discussion. Hence, also, the answer, in part, to a question that has repeatedly been put to us: Why choose such a theme of discourse? The range of Theology presents a wide variety of topics, in the canvassing of which instruction might easily be

mingled with pleasure ; wherefore, then, select one so intangible and unattractive ?

Our theme is a doctrine of the Bible ; and what the Spirit of truth has seen meet to reveal, it should be our study to know. Nothing, we may be sure, but what is profitable, or subservient to edification, has a place among the Oracles of Heaven. That, in relation to the point of which we treat, this may be safely affirmed, but little consideration or perspicacity is required to perceive. It is of no inferior moment : indeed, in some respects, it is, with all its alleged repulsiveness, of primary interest. As, too, it is much impugned, not only by the ignorant or unreflecting, but also by persons who pass for Philosophers, who style themselves Reasoners, and who would be esteemed wiser than their teachers ; it may be proper to examine their objections, or the grounds on which they discredit it.

Vanity may take offence at the freedom of our remarks. To flatter its complacency was not our object ; nor can the expressions of its displeasure, which we know how to estimate, affect us. In the opinion of their mental eminence, cherished by some of our opponents, and entertained by numerous admirers, we cannot concur. But, chiefly to be deplored is the *ungodliness* of their spirit.

Whether, in some instances at least, it does not afford proof, presumptive if not demonstrative, of the fact of Satanic influence, may be fairly submitted. Neither, on the other hand, have we been careful to gratify the taste of the lovers of 'smooth things.' We would not undervalue the *suaviter in modo*: but there are qualities of vastly superior worth,—more excellent in themselves, and far more appropriate in addressing certain advocates of Antichristian tenets. Their sentiments we abhor, but their spiritual welfare we desire; and, in order to this, would have them gained over to soundness of belief,—a creed in conformity with the doctrine of Scripture.

In the following sheets, a full exposition of the subject in debate must not be expected. Our design was, principally, to excite attention to a doctrine of deep and universal, though painful, interest: a doctrine but little considered by the generality of Christians, and apt, from its very nature, to be neglected by many. It is also, in common with other parts of Revealed Truth, scornfully repudiated by the Infidel as irrational or unphilosophical; while it is strongly opposed by the Unitarian or the Neologist, who, by a peculiar mode of Exegesis, attempts to explode it as a notion of ignorance.

We wish to prevent especially the young and the uninformed, who are most in danger, from being misled by the dogmatic assertions or sophistical arguments of the former, or perverted by the false Criticism and misapplied learning of the latter.

Some may object to the *form* into which our observations have been thrown. Perhaps, it is not the most logical, or that which, had we at first contemplated writing so largely, might have been adopted. When commencing, we had not the remotest idea of producing a Volume: our original intention was, merely to furnish a short series of Articles, of a plain and popular cast, for the *Scottish Christian Journal*. The first Part appeared in that Periodical, and has been extracted *verbatim* from its pages. When a Work like the present was decided on, it was deemed advisable to continue it in the form in which it was begun. Hence the different Parts, with the division of each into Chapters of nearly equal length. The theme, instead of being one of our own choice, was suggested to us, and the discussion of it, in some shape, pressed upon our attention. We are not singular in regarding Demonology as, from the covert or open attacks made upon it, a branch of what may be fitly called 'the *present* Truth.' In

support of the opinion expressed, easily could we, if required, point to Theologians of high repute. In the roll of both living and departed saintship, their names stand second to none for genius, learning, and piety.\*

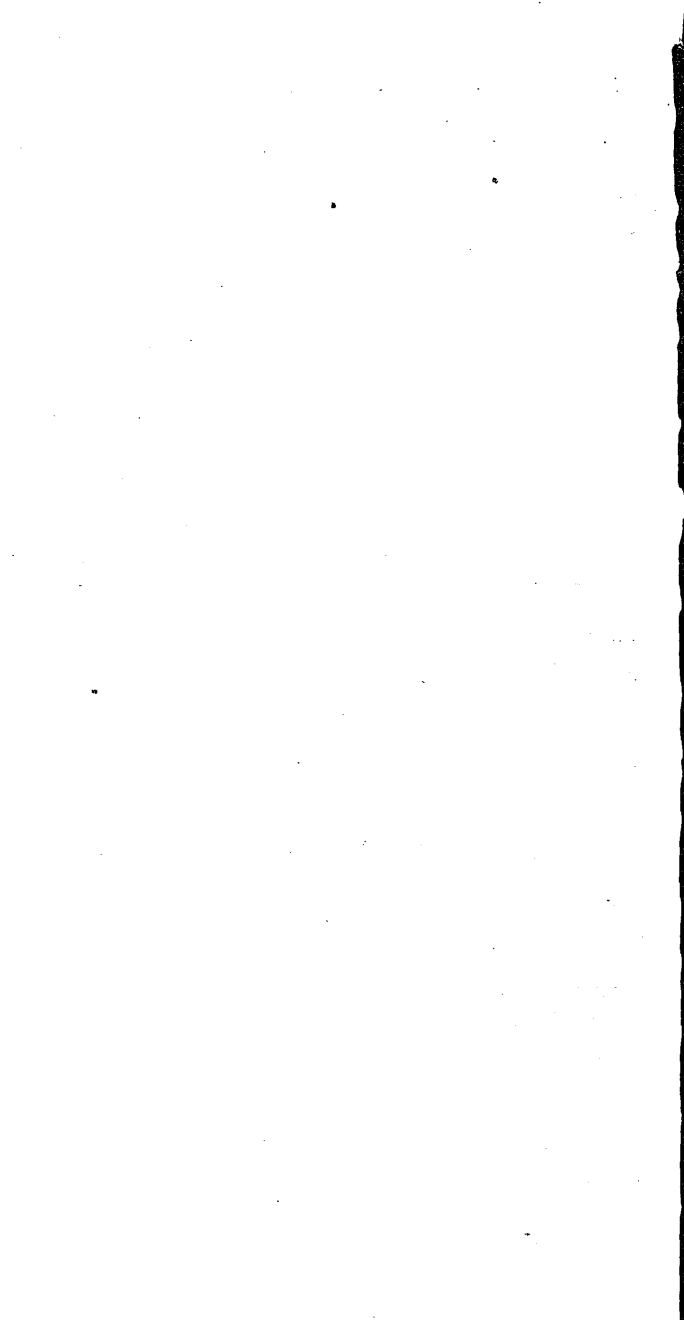
The two last Chapters, though not strictly belonging to the subject, have been added for the reasons stated. That on Modern Authorship, directs attention to one chief source of doctrinal errors. In the other, entitled Authority and

\* On this subject, three very able and accomplished Theologians have written more or less fully. The first is the late Mr Hall of Bristol, whose remarks, though brief and general, will repay a careful perusal. The second is Dr John Brown of Edinburgh, who has given two excellent Dissertations; the one in his Exposition of the First Epistle of Peter, the other in his Commentary on the Sayings of our Lord: both very instructive and satisfactory, worthy of a place in the admirable Volumes of which they form a part. The third is the Rev. Mr Scott of Airedale, whose Treatise we had not seen till three hundred pages of our own were thrown off, and nearly fifty more were either in proof or in manuscript. We deem it, so far as leisure has permitted us to examine it, exceedingly valuable; as masterly as it is lengthened; discovering on the part of the Author, at once superior powers of reasoning, and an intimate acquaintance with Holy Writ. The disquisitions referred to we would recommend to the thoughtful attention of all who wish to obtain a Scriptural knowledge of Demonology.



Sufficiency of Scripture, the Word is set in the proper light, or elevated to its due position and rank in the economy of Religion. With it, nothing of human conception or device is to be considered as co-ordinate. It is the Supreme and Infallible Standard. By it, all opinions and principles are to be tested: with it, our views and sentiments ought to harmonize. Their agreement or discordance with the Testimony, determines their soundness or heterodoxy. From its averments the Christian is to learn the whole of his Theology and his Ethics. To it, then, in every instance, let the appeal be made with becoming reverence of spirit and submission of understanding. Is the inquirer desirous of instruction on matters of infinite importance and eternal interest? Let him apply, not to the philosophies of the day, not to the theories of mortal wisdom, but to the Writings of Prophets and Apostles. The former, the offspring of darkness, lead, though by manifold and widely-diverging tracks, to the 'blackness of darkness:' the latter, an emanation from 'the excellent glory,' conduct, by a sure and certain path, to the realms of light. They, they only, 'teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.'

The blessing of Him, who is 'the God of Truth;' of the Divine Teacher, who is 'the Truth,' and 'by whom Truth came;' of the Sacred Paraclete, who is 'the Spirit of Truth,' its Revealer to the mind: The blessing of the Eternal Triune, to whose honour, in connection with the good of souls, it is dedicated, attend this humble vindication of a much neglected and often vilified, but most momentous doctrine! That it may be universally acknowledged as one of the 'faithful sayings' of that Word, which, proceeding from a Being 'who cannot lie,' is all Truth—holy, sanctifying, saving Truth: that He, whose office it is, may rend the veil from the understanding and the heart, and grant, to the prejudiced or sceptical reader, a right discernment of this 'great mystery,' disposing him to receive it as a fact, and to act under the belief of it,—is the earnest prayer of the Author.



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Part First.



The Doctrine of Devils.



THE  
DOCTRINE OF DEVILS.

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CHAPTER I.

*Introduction.*

OF both the compass and the varieties of animate and intelligent Nature, our knowledge is extremely meagre. How can it be otherwise? Here opens a field too vast for the comprehension of human intellect. In relation to it, however, nothing is ascertainable, by direct observation or inquiry, beyond very circumscribed limits. But one, and that, in all likelihood, a comparatively insignificant, department comes within the range of our notice. To the races that people the globe on which we dwell, our cognizance is confined. Concerning the universe of living creatures, external to this small province, with but a single exception, for the partial glimpses of which we are indebted solely to the disclosures of Revelation, we can only conjecture. This is a point, on which the toils of genius can throw no light: in regard to it, the untaught and the learned are equally ignorant.



curiosity must be repressed: they are alike vain and impertinent.

Perhaps we should not greatly err, did we suppose a scale of indefinite extent, along which, in perfect regularity, according to the order of dignity, all are ranged. At a respectable gradation in the scale, may stand the human race; while, on the one side, runs far lower a descending series, and on the other, rises, to a much superior elevation, an ascending series. The supposition, we are aware, conflicts with the vulgar belief, that Man is the solitary specimen, among the productions of creative Omnipotence, of a *compound* nature: all other creatures endued with life, being either purely intellectual, or wholly animal.

But, what foundation, we ask, is there for this belief? In all such cases, the Record is our ultimate appeal, and the decisive authority. Does it, then, either by express statement or by implication, favour such an idea? Without fear of contradiction, we answer, No. Like many notions, once prevalent, but exploded by careful examination, or by collateral discovery, it is destitute of support. It rests on nothing better than the mere *absence* of visible proof, or explicit information; while the investigations of natural science, though not conclusively rebutting, rather, so far as they have an indirect bearing on the subject, discountenance it.

To the doctrine of a plurality of worlds, then, we give our unhesitating assent. Nor have we a doubt,

that God made them, like our own, 'to be inhabited.' All of them, we believe, if not already, will in due time be, furnished with their respective populations; while in each may, not improbably, stand in lordly pre-eminence, at the head of its family groups, an order of organized beings, gifted with reason, and heirs of eternity. 'No man,' indeed, resident in this distant abode, 'hath seen, or can see' them: their remoteness rendering the vision of the nearest, even with the best telescopic aid, impossible. But that, at present, they are not, or cannot be, the objects of sight, hinders not our faith in their existence. In thus stating our own creed, we are much mistaken if we do not express, in substance at least, that of all whom the lights of Science have illumined: of all who have turned their attention to a subject, which, from the amazing expansion of view Astronomy affords, can hardly fail to have engaged more or less of their musings.

Thus far there may be, among the more reflecting, a general concurrence of opinion. But, the report has reached us of another description of beings, of simpler constitution, and superior grade. Of their existence, no acquaintance, how intimate or extensive soever, with the visible Universe, could have informed us. Undiscernible, from the *spirituality* of their nature, by the corporeal eye, which is formed to perceive only material objects, they may encompass us in numbers, or act with potency upon our own spirits, without our being

cognizant of their presence, or conscious of their influence.

But for authentic intelligence of it, therefore, we should have had no conception of the entity of these unembodied ones. Whether such creatures are, or are not, is a question, which the most curious and speculating might never have thought of; or which, as involving a difficulty of hopeless solution, they might have deemed it useless to entertain. In favour of the affirmative, not as a fact, but a bare *probability*, what can be adduced? The research of the inquisitive fails to discover a vestige of evidence. How, in that case, could any have been inclined to countenance it? The indication, without any rational ground of preference, of a leaning on its behalf, might have been held symptomatic of mental aberration or dreaming. Here, then, notwithstanding the attestation of the True Witness, harmony of sentiment or belief does not obtain.

The beings alluded to are represented as composing two great classes,—those who kept, and those who left, ‘their first estate.’ To both, the appellation, ‘Angels,’ is given, though more commonly to the former. It is a term of office, and imports rather their functions than their qualities. It intimates, that they are the servants of the Eternal King, ready to do His pleasure, and whom He commissions, on errands of importance, to different provinces of His mighty empire. From various designations and expressions, we learn, that

they are exceedingly numerous, of high intellectual capacity, and perfectly holy; while it would also appear, that among them subsist gradations of rank in nature, or authority, or both.

The other class, or Evil Angels, are usually denominated Devils: and one, who is distinguished by ability and energy, receives the name of 'Satan,' or Adversary, by way of eminence. Consummately wicked, they are enemies to their Maker; whom they both hate and dread, whose righteous authority they resist, and whose benevolent designs they would thwart. Rebels against the administration of the Sovereign Lord, they are also leagued in opposition to the virtuous orders of creation; the knowledge of whose happiness moves their envy, and aggravates their misery, and whom, if it were possible, they would seduce from their loyalty, and subject to the penalties of disobedience. But, they are especially to be feared by MAN: their inferior in faculty and resource, as well as in experience. Antagonists, so 'excelling in strength,' so ingenious in device, and so practised in deception, are truly formidable; while their deadly spite, ever seeking expression, and ever ready to avail itself of opportunities, renders them the more dangerous.

Indeed, as regards the strategy of these elder apostates, and the license which a mysterious Providence concedes to them, the human family would seem to be *peculiarly* situated. Of the spiritual kingdom, but a

few vague and dubious notices have been granted us. Apocalypses so partial, gleams so obscure, afford no definite knowledge, only a very faint and indistinct idea, of the hostile schemes and movements of the rebellious against the provinces or ranks of the upright. But, from what is written, perhaps, we may infer—though the inference, it is admitted, partakes more of the conjectural than the certain—that the condition of mankind is, in respect of Demoniacal influence, including both the manner and the degree of its exertion, altogether *singular*. By its skilful appliance they were, through the guilt of their federal head, involved in the consequences of transgression. Pitying their wretchedness, and determining their salvation, the Divine Mercy provided for them a restorative Economy, by virtue of which their lost hopes might be revived, and their forfeited inheritance regained.

That Economy the sons of perdition hate, as calculated to defeat their malevolent intentions, and abolish their unrighteous dominion, by securing deliverance to the hapless victims of their tyranny. Their earnest desire, and unceasing aim, therefore, is to obstruct its operations. If they cannot wholly neutralize its efficacy, they do their utmost to mar its benign tendency, and frustrate its salutary results: those whom they cannot retain in perpetual vassalage, they strive, in every practicable way, to distress and injure. They cannot, without alarm and resistance, see their empire invaded, the

prey wrested from their possession, and the souls, that they had thought to hold in 'bonds of iniquity,' disenthralled, and turned to holy obedience. May not the singularity of our case, then, account for our being peculiarly the objects of Satanic attack? Of all the rational orders, however numerous, no others may so be tempted,—assaulted in a similar mode, or to a similar extent,—because no other may be in exactly the same circumstances. None may, like us, be fallen, but not cast off. We alone may be the subjects of a remedial system, that provides equally for pardon and purity; embracing a propitiation to atone, and grace to sanctify; exhibiting the means, and tendering the offer, of salvation, with unconditional freeness and unrestricted universality, to the children of guilt and corruption.

Why have such scope and liberty been granted to these 'Spiritual Wickednesses?' Why does a Being, whose power could at once annihilate their opposition, permit such a varied and continued display of it? Why, for thousands of years, and over the whole earth, have they been allowed to exercise so terrible a domination; to carry on, alternately by the arts of subtlety and violence, their designs of malice; to establish their strongholds, and consolidate their kingdom, without effectual hindrance, or with hardly any apparent interference; to spread the reign of darkness, prolong the prevalence of superstition, and multiply follies and crimes, till they have gained nearly absolute ascendancy

over mortals, and the world of mind, thoroughly blinded and depraved, has been all but subjected to their arbitrary control? These are inquiries, which we are not competent fully to answer. 'Even so, Father, for so it hath seemed meet in Thy sight.' Some reasons are patent, and these, it is presumed, sufficient to vindicate the ways of God; to evince the wisdom, the rectitude, the propriety, of His procedure as Moral Governor. To us they are satisfactory, and more we do not desire: content to wait for that complete elucidation of the plans, and principles, and operations of Providence, and, especially, of the Economy of Redemption, which the light of heaven may be expected to afford.

Besides, touching the Agency of Demons, may not many of the superior orders of Intelligence, even now, be better informed than we in regard to the *reasons*, as well as the modes, the instrumentalities, and the potency? With reasons, of which we are left in ignorance, because the knowledge of them, having no direct bearing on our improvement, is not necessary to us at present, they may be acquainted. They may thus be receiving lessons deeply interesting, and of the kind reserved for ourselves hereafter, but of which we can have little conception, till arrived at the state of perfection. They may be furnished both with topics of instruction, and sources of enjoyment, to which, otherwise, no access could have been had: be obtaining

views, alike pleasing and profitable, of the Divine character and administration: be beholding, with reverent delight, evil made the minister of good, and its mightiest influences so counteracted and overruled, as to contribute to 'the praise of the glory of grace.'

Is it so, that our Earth is the theatre of events so grand in their nature, and so momentous in their issues: the scene of the antagonism of opposing principles—of the conflict of the Powers of light with the Powers of darkness, of the displays of Wisdom in outwitting the inventions of craft, and the triumphs of Love over the efforts of malignity? May it not thus acquire an importance beyond what intrinsically belongs to it, and attract the wondering attention of distant worlds, to whose inhabitants may be conveyed, by angelic heralds, or by other modes of communication, tidings of what is transpiring in this small but interesting spot? May they not thus be supplied with a new theme of contemplation, and new matter of song; and, with increased ardour, pour forth the doxology: 'Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints!'

By some, we are aware, the 'doctrine of Devils' is discredited. They scout the idea, so prevalent among professed believers in Christianity, of the Agency of Evil Spirits: nay, that such beings exist, if not disputed or denied, is a matter about which they are extremely sceptical. Others, who admit the *reality* of the Agency



mentioned, object to our assertion of its *might* and fearfulness. We are thoroughly persuaded, however, that the views which we hold are supported by the highest testimony. Those who examine the subject in the light of Scripture, and whose judgments are guided by its decisions, will, it is presumed, allow the substantial accuracy of the statements to be advanced. On a question of this nature, mere human authority is of no weight: the opinions and speculations of sages, who bow not to the declarations of the Record, are worthless: in so far as they contradict what it teaches, or disagree with the evident import of its language, or the general bearing of its contents, they are erroneous. Here, as on all points of faith and practice, our desire is, to consult the Oracle, and to receive, with implicit credence, its responses, as the utterances of Infallible Truth.

## CHAPTER II.

*Existence.*

THE following remarks are brief and cursory. Instead of entering deeply into the subject, they rather, as it were, skim the surface. They are submitted to the dispassionate consideration of those, who dispute or impugn the doctrine, which, in common with the various Sects of the orthodox, we advocate. If they are thought severe in phrase, or harsh in tone, remember the reprehensible procedure of the persons against whom they are directed. How dishonest the methods by which they 'wrest the Scriptures;' thus striving to compass, along with their 'own destruction,' that of the uninformed or the unstable! It is not forgotten, that to 'speak the truth in love,' and 'in meekness to instruct them that oppose themselves,' are Divine injunctions. But neither should it be forgotten, that the same authority commands to 'rebuke sharply:' and, surely, such a style of address, if proper towards any, cannot be inapplicable to those, who aim at the basest ends by means equally base. Our remarks may, also, serve to reprove or admonish some, who, though pro-

fessing to hold the doctrine stated, practically neglect it. Not a favourite subject of reflection or discourse, it is rarely present to their minds. It is allowed in words, but ignored by deeds; exerting as little influence over the tenor of the thoughts, or in the regulation of the conduct, as if it formed no article of the Christian creed.

In prosecuting the discussion of this theme, we shall arrange our observations under two general divisions: the Existence—the Agency—of Evil Spirits. Under each head, we purpose, by way of reply, to examine some of the more popular objections. We begin with the topic, which has the priority in nature, and which, therefore, is entitled to precedence in the order of disquisition:

The **EXISTENCE** of Evil Spirits.—The knowledge of their Existence is matter of pure Revelation. Independently of *it*, we should have been in utter ignorance regarding the fact. Reason affords no intimation of it. It lies entirely beyond her province. It is too recondite for her to have searched out. It pertains to a sphere that far transcends her reach. It belongs to a class of secrets, which she cannot penetrate: is one of many mysteries, which it is not given her to unveil. Nor is there the least likelihood, that, in virtue of any improvement of power, or by any process of investigation; as the result of any culture, or at any advance in the path of inquiry, she could ever, by her own unaided efforts,

have obtained cognizance of it. The acutest vision had never discerned it.

Accordingly, when the Existence of Devils is announced to her, by the voice of Inspiration, as a verity; Reason is not hasty to receive it. Not only did the discovery of it, originally, exceed her ability, while it must have ever eluded her observation. It likewise involves what, to her, is very *unsavoury*. She does not relish it: it is altogether unacceptable to her taste. As to its truth, she cannot but feel her incompetence to decide; yet, her arrogance leads her to sit in judgment on it, and to pronounce a verdict. The doctrine appears to her quite unphilosophical. The phraseology in which it is taught, is reckoned a flourish of Poetry or Rhetoric, an Eastern trope, or metaphor. It is called a childish delusion, or an ingenious fiction. It is represented as the antiquated offspring of ignorance, or the exploded dogma of superstition: a bugbear, which priestcraft had conjured up to awe the vulgar. It is discarded as a notion, fit only to be instilled into the weak or the uninformed, but, like any other figment of the imagination, unworthy the credence of an enlightened understanding.

But, why deem it incredible, that there are such beings as Devils? Wherefore should the possibility, or even the *probability*, of their existence be questioned? What principle of sound Philosophy does the supposition oppose? What dictate of right Reason does it contra-

dict? Indeed, to hold the negative, or to deny their *entity*, were to violate the genius of the one, and offend against the spirit of the other. It is a position, perfectly untenable: an opinion, without a particle of evidence: an assumption, unwarranted by any rational consideration. It is assertion merely; assertion, bold, but rash; confident, but groundless. It is destitute even of the semblance of foundation, either in what forms the substance of *actual intelligence*, or in what falls within the range of legitimate inquiry, or fair deduction. On a point of this nature, bare affirmation, by whomsoever, will not satisfy us. We desiderate something more: but unreasonable dislikes, and vain imaginations, compose the sum of what the objector has to offer.

The Existence of Evil Spirits, it is allowed, is one of those articles of our creed, which cannot be established by a train of arguments, such as may be adduced in support of many of our conclusions, or beliefs. It does not admit of *logical* proof, or *direct* confirmation. Our faith of it rests not on the authority of man. It has a more solid basis than the inferences of sense, or reason, or experience. These are fallacious, and might deceive us: not that on which depends our persuasion of the tenet in question. This is, entirely and exclusively, the *Divine Testimony*. More we could not have: less, in such a case, would not suffice. 'The mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it.' We *therefore* accept it as a 'faithful saying.' What, though no 'man *hath* seen, or

*can see,* those of whom we discourse? Immaterial, they are *necessarily* invisible to mortal eye. What though their being be not ascertainable by human research? That they *are*, we are assured by Him, who formed them; and we set our seal to it as indisputable.

Mention is made, in particular, of one unembodied Spirit, high in rank, and great in intellect, but evil in nature, and malevolent in intention, called Satan, or the Devil. The Existence of this 'Morning Star,' once rivalling the brighter of the celestial luminaries, but fallen from the sphere it originally adorned, and coursing, with ceaseless impetuosity, along devious paths, to the peril of a world, which the force of this dread Wanderer has drawn from its proper orbit: his Existence is not a conjecture, or a probability, but a *certainty*. Unimpeachable veracity declares it. It is engrossed among the disclosures of the Record. It forms a part, an important and indispensable part, of its informations. It is taught without ambiguity, without obscurity, without figure: taught with all the plainness and clearness of which language is susceptible. Not only is it announced in terms of unmistakable import; but, as necessary to be distinctly known, and constantly remembered, and seriously pondered, it is assigned a place of distinguished prominence.

From Alpha to Omega of Revelation, the doctrine for which we contend is introduced. It occupies the foreground. It recurs with a painful, yet salutary,

frequency. It obtrudes itself upon the notice at every turn: is presented under this other aspect, or in that other connexion. It is not, indeed, formally *proved*, nor ever made the subject of express *proposition*. Like the *being* of Jehovah, which is nowhere argued, or stated as a theorem to be demonstrated, it is *assumed*, or presupposed. Whenever brought forward, or alluded to, it is as a matter taken for granted, not as requiring either direct affirmation, or the support of evidence. It is always propounded as if it were a fact, respecting the reality of which there could be neither controversy nor hesitancy. Such a mode of instruction well befits the Divine Majesty; whose simple announcement of any doctrine, or assumption of any truth, is instead of a thousand arguments or proofs. Regarding Evil Spirits, many things are stated; all of which *imply*, what is never asserted in positive phrase—their Existence.

Is the doctrine maintained thus embodied in the communications of the Word? What follows? One obvious consequence is, that to doubt, or deny, the former, is to impugn the truthfulness of the latter. To explain the annunciation of the doctrine as a figure of speech, a metaphorical expression, an Oriental mode of diction: what is this but to burlesque, or parody, Scripture? It is to divest its solemn utterances of meaning or force, by daring, at the license of an unbridled fancy, or to serve the purposes of impiety,

to turn into myth or allegory, what it *teaches* or *narrates*. The taste or humour, the predilections or caprices of each, become his guide in interpreting the breathings of Inspiration. According as these savour of insobriety or ungodliness, the contents of the Book are wrested: in such degree the value of its instructions is deteriorated, and their efficacy marred. The *genuine* sense is misapprehended or obscured, and one constrained and foreign imposed. The literal is transmuted into the figurative; the heavenly, merged into the earthly. The *letter* may be retained, while the *spirit* is evaporated: and, through the unhallowed touch of a corrupting Philosophy, what was 'ordained to life, is found to be unto death.'

Alas! that any, affecting reverence for Holy Writ, should be guilty of such presumptuous freedoms, either with the text or the interpretation. Yet, there are those, who, while feigning obeisance to it as the rule of faith, will not allow that there lives a being—a superior, but sinful, Intelligence—whom its blessed Author styled, emphatically, 'the Prince of this world,' and one of His Apostles, 'the God of this world,' and 'the Prince of the power of the air.' Explicitly as it is taught, and often as it is urged upon the attention, his Existence is questioned or denied. It is represented as an imagination, or a delusion, founded on a misconstruction of the peculiar style of the sacred penmen, or ignorance of the idioms of Hebrew composition. That



they do, *apparently*, ascribe to him, in most express terms, and in every conceivable way, the attributes and actions of a moral agent, cannot be gainsayed. Yet, to understand them, by such diction, to intimate his *personality*, would, it is contended, be a misapprehension of their meaning. We are reminded of the difference between bold metaphor, and plain narrative; between a fiction of Poetry, and a matter of fact. We are told of accommodation, in the phraseology of Scripture, to the superstitious notions prevalent among the Jews. We are assured, that by what their language naturally leads us to regard as a *living being*,—a subject of moral government as really as ourselves, but far above us in rank, as well as anterior in origin,—the sacred Writers meant only a prosopopeia, or personification, sometimes of sin, sometimes of the evil agencies, or hostile authorities, of the world.

Relative to this controverted point, the Record, we have said, gives a ‘certain sound.’ It is our only sure Instructor; and to its voice we ‘shall do well to take heed.’ In this, as in all other matters, its teaching, how conflicting soever with ‘the wisdom of the wise,’ or contrary to pre-conceived opinions, deserves our reverent attention and unhesitating assent. From it we gather the following informations, which seem to comprise the substance of its testimony on the question before us. There exist orders of intelligent natures, high in the scale of creation, but, not clothed with

material frames, invisible to the corporeal eye. Originally pure and obedient, but yielding to pride and ambition, they became unholy and rebellious. Now, deposed from their seats in glory, and without the hope or the means of recovery, they have no prospect but that of unabating and endless woe. Maddened by the agonies of despair, and under the dominance of unchecked depravity, they are the inveterate and irreconcilable enemies of God and man.

As to the *number* of Evil Spirits, we cannot speak with aught like precision. Here, the only competent authority is nearly silent. While acquainting us with their Existence, it leaves us in the dark as to the extent of their *plurality*. From some incidental notices, however, they would appear to be very *many*: in multitude, perhaps equalling, it may be vastly exceeding, not only the aggregate of one generation, but the countless myriads of all the generations, of the human family.

With respect to their *influence*, too, our knowledge is almost as scanty, as imperfect, as regarding their number. But, that it is *mighty*, may be safely inferred, partly from their native endowment, partly from their lengthened experience, and partly from what Inspired Testimony affirms of them. Individually, like their unfallen brethren of the same orders, they are strong: collectively, they must, beyond all conception, be 'great in power.' From what is written, may it not be further concluded, that they compose a compact and well-

organized empire; or consist of skilful and disciplined armies, enlisted in a service that accords with their views and feelings, acting in concert and upon plan, like those who are resolutely bent on a common end, and ruled by a despotism the most vigorous and absolute of which the universe contains an example? They are marshalled, it would seem, under the regency of a Leader, of prodigious capacity, and intense malignity, whose will is law, and whose behests compliant hosts are ready to execute. This tyrant Chief, or arbitrary Potentate, we find designated by a variety of appropriate and significant names, descriptive of his sinful character, or pernicious agency, and exhibiting him as an object, especially to our feeble race, equally of dread and abhorrence.

The two last particulars, indeed—the Number and the Influence of Devils—properly belong to another branch of the argument. As they may come under notice afterwards, we pass them over now without comment. Their Existence is the fact, the only fact, to which attention has, at present, been directed. The grounds for our belief of it have been adduced: or the *sum* of what the Scriptures state on this head, together with the *manner* in which they set it before us, has been shown. These grounds, although most satisfactory to us, fail to operate universal conviction. By some, they are wholly and unceremoniously rejected: others, by misinterpreting their import, or applying to

them false principles of Exposition, try to evade their force, and escape the conclusion to which, rightly construed, they lead. To those who adopt such unworthy courses, we purpose, in our next Chapter, shortly to address ourselves. If we shall not succeed either in reasoning or shaming them out of their error, our exposure of their unfairness, of the fallacies and impieties of their procedure, may, through the Divine blessing, guard others from the snares which their guile prepares for the simple and unwary.

Meanwhile, we close with entreating careful attention to the subject. It is entitled, we apprehend, to more prominence, in the instructions both of the Pulpit and the Press, than it has generally received. That, surely, cannot be a matter of trifling importance, which God has presented so often, and in such a variety of lights and connections, in His holy Word. Deep must be the interest it possesses: awful the solemnity pertaining to it: of universal concernment the knowledge and belief of it. What, then, must be the guilt of opposing a doctrine at once so divinely true, and of such terrible significance! 'O the infatuation that contemptuously rejects it! How 'foolish and unwise' even to treat it with indifference! Without controversy, it merits patient, serious, and prayerful examination; a frequent place both in public discussion, and in private meditation. May its professed believers have a more intelligent conviction of its verity, and a livelier

and more influential impression of its momentousness! May its enemies, whether undisguised or secret, while they read or hear, be prevailed on to ponder and digest, the inspired statements of it! Spirit of wisdom, purge their mental vision of the films of prejudice, giving them, 'in Thy light, to see light' clearly! Rend the veil from their hearts, that they be no longer 'faithless, but believing!'

## CHAPTER III.

## Disbelievers.

WE are met, at the outset, by 'the disputer of this world.' He is a wise man, of sober mind, and 'slow to believe.' What others fully credit, he doubts or denies. He must have *proof*, before he will yield the assent of his understanding. He accosts us with a preliminary question. He requires the *reason* of our belief in One, whom we designate the Prince of darkness. That reason we are ready to produce, though it may not be such as to satisfy our rational inquirer. It is derived from a Source, at which he looks with suspicion or aversion: a Document, which he treats with disrespect, and whose informations he hesitates or refuses to accept.

How shall we disarm this opponent? Great would be our happiness, to cure him of his incredulity; to dislodge him from the strongholds of his scepticism. But, such a triumph, we fear, is not likely to be the reward of our effort: his mental condition, and the prejudices amidst which he entrenches himself, almost preclude the hope of achieving it. His scruples are

not so easily overcome as some may be apt to imagine. Why? He calls for a *kind* of proof, which neither we are competent to give, nor the nature of the case admits. Otherwise, he demurs to our conclusions, and maintains his position with all the pertinacity of disbelief. An unfair disputant, who sets no price upon Truth, and brooks not the confession of error, he resorts to artifice: a cavil, or a sneer, or a growl, muttered in a tone of contemptuous pride, is his usual weapon of defence.

What answer shall we frame for our modern Pyrrhonist? By what line of argument may we carry conviction to his mind? How can we strip him of 'the armour wherein he trusteth?' 'Wise in his own conceits,' he may charge us with simplicity or weakness. We retort the charge. He it is, who opens his lips in folly: whose judgment is misled by the deceitfulness of the heart. His supercilious airs daunt us not. His 'swelling words of vanity' only move our pity. Every emotion of anger dies in us, when we advert to the doom of the immortal creature, who dares to 'reply against God.' Such guilt he contracts, by questioning the doctrine under review. His Maker has taught it, among the other discoveries of the unseen world, included in the Volume of Inspiration. In repudiating it, therefore, he virtually makes the God of truth 'a liar.'

The demand of *demonstrative* evidence, we tell the

disputer, is unreasonable. Philosopher he may think himself, or be styled by a thousand admirers. Proud may be the pinnacle on which eminence in scholarship, or success in interesting paths of inquiry, has placed him. But, whoever he may be, whatever be the splendour of his genius, or the honours of his name, is to us immaterial. Our quarrel with him, at present, is confined to the one point under consideration; and we are bold to remind him, though our plainness should offend his vanity, or move his choler, that his cavils and objections manifest a spirit very different from that of sound Philosophy. They are based on grounds, which she utterly disavows: grounds, too, which, unless the intellect were misled by some deranging or corrupting influence, her genuine cultivators would be ashamed to adopt.

Our remarks, in the sequel, we shall throw into the shape of friendly remonstrance. We dare not flatter, but neither do we wish to insult. If umbrage is taken at the style of our address, we scorn to apologize. We point to the overweening conceit, the blustering arrogance, the audacious impiety, of not a few among our leading opponents. On that score, we are ready to defend even a greater severity of language than we have chosen to employ. Besides, who are they, or what are we, that, in replying to their infidelity, we should resort to the apologetic, or discourse in soft words? We give the vainest and mightiest of them to



know, that we fear them not. What care we for either 'the gods of the hills,' or 'the gods of the valleys?' The arena of debate is open to them, and glad shall we be to meet on it the most defiant of Philistia's giants, or famed of Anak's sons.

The Existence of Satan is a doctrine, which its impugners have treated with characteristic unfairness. We are not aware of their having, in a single instance, attempted to controvert it by sober reasoning. Ridicule is the weapon with which they have commonly assailed it. Indeed, this has, in every age, been a favourite weapon with many of the more noted enemies, both of Christianity in general, and of certain of its distinguishing statements. It is one, however, of which only a weak or disingenuous opponent will avail himself. It is the artifice of a mind, either suspicious of the tenableness of its position, or conscious of its own inability to defend it. Ridicule disproves nothing. It affects not the merits of the point, the correctness of the belief, against which it is directed: it neither establishes the true, nor exposes the false. When employed to do what cannot be accomplished by the more legitimate means of sound discussion, or rational argument—to bring into discredit any of the facts or principles of Revelation, it is symptomatic of extreme badness of heart.

As to the particular doctrine in question, make it not a subject of *mockery*. On those who resort to it, such

a mode of attack reflects no honour. It is a mean expedient; an artful *evasion* of the point at issue. It is unworthy of a candid or earnest inquirer. It consists not with a sincere desire to ascertain what really is the fact. It betrays opposition to a tenet, merely from *dislike*: a determination to support a theory or hypothesis, irrespective of evidence. Shame on those, who can adopt such a base subterfuge; especially on those, who profess to revere the Book, which propounds the obnoxious doctrine. It is a *serious* matter, and deserves to be treated in a spirit, and a manner, as remote as possible from the light or the profane. Here, levity or raillery is peculiarly unbecoming. Is its *truth* doubted, or its *reasonableness* objected to? Let the *grounds* of doubt or objection be stated with the utmost explicitness and force. They can then be thoroughly examined, and calmly weighed. Whereas, the simple *denial* of it, in ever so confident a tone, goes for nothing. Vain, too, is the endeavour, by all the artillery of *ridicule*, to unsettle the convictions of those, who are firmly persuaded, by careful attention to the language of the Document, of its Scripturalness.

The question may be reduced to a narrow compass. Either there is, or there is not, such a being as Satan. Some maintain the negative. Proof is demanded. That they are clearly bound to produce. But *proof* they have none. What then? They flatly contradict

the doctrine. Occasionally they try, by absurd or inadmissible criticisms, to explain away the passages, which directly intimate, or necessarily imply it. These passages, it is affirmed, only personify evil, or speak of sin in the abstract; while we, by a gross but vulgar mistake, conceive an intelligent creature to be meant. Oftener, they attempt to bring the doctrine into disfavour, by presenting it in some ridiculous light. It is a tale of childhood, or one of the early impressions of a false education. With the weak, the ignorant, or the superstitious, it may gain credit; but it will be discarded by minds that scorn to be misled by erroneous teaching, or have achieved their freedom from the trammels of prejudice. This is very flattering, no doubt, to the pride of self-esteem. It may cherish the conceit of superior illumination. But, we are persuaded, it is only a pleasing dream, an idle fancy; and those who indulge it had better take heed, lest it be found, that 'the light which is in them is darkness.'

We, on the contrary, hold the affirmative. But we are 'ready to give, to every man that asketh us, the *reason*' of our belief. The substance of that reason may be embodied in a single sentence, and has already been indicated. The doctrine advocated, has been *Divinely* revealed: it is certified by that infallible attestation,—'Thus saith Jehovah.' In other words, it is contained in that Volume, which purports to come

from 'the Faithful and True Witness.' The credentials of this Volume we have minutely investigated: as well as examined, we trust impartially, much that has been written by the abler of those, whose object, whether avowed or concealed, was to disparage or invalidate its vouchers. What has been the result of our frequent and laborious inquiries? Strict scrutiny has convinced us, and each successive repetition of the process has deepened the conviction, of the justness of its claims to a supernatural authorship. It bears, in our decided judgment, the manifest seal of Inspiration: exhibits, in every page, the unmistakable signature of a Divine hand. It consists, unquestionably, of a series of utterances from the Throne: communications directly from the Invisible, and of which Prophets and Apostles were only the vocal organs, or commissioned heralds.

Perfectly satisfied in regard to the *heavenly origin* of the Word, we are equally sure, that its contents must all be *pure truth*. As Omniscience can be ignorant of no fact; so neither can Veracity declare what is false, or teach what is erroneous. Not more certain are we, that, in nature, darkness cannot issue from the fountain of light, than that deception cannot proceed from Him, who is both 'a God of knowledge,' and 'a God of truth.' He knows all things, and He '*cannot lie*.' Hence, whatever His lips utter, must be absolute verity; the announcement corresponding exactly with the

reality. Now, among the Revelations of His Word, the Existence of Satan has been assigned a place. It is introduced, not once, but often; not in equivocal or enigmatical, but in explicit phrase; not in the style of figure or metaphor, but in that of simple narrative. We take the statements as they occur in the Record. We adopt such methods of determining their import, as are sanctioned by universal approval. We apply the same laws of Exegesis, which are used in other cases; and apply them in the same manner. We interpret the expressions according to their plain, grammatical construction, the understood acceptation of the terms, and the peculiar idiom of the language.

Conformably to these rules of exposition, the passages which discourse of Satan, must be considered as speaking of a *rational being*. The scheme of Hermeneutics, which favours the opposite view, we scarcely know by what terms of reprobation to characterize. To us it appears radically unsound: indeed, so false, so extravagantly licentious, that, but for its actual adoption, the proposal of it might have been thought incredible. To explain the passages referred to, as some insist on doing, of a mere abstraction, a personification, a creation of the fancy: what is this but to be guilty of impious trifling, or wretched sophistry? It were to befool alike those who propose, and those who receive, such constrained or perverted comments. It were to subject Scripture to the torture, in order to extort, by

the operation of violence, a meaning different from, or contrary to, that which, by fair and legitimate questioning, could be extracted. It savours of the very essence of blasphemy.

Yet, such are the desperate shifts, the dishonest expedients, to which 'men of corrupt minds' not seldom have recourse, in their anxiety to get rid of an unpalatable truth, or with a view to support a favourite theory or opinion. We call upon such to act a more manly and consistent part. Try not to disguise, under pretexts too flimsy to deceive any but imbeciles, your unfeigned sentiments. Be bold to *avow* your hostility to the Bible. Make common cause with the Deist, who, in his antipathy,—an antipathy springing from ignorance, and fostered by prejudice,—*openly* rejects Holy Writ. Scouting the idea of its inspiration, he pronounces it the composition of fallible or erratic genius: a congeries of effusions, by well-meaning, perhaps, but often mistaken men: a Volume, which blends, with not a little that is puerile or unsound, much that is sage or wholesome; and which, though worthy of perusal for its judicious maxims, or curious and antique lore, has no better claim than the Shaster or the Khoran to be regarded as *Divine*. If, on the other hand, you pretend to venerate Scripture as the treasury of saving knowledge,—as comprising, 'not what man's wisdom teacheth, but what the Holy Ghost teacheth:' then we ask you to embrace, without omission, without

modification, without reservation, whatever doctrines it promulgates.

We give you the alternative. Which horn do you prefer? Make your choice: declare it, or we fasten on you the charge of cowardice and duplicity. Either, say you repudiate the Divinity of the Bible: in which case, except, though at your peril, to those of its statements that coincide not with your vain conceits. Or, professing to revere it as 'of God,' accept, with the implicit faith, and the reverent submission, due to the Holy Oracle, *all* its disclosures; interpreting them in the sense which they obviously bear, and which the customary use, and ascertained construction, of language require. The demand seems reasonable: the obligation is imperative. Do you demur? Why? State distinctly the grounds of objection. You are not at liberty either to *reject*, or *qualify*, a single announcement or representation, on the score of *dislike*; or, because of its repugnance to pre-conceived notions, or peculiar partialities. This we hold to be an indisputable point; a principle, as evident as any axiom. We press it upon your attention. We ask your assent, and we shall have it, if reason, and not humour or prejudice, is to guide your judgment. If Jehovah has spoken, it is for us to hear. *What* He declares, we are bound to believe. Some of His utterances may be disrelished, or may clash with our cherished opinions. Nevertheless, acquiescence is ours: in no instance, and on no

pretence, are we permitted to withhold our implicit and hearty credence.

Perhaps, you think otherwise. You are *entitled*, you imagine, to carp and choose at pleasure. Here, we join issue with you. We challenge you to produce your warrant. No quibbling—no sophistry—no evasion. We maintain, you are *not* authorized to deal with the Book of God, as you may do with the work of an erring mortal: *not* authorized to discard or modify any one of its ‘sayings,’ as reason, or fancy, or taste, may suggest. If you suppose you have a title, where is the *proof*? That you are *bound* to give: that, we have a *right* to demand. Where find you the least intimation of it? Ah! you deceive yourselves: you ‘believe a lie.’ The averments of the Word *all* come from the same mouth; so that you must assent, or object, to them *in whole*. No license is granted you to embrace one, and refuse another, of the discoveries of Revelation. Though not all equally important, they are all equally *true*. All are confirmed by the same testimony: all are parts of the same scheme; each necessary to its perfectness, each holding the place which Wisdom assigned it. We tell you with all plainness, yet with much sorrow, that, if you subscribe to the Inspiration of the Record, and receive it not in the *entireness* of its doctrines, and according to the manifest import of its terms; you act more inconsistently than the Deist, who avows his persuasion of its earthly origin. You feign



regard for Sacred Scripture, yet 'do despite to the Spirit of grace, by rejecting, or explaining away, such portions of His testimony as offend your pride: thus superadding, to horrid impiety, the guilt of hypocrisy.

As to the particular tenet in question, we submit, to the consideration of the sceptical, the following queries. Allowing a Divine Existence, do you believe Him to be a Spirit? If so, do you deem it incredible, that He has created an order, or orders, of *immaterial* natures? Does it not appear, *a priori*, more probable, that a pure and infinite Intelligence would be the Father, rather of simple intelligences like Himself, than of compound creatures such as we are? By Angels, we understand rational beings without corporeal parts. That there *are* such unembodied beings, is a proposition, which none should deny, because none can disprove it. Reason confesses her inability to discover their Existence; but neither does she warrant incredulity or disbelief. Their existence we are enabled to assert on other evidence; evidence, too, which we account superior, at once more direct and satisfactory,—THE INFALLIBLE AUTHORITY OF THE WORD.

Granting the *creation* of Angels, may not some of them be *evil*? While the vast majority have 'kept their first estate,' may not a minority, *comparatively* small, yet *actually* large, have fallen? Originally holy, may not the latter have become depraved; spoiled, by some

melancholy but unexplained departure from rectitude, of every trait of the image, which once constituted both their honour and their bliss? Equal to their Brethren in mental power, and partaking of the same moral qualities, shining, like them, in the beauty of unsullied excellence; may they not have acted very differently? Capable of retaining, may they not have criminally lost, their primordial integrity: able to stand, have unhappily lapsed; and thus, by their own deed, have forfeited their immortal inheritance? Yielding to 'pride,' which is expressly affirmed to have been 'the condemnation of the Devil,' might they not have opposed the will of their Maker, and thus contracting guilt, have been deposed from their thrones of glory? To maintain the contrary, were to allege their constitutional *impeccability*. Or, it were to charge God with unrighteousness, in not preventing the *possibility* of their sinning; or in not establishing them, unchangeably, in a state of unblotted innocence. Like man, they enjoyed a perfect freedom of will,—the indispensable privilege of a moral and accountable agent; but, like him, abusing that freedom, they inherit shame, the meet recompense of disobedience.

*What* was the peculiar temptation of those primitive apostates: *how* sin was conceived, or the first motion of it arose, in their hearts: in what *form* it found actual expression; in what particular mode, or by what positive deeds, it first manifested itself: *when* they swerved

from their pristine uprightness,—how long after their creation, or before the Adamic period: whether they revolted *all at once*, in virtue of some trial to which, as the test of principle, they were contemporaneously subjected; or *in succession*, and as the consequence of repeated failures: whether each fell *of himself*, independently of any malign influence from without; or some were permitted to be tempters and seducers of others: these are inscrutable mysteries. They are matters, the knowledge of which, however it might gratify curiosity, could minister no solid benefit, or contribute aught calculated either to instruct or improve. Respecting them no information has been given; and, therefore, to speculate or conjecture were alike unprofitable and presumptuous. We speak, not of the time, or the manner, or the means, but merely of the *fact*. We hold it to be clearly revealed, that while some remained stedfast, and have been confirmed in holiness and felicity, others proved disobedient, and are ‘reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.’

The questions proposed, we press on the reflection of our opponents. We entreat their calm and serious considération of them. We do it the more earnestly, as they relate not to points of ‘doubtful disputation,’ or of idle though amusing theory, which may engage the contemplations of the ingenious or the inquisitive. On the contrary, they involve matters of *practical* interest;

subjects that have a direct and an important bearing, in ways and to a degree not imagined, both on their present and their future well-being. All the motives, in short, that can be supposed to influence a reasonable creature, desirous to ascertain the nature, or the evidence, of any article to be admitted into his creed, conspire to urge to the careful examination, the patient and dispassionate canvassing, of the topic under review.



Part Second.



Diabolical Agency.



# PART SECOND.

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## CHAPTER I.

### *Reality.—Moral Influence.*

OUR remarks, in the discussion of the preceding Part, bore chiefly on the EXISTENCE of Evil Spirits in general, and of one of their number, named Satan, in particular. It concerns us, however, to know and consider, not only that such sinful creatures, immaterial, and, therefore, to us invisible, exist; but that they possess an INFLUENCE very powerful and deleterious. To this second point, we now proceed briefly to advert. The two, though intimately related, are quite distinct, and admit of separate examination.

Let us premise, that it is not our design to attempt a laboured dissertation, or to canvass the subject at length, and under its several aspects. Hence, our remarks on this head, as well as on the former, may appear somewhat loose and general, if not superficial. The object is, rather to direct attention to the question, than fully and formally to discuss it. Believing it to be one which merits a large share of regard, while



many are too prone practically to overlook it, and others treat it with scepticism or ridicule, we have deemed it proper to bring it under review. Only simple plain reflections, or admonitory counsels are offered, as a cursory glance seems fitted to suggest. More we did not propose to ourselves, nor will much more be thought necessary. With this intention, let us consider

The REALITY of Diabolical Agency. This Agency may be contemplated in two lights. It is partly Moral, or purely spiritual: exerted directly on the rational nature, through the force of representations or persuasives. It is partly Physical: exerted on the body either immediately, or by means of outward influences, or material causes, that affect its state and comfort. To the former of these topics—Diabolical Agency in its MORAL bearing—our observations, in this Chapter, shall be restricted. Let us, then, attempt to establish, by Scriptural proof, its REALITY.

This Moral Agency the Supreme Ruler, in His adorable sovereignty, permits Satan, for wise though mysterious purposes, to exercise. Hence, he is represented as ‘going to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down in it:’ language, which intimates at once the restlessness of his activity, the celerity of his movements, and the amplitude of his range, as co-extensive with the diffusion of humanity. According to inspired testimony, it was he who, in the form of a serpent, or entering into one of those reptiles, and speaking through

its mouth, seduced our first mother into disobedience. It was he who, on one memorable occasion, 'provoked David to number Israel : ' a procedure, by which, to the joy no doubt of the Tempter, he incurred the Divine displeasure, the visitation of which, by pestilence, caused the swift destruction of 'seventy thousand' of his subjects. It was he who, envious of the prosperity of Job, and desirous to harass and distress, if he could not ruin, that eminent saint, 'smote him with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.'

The fact of the Agency of Satan is also taught, in the clearest manner, by the Evangelists. It is asserted in the narrative of our Lord's temptation in the wilderness. It is intimated in the accounts of the various cases of possession, in which first Jesus, and afterwards His apostles, put forth a miraculous power to heal. It is affirmed in the following address of our Saviour to the unbelieving Jews: 'Ye are of your father the Devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do: he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.' To the same purport, the beloved disciple declares: 'He that committeth sin is of the Devil; for the Devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that He might destroy the works of the Devil.' Writing to the Ephesians, too, the Apostle Paul says: 'We wrestle

not against flesh and blood, but against Principalities, against Powers, against the Rulers of the darkness of this world, against Spiritual Wickedness in high places.'

In the Old Testament we read, that the Prophet Zechariah, when shown 'Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the Lord, beheld *Satan* standing at his right hand to *resist* him. And the LORD said unto *Satan*, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan.' In the Apocalypse, he is introduced as the chief, though unseen, actor in those scenes of iniquity, those schemes of persecuting violence, in virtue of which were poured out such vials of terror on 'the children of disobedience.' In the wondrous visions and revelations granted to the favoured exile of Patmos, he was beheld as '*coming down*, having great wrath, knowing that he had but a short time:' as '*bound* a thousand years, and cast into the bottomless pit:' as again '*loosed* out of his prison, and going out to deceive the nations:' as at last consigned, with the Beast and the False Prophet, to 'the lake of fire and brimstone, and there *tormented* day and night for ever and ever.' In Scripture, generally, he is spoken of as the prime enemy of God and man, 'full of all subtilty,' and the instigator to 'all mischief:' ever seeking to deceive and to destroy, whether in his undisguised character as the 'Prince of devils,' or as 'transformed into an angel of light.'

In the passages quoted or alluded to, and in numerous

others of equivalent import, a certain Being is introduced; and to him are imputed attributes, intentions, and actions, which are proper and peculiar to a moral agent. Examine each passage separately, and try if, excluding the idea of *personality*, you can extract from it any intelligible or consistent meaning: rather if, at least in the great majority of instances, the sentences are not reduced to mere inanities, so many specimens of the veriest jargon or babbling. The exercise is not difficult or laborious. It may be profitable, by carrying conviction to some, who have hitherto paid but little attention to the subject, and whose minds are apt to be perverted by the sophistries of the heretical. Nor need it be tedious, as a few selected cases may suffice.

Take, first, the Temptation in the wilderness. Is it asked, Where was the *scene*? How was the assault made? What was the *motive*, or the *object*, or the *hope*, of the Adversary? To such inquiries, our answer is—silence. They are matters of curiosity, which have not the remotest bearing on our present subject. The only question is, How shall we interpret the Evangelical account? Admit a *personification*; conceive of a *quality*, or an *abstraction*, instead of a living being: what absurdity, if not blasphemy, does the supposition involve! That the Tempter cannot denote the hostility of either Gentile or Jewish powers, is evident from the fact, that our Lord was *alone*. Neither can the Tempter be understood of Sin, or the *principle* of Evil;

for, in whom could it have subsisted but Himself? Abhorred be the blasphemous thought, of corruption inhering and rankling, though but for 'forty days,' or gaining even a momentary lodgement, in the breast of a Being who was, emphatically and absolutely, 'the Holy and the Just One:' in other words, that the conflict was *internal*. While both hypotheses are untenable, equally objectionable is the theory of a *visionary* scene, a fanciful representation, a pictorial drawing of the imagination. We take the expressions in their literal acceptance, as relating a *real* transaction, an actual contest. It is the strife of mighty belligerents; the resolute encounter of two lofty Intelligences: the one invisible, the other incarnate; the former unholy, the latter impeccable; that the Head of the rebellious, this the Son of God 'in the likeness of man.' Nor, when the case is considered in all its particulars, can we fail to be struck at the consummate ability, the matchless dexterity, of the assailant, in accommodating his temptations so adroitly to the circumstances of the Assailed. Such is the obvious and natural view of the narrative. No other is warranted by the laws of Sacred Hermeneutics: nor, we may be sure, would another have been sought for, but from the desire to evade an unacceptable conclusion.

Next, an Evangelist relates, that when the Seventy, returning from a missionary tour, reported, with much elation of spirit, their unexpected success in expelling

demons, Jesus said, 'I beheld Satan, as lightning, fall from heaven.' Afterwards, referring to the same joyous event, He declared, as one grand result of that approaching crucifixion, which He foretold under the figure of being 'lifted up:': 'Now shall the Prince of this world be cast out.' Again, in the near prospect of another encounter with the archfiend, who was about to assault Him, not, as in the wilderness, with the wiles of the serpent, but with the fury of the lion,—not under the guise of a friend, but with the violence of a raging foe: He pre-intimated, 'The Prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.' Once more, towards the close of His valedictory address, when promising the Paraclete, whose agency should soon be so signally displayed in delivering 'the captives of the Terrible One;': the Saviour announced, for the comfort of His sorrowing disciples, 'The Prince of this world is judged.'

• That, in all these instances, the idea of a personification is inadmissible, we presume to be manifest. It would represent the Speaker as adopting, intentionally, a style unintelligible to those whom He was addressing; and as uttering a sentiment, widely different from that which His language was fitted, and must have been understood, to convey. Hardly could the hearers have avoided misapprehending His meaning, while, contrary to His usual practice, He added not a word, dropped not a hint, to correct or prevent their mistake. On

each of the three last occasions, our Lord employed an expression peculiar to Himself,—‘The Prince of this world.’ We submit whether the reader, whose mind was under no particular bias, or whose views were not perverted by some sinister, predisposing influence, would construe this expression conformably to the theory we reject. Would he not take it to signify, what it seems plainly to import, a wicked but potent Spirit? Whether considered separately, or in its connection, it will bear no other sense than that of a great, living Intelligence, possessed of high dominion, or exercising an unholy sovereignty: a dominion, a sovereignty, justifying the appropriateness of the description, and which, whatever be some of its characteristics,—its means or principles, its interferences or aims,—is alike malignant in nature, vigorous in activity, and fearful in extent.

Further, we read of ‘Satan entering into Judas,’ and of his ‘filling the heart of Ananias.’ The former he prompted, by stimulating his covetousness, to betray his Master: the latter, by working on his avarice and hypocrisy, to ‘lie unto the Holy Ghost.’ But, waving all consideration of the *manner* of the temptation, which can only be matter of probable conjecture, we are led to conceive of a depraved, moral agent, mysteriously yet actually, instigating to evil. To repudiate such an idea, were clearly to twist and wrest, by a most reprehensible process of straining, the natural construction of the expressions. Thus, also, we interpret the declaration

of Paul to the Thessalonians: 'We would have come unto you once and again, but *Satan hindered us.*'

The same remark applies, with equal force, to such Scriptures as these. 'The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly:' suggesting, unquestionably, the notion of a powerful and malicious foe, crafty in scheming, and busy in inflicting mischief, but whose efforts should be frustrated, and his hopes finally disappointed. What other but a very forced and far-fetched sense can be put upon the Apostolical declaration respecting the purpose of the Incarnation? One of its great ends is asserted to have been, 'That through death, Christ might destroy HIM that had the power of death, that is, the DEVIL:' not annihilate his being, but abridge his dominion, deliver from his vassalage, and counteract the designs and workings of his enmity. Who but a dreamer, unfit to be reasoned with, could talk of figure or metaphor here?

As little can we sanction the Exposition, which adopts it in this other inspired statement of the same Writer. 'Having spoiled PRINCIPALITIES and POWERS, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it:' in IT,—either on the cross, or in Himself. How unwarrantable the assumption of poetic license, or of an imaginative flight, in what bears so evidently to be a plain narration! Such the rules of language, as well as the concordant voices of both the Hebrew and Christian Oracles, require us to view it. Consistently



with the principles usually applied to elicit the meaning of any Author, we regard it as descriptive of an awful, but, in its results, glorious reality: the announcement of a signal victory over mighty, though invisible, antagonists,—Potentates of a superior order to those of Adamic descent: intimating the final issue of the conflict, so terrible yet decisive, alluded to in the saying, ‘This is your hour, and *the power of darkness.*’

Then, permission, it would seem, being granted them for a season to do their worst, apostate angels, marshalled under Apollyon, attacked, with the energy of desperation, and when, if ever, there appeared the possibility, if not likelihood, of success, the ‘amazed’ and ‘sorrowful’ Sufferer; intensifying the horrors of the Agony, and adding one of its bitterest ingredients to His cup of anguish. Incarnate Innocence triumphs, and the sons of pride are humiliated: theirs is the torturing perplexity, the sore mortification, of repulse, and defeat, and disgrace. Now, after the lapse of four thousand years, and by evidence as irrefragable as the manner was wonderful, or the circumstances strange, the Divine veracity is attested; and that first prophecy, in phrase so enigmatic, yet in import so rich and cheering, meets its fulfilment to the joy of a jubilant universe: ‘The heel of the Seed of the Woman is bruised, but the head of the Serpent is broken.’

Again, it is written, ‘The angels who kept not their

first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.' Such is the statement of Jude; and very similar, and of exactly the same import, are the terms in which Peter announces that terrible catastrophe. Now, of whom do these two inspired penmen speak? To say that each refers to moral and accountable creatures, by the appellation, 'Angels,' looks like repeating a truism. *Sin* and *sinner*s are correlates: they are separable neither in fact nor in conception. The former implies or presupposes the latter, as necessarily as the solar beam the presence of the sun, or heat that of a body emitting caloric. It has, and can have, no *independent* existence. As a simple abstraction, therefore, or an isolated quality, it neither could have entered heaven, nor have been expelled from that residence of purity. It was the act of *persons*; whom, like the primogenitor of our inferior race, the Creator 'made upright,' but who, like him, proving disobedient, were driven forth from the association of the holy, as he, on his criminal fall, was turned out of the bowers of Paradise. In an exchange of the abodes of bliss for realms of perdition, the former received the just recompense of their rebellion: and, whereas Mercy interposed for the recovery of lost man, it 'took not hold of angels;' so that the punishment of these apostates is of interminable duration. In the righteous retributions of the Sovereign Ruler, they are reserved in

'everlasting chains,'—doomed to 'suffer the vengeance of eternal fire.'

In the verse cited from the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, Paul evidently speaks of two distinct classes of opponents, with whom saints have to maintain an arduous struggle. The one class he styles 'flesh and blood.' This is a phrase of repeated occurrence in Scripture, and allowed to be synonymous with mankind. Here, therefore, it must be construed as descriptive of adversaries of the human order; or the resistance and hatred which the pious experience from partakers of their own nature. The other class of foes, as distinguished from these, and of a superior and more formidable grade, the Apostle designates 'Principalities, Powers, Rulers of the darkness of this world, Spiritual Wickednesses.' Who are they? Personifications of the various kinds and degrees of hostility, offered by the ungodly among men to the lovers of truth and holiness? No; such an interpretation would identify them with the former, from whom they are severed, and with whom they are contrasted. It would thus render the two members of the sentence, not only tautological, but nonsensical. As undeniable is it, that the several epithets are not personifications of the *principle* of depravity. Who that studied propriety of speech, or wished to be understood, would so discourse of it? Nor can we believe that any, save those who had a purpose to serve, and who felt themselves sadly diffi-

culted, would have suggested an explanation so improbable, a solution so ridiculously absurd.

What, too, shall we make of the expression of John, 'The Devil sinneth from the beginning?' What of the nearly parallel expression of our Lord, 'The Devil was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth?' Will it be gravely maintained, that these are figurative forms of diction, merely affirming the antiquity, or the long continuance of the evil nature and baneful workings, of *Sin*? Are they but other ways of asserting, that from the early date indicated by 'the beginning,' through all the intervening duration, *SIN* has been, and has done, what is stated? According to the one representation, *it* has 'sinned;' or, the corrupt principle has, from its origin, been constantly corrupt. Agreeably to the other, *it* has been 'a murderer, and abode not in the truth.' When *it* speaketh a lie, *it* speaketh of *its* own; for *it* is a liar, and the father of it.' It is alleged, that, disassociated from any rational agent, *Sin*, as an abstract quality or thing, *begat* itself, and, from the moment of its self-generation, has been *sinning*, *murdering*, *lying*, consistently with its *truthless nature*? Comment is superfluous. What puerilities! And was it an inspired Writer who indited the former; and the Great Teacher Himself, He who 'spake as never man spake,' the Wisdom of God, who uttered the latter?

To the son of Jona our Lord once said, '*Satan* hath desired to have thee, that he may sift thee as wheat.'

Of the malignants, who accused him of being in collusion with Beelzebub, He asked, 'How can *Satan* cast out *Satan*? If *Satan* be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand?' The Apostle Paul denominates his thorn in the flesh, 'the messenger of *Satan* to buffet him.' Alluding to his Divine commission to the Gentiles, he represents their conversion as a being 'turned from the power of *Satan* unto God. Speaking of Hymeneus and Alexander, who 'concerning faith had made shipwreck,' he says, 'whom I have delivered unto *Satan*, that they may learn not to blaspheme.' Showing young women how to avoid 'giving occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully,' he remarks, 'some are already turned aside after *Satan*.' Referring to the member who had been guilty of incest, he commanded the Corinthians immediately, and with all due solemnity, to 'deliver such an one unto *Satan*, for the destruction of the flesh.' Again, when enjoining his restoration to their fellowship and brotherly love, he enforces his recommendation by this argument,—'Lest *Satan* should get an advantage of us.' Prescribing to certain parties their mutual duties, he urges attention to them by the following consideration,—'That *Satan* tempt you not for your incontinency.'

We read of 'the *synagogue* of *Satan*;' of 'the *seat* of *Satan*;' of 'the *working* of *Satan*;' of the *devices*, the *wiles*, the *snares*, the *depths*, of *Satan*. We read of his 'beguiling through his subtilty;' of his 'walking about,

seeking whom he may devour ;' of his 'taking sinners captive at his will.' Such phraseology is of constant occurrence in the Inspired Canon, pervading, in similar variety and distinctness, both Testaments. It naturally suggests the idea of a Being consummately wicked, yet pre-eminently crafty, active, and powerful; against whose deceit and violence, therefore, we are so repeatedly put on our guard, and so well provided with the appropriate armour. Indeed, so plainly does this idea seem to be taught, that we cannot conceive of its having been ever doubted or controverted, but for the pride of reason, or the exigencies of system. What deserves notice, too, as a consideration of no little weight, is, that the sacred penmen, in their whole line of succession, were perfectly aware, that such was the idea universally entertained by the people, to whom they communicated their Divine instructions: an idea, that appeared so evidently intimated by the language of those instructions, that an unsophisticated mind could hardly avoid adopting it.

After the manner now pursued, we might examine each in the long catalogue of passages from Moses to John, in which Satan, under any of his distinctive names, is mentioned. That, in all of them, a *person* is intended, might be shown, it is presumed, to the satisfaction of every reader not warped and swayed by invincible prepossessions. We do not say, that in no single instance can an expression be interpreted, intel-

ligibly or plausibly, on a different principle. But, nowhere, we are sure, is such the obvious import of the words, or the sense that would most readily occur to an unprejudiced inquirer. Besides, supposing the opposite, what were two or three instances, capable of being so explained, to the thousand, in which another than the received construction would be, in some very unnatural, in most manifestly absurd?

The theory of a *prosopopeia*, then, or personification: in other words, the notion, not of an Intelligence, but of a *principle* or an *abstraction*, we hold to be a wild and dangerous conceit. It seems to argue, in those who adopt it, an extreme of fatuousness or of impiety. It is the product of a criticism, which spurns the restraints of sobriety or law; a criticism which, in its capriciousness, scruples not to violate all exegetical rule; a criticism so arbitrary, so licentious, as to merit the utmost severity of rebuke. Yet, its advocates are men of candour, of reason, of enlightenment! Who so full of pretension, or so bold in dogmatism? Fain would they disabuse us, dreaming errorists, of our exploded beliefs and vain fancies, and indoctrinate us into their sounder and more philosophical creed. Desirous do they seem, and even condescendingly officious, to school us, as no doubt their peculiar qualifications eminently fit and entitle them, into a practical acquaintance with the elements of a better, a more judicious and consistent, system of Exposition.

The Scheme of Interpretation, which we are asked to embrace, recommends not itself to our adoption. We have looked at it, and into it, repeatedly and with care. Each successive inspection has led us the more decidedly to oppose and repudiate it, as savouring equally of the false in sentiment, and the ungodly in spirit. It tends, as well as aims, to divest, of point or significance, no small portion of Holy Writ. It renders enigmatical or obscure, what seemed plain and manifest as the clearest annunciation. It degrades Divinely-instructed teachers into putters forth of myths, or parables, or riddles. It turns the Oracles of Wisdom into 'dark sayings;' utterances of as hidden a sense, as dubious a construction, as the responses of Delphian notoriety.

Now, is it credible, that the 'holy men of old, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,' so clothed their announcements in a garb of mysticism, as to veil, from the common understanding, the truths which they were commissioned to promulgate? Are we to suppose, that the *phraseology* of the Bible has been framed on a principle too strange to be thought of, or too recondite to be apprehended, by the unlearned or the simple, whose benefit, no less than that of the more erudite or profound, was contemplated by its Blessed Author? Shall credence be given to the irreverent insinuation or averment, the extravagant fiction of a graceless fancy, that the *style* of Prophets



and Apostles, in any of their inspired communications, was purposely accommodated to prevailing, but mistaken, opinions; and that it is such as is calculated, if not designed, to mislead? Can it be that the Volume, which professes to 'show the way of salvation,' and whose contents it so concerns all to know, has hitherto been, to the vast majority of humble and serious readers, so far at least, as a Book closed and sealed: that the *language* of certain of its declarations, touching points of deep moment, though apparently of easy import, is vulgarly misapprehended,—not literal, but metaphorical: and that, for the key to the right interpretation of it, we are indebted to modern ingenuity, the learned research of Anglican Socinianism and German Rationalism?

To what has been advanced, we invite critical, but candid, attention. Indeed, the more rigorous, if honest, the examination, the better. Divine Truth, like the pure ore, never loses by the testing process. Nay, that its native beauty, and its worthiness of acceptance, may be perceived and appreciated, careful study is needed. The more sifting the inquiry to which it is subjected, whether as a *body*, or complete system, or in any of its detached portions, the stronger will be the conviction produced of its value and excellence: its accordance with fact, with reason, with the relations of things. This remark is applicable, in its full force, to the doctrine under consideration. To establish it, the

induction of particulars, or the collection of Scriptures submitted, may suffice. Taken in the customary sense of the words, these passages are so many explicit affirmations of it. Easy were it greatly to extend the corroborative proof; but this seems a work of supererogation, as what has been adduced must be amply sufficient to operate, or to strengthen, belief in an unsophisticated mind. In our apprehension, the position maintained is impregnable; and futile has been the toil expended, useless every weapon fabricated, to weaken or overthrow it.

## CHAPTER II.

## Reality.—Physical Influence.

HITHERTO, our remarks have been confined to the MORAL Agency of Evil Spirits, or their influence upon the *soul*. Its Reality we have endeavoured to confirm by Divine testimony: in other words, to prove, by a series of Scripture references, that such an Agency is actually exerted. Understood in the received acceptation of the terms, they teach it as plainly as it is capable of being enunciated. To explain them otherwise, were to violate the proprieties of language, and the laws of interpretation. It were to affix to them a sense far from obvious—a meaning too ingenious to be sound. It were to set aside the common rules of construction, in order to give scope to the revellings of a fancy, that can be reined neither by the restraints of system, nor the dictates of piety. And wherefore an Exegesis so unnatural, so overstrained? By such a scheme of Exposition, to get rid of a truth distasteful to the carnal mind: and the more that it is contained in a Book, whose authority is disowned, or whose communications are perverted.

Is it conceivable, we ask, that a Volume, consisting of so many parts; penned by such a number of writers, differing widely in genius, in station, in pursuit; and extending, from its introductory to its closing pages, over a period of about twelve centuries: that it was composed on the principle, advocated by modern disbelievers in Satanic Agency? The last eight penmen, indeed, were contemporaries, so that, in their case, collusion was practicable. But most of the others, living in successive ages, had, with but a very few exceptions, no opportunities of personal intercourse or mutual consultation. Is it credible, then, that they should, whether undesignedly or from purpose, have all adopted, in relation to one point, a style not only calculated, but which they must have known could not fail, to mislead? Their language is precisely such as would have been employed, had they been discoursing of an intelligent being or beings: yet, we are told, it is descriptive of an abstract thing or quality, sometimes of the opposition of Jewish Rulers, or Heathen Powers!

Are we required to believe, that nearly forty writers, of whom the majority flourished at distant eras, all used, as if by concert, or in imitation of the earlier by the later, a diction fitted to convey one idea, while they meant to convey another totally different? Is our faith demanded to the doctrine, that, as often as they touched on a particular topic, they invariably had recourse to

terms and expressions, really figurative, though apparently literal, and whose import, therefore, was sure to be misapprehended? Is it conceivable, that such phraseology, which is common to them all, should occur many hundreds of times, unaccompanied by any supplementary remark of explanation or caution? Is the supposition admissible, that what looks the sober garb of Prose, is the meretricious ornament of Poetry: what purports to be the language of simple narrative, or doctrinal statement, is the imaginative style of metaphor or allegory? Is this the fact, while, from Genesis to Revelation, there is no intimation of it; not a single hint to prevent mistake, where, without some such caveat or warning, mistake seems unavoidable?

Such a manner of composition, in uninspired men discoursing on ordinary topics, we should condemn as deceptive and absurd. Can we imagine, that it is the very manner adopted, with undeviating uniformity, by the writers of both the Old and New Testaments? How could they, on that hypothesis, be acquitted of imposture, or vindicated from the charge of 'cunning craftiness?' Different, certainly, is the mode of instruction, or of presenting truth, which we should expect in teachers possessed of judgment and probity, not to say piety. Perhaps, it may be affirmed, that the collected productions of human authorship, if we exclude those which are professedly works of fiction or romance,

do not furnish a similar example. This, apart from other considerations, might, as we view the matter, necessitate the persuasion, that, in treating of Diabolical Agency, they spake, agreeably to the literal import of their words, of the doings of *persons*: spirits endued with consciousness and energy, whose nature is corrupt, and whose aim and delight are to corrupt. Of their manifold statements on this head, such is our understanding—the conclusion to which we feel ourselves shut up. The notion of our opponents, therefore, we cannot but regard as fabulous; a vain conceit, a gross perversion, the very wildness of criticism and extravagance of heresy. It would puzzle us to produce, from the multifarious records of heterodoxy, a viler specimen of ‘handling the Word of God deceitfully;’ a more studied system of disguising its sense, or falsifying its testimony.

But, Diabolical Agency, we said, is also **PHYSICAL**. In other words, it is exerted, in ways equally various and hurtful, in the infliction of evils on the body, or outward estate. At present, we speak not of its *measure* or *degree*: this may afterwards receive particular notice. We advert simply to the *fact*. Its reality seems to be revealed as plainly as is that Moral influence, to which attention has been called. The appeal being to Scripture, the one can no more be questioned than the other. Though not with the same frequency as the latter, to which, owing to its incomparably greater

malignity, or more dreadful and dangerous nature, a corresponding prominence is given; yet often, and in very striking lights, is the former brought under our observation. Repeatedly, in the writings of the Old Testament, it is introduced in connection with sufferings more private or public, and on a larger or smaller scale: as the direct and proximate cause of calamities, in the person, the condition, or the relationships. But, in the Gospels and the Book of Acts, especially, it is many times mentioned; while the explicitness of the terms precludes dubiety, and the historic character of the accounts forbids the supposition of figure.

Matthew relates the case of 'a dumb man,' who was 'possessed with *a devil*,' but who, when 'the devil was cast out,' recovered the faculty of speech. He tells of a Syrophenician woman interceding for her daughter, who was 'grievously vexed with *a devil*,' but whom, at the importunity of the suppliant, our Lord 'made whole,' by relieving her of the tormentor. Concerning a Gadarene, who gave his name Legion, and who wandered about naked, the terror of the neighbourhood, lodging in the tombs; Luke says that he was possessed of 'many *devils*,' who strengthened him to burst the fetters with which he was occasionally tied, and drove him, in uncontrollable paroxysms of fury, into the wilderness. He adds, that, obtaining permission to enter into a numerous herd of swine feeding in the vicinity, they caused the whole, as if instantaneously

seized with madness, to 'run violently down a steep place into the lake, where they were choked.'

In support and illustration of the doctrine we hold, take the following striking incident recorded by the same Evangelist: 'In the synagogue there was a man, who had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice, saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when *the devil had thrown him in the midst*, he came out of him, and *hurt him not*.' Well might the people exclaim in astonishment, 'What a word is this! For with authority and power He commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out.' The incident, so instructive in some other respects, is here referred to only for one purpose—to show the potent influence, exerted by the demon, at the moment of his expulsion, over the *body*, as well as the mind, of the poor maniac. In a fit of malignant rage, he suddenly prostrated his helpless victim on the ground, and, but for a restraint which he wanted strength to overcome, would, doubtless, have inflicted serious, if not fatal, injury.

Three of the Evangelists inform us of a case that was very deplorable, and had, by its peculiar aggravations, excited much interest. It was that of a father, who, having applied for help to the disciples in vain, implored



the compassion of Jesus for his son. The latter was sorely afflicted by one of the ministers of evil, who, at times, so actuated him, that he 'cried out, and foamed, and was bruised.' Jesus expressed a desire to see him. As he was coming, the 'foul spirit,' who was also called 'dumb and deaf,' as having deprived the unhappy sufferer of both speech and hearing, threw him down, and 'tare him.' Wallowing in the dust, like a person in violent convulsions, he writhed, and shrieked, and frothed, till, strength exhausted, and the demon gone out, he lay 'as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead.'

Luke describes another very affecting case. It is that of a Jewess, who, for 'eighteen years,' had laboured under a distressing malady. To such decrepitude had it reduced her, so bent and disabled was her frame, that she 'could in no wise lift up herself,' or was incapable of standing erect. The historian calls it 'a spirit of infirmity,'—plainly attributing the latter to the agency of the former; while he represents our Saviour as declaring, in so many words, that '*Satan* had bound her.' What form of words could have conveyed, more clearly or emphatically, the truth for which we contend?

Not to multiply examples, we only add, that the Apostle Peter, when 'opening the door of faith to the Gentiles,' gave to his auditors the following beautiful and comprehensive character of Him, whom he preached as a Saviour: 'who went about doing good, and heal-

ing all that were *oppressed of the devil.* Looking into the Gospels, we find this character illustrated and confirmed, by a great variety of delightful and convincing proofs. Each of these charming Memoirs furnishes a commentary, rich equally in instruction and comfort, upon both parts of it. Following Jesus throughout His public ministry, we see Him, like the glorious orb of day, incessantly active in dispensing benefit. In particular, we behold Him, among other ways of 'doing good,' displaying the union of compassion and power, in granting deliverance to the captives of the mighty. 'The oppressed go free;' health being imparted to the body, as well as soundness to the soul, over which had tyrannized the sons of cruelty and impurity.

Here, it may be proper to remark, that the period, embracing the personal ministry of our Lord and that of the Apostles, was altogether singular. Then, a new Economy was introduced. For it, a magnificent system of preparation, Divinely appointed, had been carrying on during the course of four thousand years. To it, the Patriarchal and Levitical Dispensations pointed the faith and hope of the pious: from their relation to it, they derived all their value and utility: in the establishment of it, they received their completion. Of its blessed Founder, 'Moses wrote:' of its 'good things,' the Law was 'a shadow:' of its coming and glory, the Prophets discoursed. The time fixed for its commencement having arrived, it was ushered into the world by

a select body of teachers, whom the Spirit of truth inspired to reveal its doctrines, prescribe its institutions, and unfold its designs; while they were also qualified, by extraordinary endowments, to recommend it to the belief, and enforce it on the observance, of mankind, as 'worthy of all acceptance.'

To vindicate the heavenly origin of this Economy, to substantiate the obligatoriness of its authority, or imperativeness of its claims, required evidence *peculiar* in kind and in degree. Hence the 'divers miracles' that were wrought. Of these, none were more calculated to arrest attention, or to excite inquiry and operate conviction, than the *expulsion of demons*. How astonishing, what a proof of supernatural might, the complete and instantaneous cure of one, whom they had physically disordered, and mentally infuriated! To afford opportunity for such marvels, such displays of uncontrollable dominion over the hosts of the accursed, might not the wisdom of God have so arranged, that, at the juncture mentioned, possessions should, especially within the confines of Judea, have been unprecedentedly numerous?

Say not, that the supposition reflects on the Moral Governor. Unable to see, we challenge our opponents to explain, in what respect it is disparaging to His character: how it impeaches either the benevolence, or the equity, of His administration. The accusation must proceed from inadvertence or misconception. By some,

who are slow to adopt our opinion, it is not denied, that, in certain recorded instances, the Adversary had license to vex or annoy. But, surely, the question of *number* affects not the *nature* of the fact—its accordance, or incongruity, with the principles of righteousness. What was not morally wrong in a few cases, might have consisted with the strictest propriety in many. In other words, the permission granted to Satan, at an earlier date, might, at a particular era, have been temporarily extended. Wise reasons might have justified his receiving, for a season, unwonted liberty and scope for the exercise of his malevolent propensities. Thus important purposes might have been served, and most valuable ends gained, which could not, otherwise, have been so effectually accomplished.

The Apostolic age, indeed, we regard as, in various respects, quite extraordinary. Above any that preceded or followed, it was distinguished, not only by the abundance of both gracious influence and miraculous operations, but by the unexampled energy and virulence of Demoniacal Agency. There was thus, as has been hinted, a corresponding opportunity for one of the more remarkable species of miracles, and, consequently, for exhibiting some of the more striking proofs of the truth and divinity of the Gospel. Yet, that the same Agency was exerted before, and has been exerted since, in ways precisely similar, though, perhaps, with inferior malignity or efficacy; that, from the beginning to the present

hour, devils have possessed, and, not improbably, will to the end of time possess, more or less power to oppress *body*, as well as tempt and pollute mind: this position we conceive ourselves fully authorized, by the intimations of the Word, to maintain.

The case of Job supplies an apposite illustration. The unsightly and burning ulcers, by which the soundness of his flesh was turned into a mass of loathsomeness, and his frame was racked with agonizing pain, are expressly stated to have been the doing of Satan. In Old Testament story, various other instances of offensive and acute disease are related. So peculiar is the account of the circumstances in which, or of the conduct of the persons upon whom, they were inflicted, as to beget the suspicion, that the visitation of them was referrible to the same instrumentality. This, however, we do not affirm as fact, but suggest merely as a *probability*. Fairness demands the admission, that of such instrumentality, in the passages alluded to, no distinct mention is made: and that, in the absence of an explicit announcement, regarding a point which inspired testimony only was competent to decide, positive assertion is unwarranted. May not these Scriptural instances, too, be but specimens of what is occurring, on a scale of great diversity, and with no small frequency, in all countries, and in every age?

But, it is to the *fact* alone—Diabolical Agency in the production, or aggravation, of physical suffering—that

attention is now called. Whatever difference of opinion may obtain as to the degree, the fact cannot be gainsayed, if Revelation is to be judge. 'The Holy Ghost witnesseth,' that, while assiduous in his efforts to blind and corrupt the inner man, the Adversary, in concert with demons of congenial temper, has, on occasions not rare, and by ailments not few, afflicted and disabled the outer man. Hence, perhaps, we may conclude, that the latter, equally with the former, is still, and during the continuance of this mortal state will be, subject to the baneful operations of his power. Of these operations, multitudes, while ignorant of the instrumental cause, may be enduring the painful effects: though, doubtless, they are very inferior in force or measure now, to what they were in the days of our Lord and His Apostles, at least within the sphere of their ministry. Then, for such gracious purposes as have been specified, or other wise reasons of which the knowledge is withheld from us, God was pleased to permit or appoint, among the members of the Hebrew race, more unfettered freedom to the malice and activity of Evil Spirits.

But, while we believe in a Diabolical Agency of a twofold character, or one that partakes both of the MORAL and the PHYSICAL; we believe also in its circumscription, or that it is subject to *certain restrictions*. This is as evident, from the case of the Patriarch of Uz, as any form of expression could render it. Mark the *extent* of the permission, or the *measure* of the

tolerated infliction: in other words, how far liberty was granted to the Fiend, and the straitness with which his overstepping the specified line was interdicted. 'The Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon *himself* put not forth thine hand.' Again, 'Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his *life*.' What precision in the statement of the boundary! And what peremptoriness in the prohibition to transgress!

The same truth appears, with no less clearness, from the Evangelical reports of the expulsion of unclean spirits, instantaneously, at the command of Jesus, from infuriated demoniacs, whose bodies and souls alike they possessed and tortured. Indeed, all the Scriptural accounts of it imply, or declare, that their Agency is under superior control. It is confined within limits, which, although undefineable by us, are, nevertheless, fixed and definite. The extent of its exercise depends, not upon their own will, but on the good pleasure of the Omnipotent. Their power or liberty to injure is restrained: and, in no instance can they, however desirous, exceed, even by a hair's-breadth, the terms of their commission. He, who 'determines the bounds of our habitations,' has also assigned to fallen angels the 'bounds which they cannot pass.' What He says to the swelling billows, when threatening to toss themselves in a desolating flood over the banks appointed by His 'perpetual decree,' is, in effect, addressed to

each of them: 'Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther.'

What ground for thanksgiving and joy, that the Wicked One is thus held in check by a Greater than he! As completely as the feeblest creature, is he, at every instant, and in every machination or effort, under subjection to the Almighty. His freedom of action, whether against a being or a cause, is abridged or enlarged, as seems meet in the Divine sight. Hence the length to which, at one time, he is allowed to go, and the arrest which, at another, is laid on his procedure. Nothing can he accomplish, even with the co-operation of his assistants in iniquity, but what 'the hand and the counsel of the Lord determined before to be done.' Rejoice, ye children of men, that, whatever be the desires of his malice, whatever the devices of his cunning, whatever the puttings forth of his energy, he cannot, without license, hurt or annoy. What a comfort to earth, what a consolation to the pious, that the Lion of hell is like a ferocious savage, or an untamable monster, *in chains!* Evil he may design or concert; but, in opposition to the Sovereign Will, evil he cannot *effect*. How often is he foiled in his schemes and aims! A Wiser, as well as a Mightier, than he 'taketh him in his own craftiness.'

Still more apparent will be our cause of gratitude, if we suppose the case to have been otherwise. Conceive the Adversary to have been exempt from all inhibition



or control; fettered by no restriction, save what the limitation of his faculties imposes; free to act, without curb or interference, by superior authority; executing his plans, and fulfilling his wishes, with the promptness and efficiency of an untrammelled and independent Potentate; his ability commensurate with his inclination, and his inclination equally the guarantee and the *measure* of his success. Imagine the fact to have been as now described: what might have been expected speedily to have been the consequence? So far as regarded the posterity of Adam, that consequence should have been as fearful as inevitable. Extreme and constant suffering here, and utter and hopeless ruin hereafter, could not have failed to have been the portion of every member of the race. The power of Apollyon had, in that case, been far more dreadful; exerted with a determination and a force, of which each and all would, unintermittingly, have been reaping the bitter fruits. Thanks, then, to 'the God of all grace,' who grants him not his cruel pleasure, in the accomplishment of his evil intentions, and the gratification of his malevolent desires; but who, while mysteriously permitting, mercifully restrains, overrules, and counteracts, his Agency.

## CHAPTER III.

*Extent.—Moral Mischief.*

THE subject of the two preceding Chapters was, the REALITY of Diabolical Agency. The grounds on which our faith of it rests, were succinctly stated. It is admitted, as an article of no trivial importance, into our religious creed; because it is incorporated with that scheme of doctrine, which the Bible developes. We also viewed it in the double aspect, in which it seems to be presented. One Chapter was devoted to the consideration of its Moral, another to that of its Physical bearing: the latter, though of comparatively minor consequence, being taught as undeniably, and for the same practical purposes, as the former.

The Reality of this Agency suggests, very naturally, another interesting topic of inquiry,—its MEASURE or EXTENT. Here, especially, is need for the exercise of caution in giving a deliverance. Where it is peculiarly proper that the ‘words be well-ordered,’ rashness of utterance were very reprehensible. If desirous to affirm neither more nor less than what the Record, whether by express announcement or legitimate in-

ference, fairly warrants, we should weigh with all due care the import of its testimonies. It being our only instructor, we ought to bow implicitly to what it teaches. The informations so profusely scattered over its pages we should collate, taking each in the sense which appears to have been intended by the writer, and, from the collected particulars, form our judgment.

On this point there are two extremes, against both of which it is deemed requisite to guard. The one errs by excess; the other, by defect. The supporters of the first exaggerate, while the defenders of the second depreciate, the potency of Evil Spirits: the former representing them as the authors of most, the latter as the promoters of but little, of the wickedness and misery prevalent in the earth. The truth, we apprehend, lies somewhere between these extremes; though *exactly where*, we presume not to say. In other words, we confess our inability to fix the precise limit, or ascertain even the probable degree, of Demoniacal influence: yet, that it is less than some, and greater than many, are disposed to admit, is the general conclusion which the inspired accounts, carefully examined and compared, are conceived to indicate.

In illustrating the subject of this and the following Chapter, we follow the plan which was adopted in discussing that of the two preceding. Agreeably to this division, we propose to consider the Extent, first, of the

Moral, and next, of the Physical, mischiefs caused by the malice and hatred of our invisible foes. Of these topics, the former shall engage our attention in the present Chapter.

We previously remarked, as matter of thankfulness and comfort, that the Agency of Satan and his accomplices is subject to restrictions. But, though not absolute, or correspondent to their depraved inclination, it is terrible. Very extensive are the bounds by which it is confined; while unceasing, within the sphere assigned to them, is their activity in exerting it. Survey the state of the moral world, throughout the generations of the past and the present. How degenerate, how disorganized, how afflicted! Here, if credit may be given to the only competent authority, not a little of what you behold is *their* work. We cannot, indeed, condescend on particulars, or perhaps, with the certainty of *knowledge*, specify one instance in the million. The Divine intimations, nevertheless, assure us, that in the crimes and follies which so lamentably abound, cumulative proof is furnished of their might and malignity.

To what is attributed the loss of primeval innocence? Are we not instructed to refer it, as the *immediate* or proximate cause, to the Agency of the great Deceiver? In other words, it was the mastery of his temptation over the minds of the first pair, that introduced moral evil, with its attendant miseries, into the newly-formed dwelling of humanity. Prevailing against them, he

assailed their more easily foiled, because fallen, descendants. Against these he has, ever since, been directing the energies of his mighty intellect; striving, by drawing them into guilt, to involve them in wretchedness. Nor is it merely his own individual influence, how potent soever, that is to be dreaded. In concert with him, and ready to do his pleasure, are legions of similar order, and kindred spirit; of whom he is represented as head, and the weakest of whom is an overmatch for man, whose powers are feebler, while his nature is deteriorated.

Hitherto, the work of corruption has been plied, in every possible way, with unabated vigour, and unremitting constancy. Alas! how sad has been the success, in every age, and every clime; amid all varieties of tribe and tongue, of social condition or political state, of modes of faith or forms of worship! How has the mournful result been witnessed, in the perversion of the judgment, the depravation of the heart, and the ungodliness of the life! To what a fearful extent has the earth been filled, through all time, with the noxious brood of ignorance, superstition, irreligion, and immorality! These are 'the works of the Devil.' Men, indeed, are their direct and ostensible authors: they are the unholy conception of their darkened understandings, and accord with the natural sentiments of their corrupt hearts. We are assured, however, that his Agency is, more or less, connected, really though

invisibly, both with their contrivance and prosecution. No marvel, since they are the means by which his empire, as 'the god of this world,'—his unhallowed ascendancy over the human mind,—is maintained.

What advantages, too, does Satan possess for furthering the cause of unrighteousness! Vast must be the resources of his matchless skill, and long experience. His is a capacity for mischief, of the *measure*, as well as the *modes*, of which, no adequate conception can be formed. To the machinations of his craft, and the operations of his power, how unequal the devices, how ineffectual the resistance, of our meaner faculties! The aptest expedients for accomplishing the designs of his malice, his subtilty is competent to contrive. With the expertness, too, of an astute and practised tactician, he varies them as occasion requires; adroitly suiting their application to peculiarities of season or place, of outward state, or moral temperament. Nor is his *will* inferior either to his 'depths' in concerting, or his energy in executing, schemes of evil. To promote the cause of irreligion and ungodliness, is a work in which the arch Deceiver takes special pleasure. It is alike his *employment* and his *delight*: an employment, to which all his appliances are devoted, and the success of which ministers, to him and his foul associates, malignant satisfaction.

That in the framing and promoting of Polytheism, the Father of lies acted a prominent part, may be easily

believed. To transfer to the creature the worship and service due to the Creator, must have seemed a 'witty invention,' an effectual means of strengthening and extending the reign of iniquity. Hence, the vigilance with which he guards the complex system of false religion. Hence, in some measure, the violence of the opposition excited against all attempts to subvert, or overthrow, established idolatries. Nor can it be reasonably doubted, that to him also error, heresy, and imposture, in their many diversities, owe much of their conception, their phase, and prevalence. *How far*, indeed, either the former or the latter may have been the effect of Diabolical Agency, cannot be determined. No estimate can be formed, no conjecture hazarded, as to the degree to which, in their origin and progress, they have been attributable to it. But, although the *extent* be unknown or inconceivable, and may, therefore, be a fair subject of debate, respecting which very different opinions may be held, by enlightened subscribers to the general doctrine; yet, the *fact*, which is a distinct question, cannot be gainsayed.

In Scripture, the point for which we contend, is stated as plainly as language can intimate it. There, Satan is styled 'the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.' He is said to 'blind the minds of them who believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ should shine into them.' He is described as spreading 'snares,' to entrap unwary

souls, who are 'taken captive by him at his will.' He is represented, now, as 'walking about' with the fury of a ravening 'lion:' again, as displaying the craftiness of the serpent, attacking his prey by dexterity and stealth. It is testified, that he 'sinneth from the beginning.' But, not only does the Record affirm the *fact*: it likewise shows, that he sins *without ceasing*; perpetually, with this evil intention, 'going up and down in the earth.' It teaches, too, that he sins in all the *multiplicity of ways*, of which a rational being is capable; whether by personal acts, or the instrumentality of others, by the force of intimidation, or the enticements of guile.

To intimate how extensive and dangerous is his influence, an inspired Writer portrays Satan as 'deceiving the *nations*,' and 'deceiving the *whole world*.' Again, he asserts, that the '*whole world* lieth in wickedness:' that is, we apprehend, in the Wicked One,—under the dominion, the polluting and tyrannical sway, of this formidable Usurper. Our blessed Lord, also, in His Pattern of devotion, teaches us to pray, 'Deliver us from *evil*;' meaning, most probably, the Evil One, whose temptations are at once so assiduous and so alluring, as to necessitate daily supplication for habitual grace. A sacred penman speaks of not being 'ignorant of his devices;' and earnestly cautions against whatever is likely,—the scenes, the objects, the indulgences calculated,—to give him the 'advantage of us.' Alluding



to 'the Man of Sin,' the same Apostle pictures his 'coming' as '*after the working*'—according to the energy—'*of Satan*, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders.' The Apostle James exhorts believers to '*resist him*,' which implies assault on his part: and, for their encouragement, they are assured, that, if rightly and perseveringly resisted, 'he will *flee* from them.' The Apostle Peter, too, urges to the diligent and resolute practice of the same duty; and, as the proper and only effectual manner of resisting this grand Adversary, he prescribes '*stedfastness in the faith*.'

What has been adduced may suffice as a specimen, though it is only a specimen, of the teaching of Holy Writ on the subject under examination. The passages referred to, with numerous others of similar import, clearly establish the position which we maintain. They intimate, that at the command of this Prince of apostates are powers of mischief, which it is fearful to contemplate. They also intimate, that these powers have been, partly by personal effort, partly through the medium of subordinate hosts, exerted, without intermission, and with disastrous result, against the human family. This result appears in ways and forms, as innumerable as the moral evils that infest the world: in the abounding corruptions of the true, and the manifold varieties of false, religion: in the impurities, the unrighteousnesses, the impieties, that so blemish the character, defile the nature, and trouble the life; turning

man into a miniature of the fiend, and earth, which should have otherwise been a scene of attractive beauty, into a 'waste howling wilderness,' or a theatre for the display of tumultuous and unholy passion.

As previously remarked, the fall of our primogenitors from original integrity, with consequent forfeiture of the Divine favour, and loss of the Divine image, was owing to guilty compliance with the false suggestion of the wily Liar. 'Ye shall not surely die: ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.' The triumph in Eden: a triumph commencing almost with the existence of our race, and achieved over a couple, not only possessed of full ability to withstand the onset, but laid under an express prohibition, and distinctly forewarned of the danger of disobedience: success, gained in such circumstances, emboldened, as well as rejoiced, the Tempter. Animated by the issue of that encounter, so fatal to the innocence of his victims, he has, ever since, been following it up by a continual repetition of assaults. With the restlessness of a spirit, and the cruelty of a destroyer, has he plotted the ruin, and inflicted more or less actual suffering on each member, of all the generations that have, in such long succession, and with such countless myriads, peopled the earth.

Let these brief and cursory observations be considered attentively, and, unless we are much mistaken, their substantial justness will be allowed. It is rather the *fact*, than the *extent*, of Demoniacal influence that is re-

vealed in Scripture. Of the former, the discovery is so clear as to forbid cavil or controversy: it is presented as an indisputable certainty. Of the latter, the notices are partial, fragmentary, and obscure: yet sufficiently plain to apprise of the evil, and, by impressing with its magnitude, to beget salutary apprehension, and lead to habitual watchfulness and prayer. What matters it, that no sagacity or research can calculate its amount; that neither the instances of its operation, nor its exact force in each, can be specified? Its degree is undeterminable, save by Omniscience. Yet, though limited, it is both mighty and constant: while to the 'Murderer from the beginning,' as their originator, are traceable, ultimately, all the disorders and miseries entailed, from first to last, on the moral world.

## CHAPTER IV.

## Extent.—Physical Mischief.

THAT Diabolical Agency, in its Moral bearings, is very extensive, was the position attempted to be established in the previous Chapter. The remark applies, with equal appropriateness, to the second aspect or relation, in which we proposed to view it. In other words, according to inspired representation, it has, not seldom, a connection, direct and intimate, with the infliction of *corporeal sufferings and outward calamities*. Not only are we informed of its Reality in these respects, as well as in the propagation of what is erroneous in sentiment, impure in desire, and depraved, in conduct: we also see its energy displayed, with astounding effect, in a multitude of mournful illustrations.

We refer to certain cases of possession, related by the Evangelists, in which devils are represented as exerting a terrible mastery over both body and mind; with the cruelty of relentless tormentors, variously enervating or afflicting the one, and grievously vexing or inflaming the other. We refer, also, to a series

of catastrophes in the history of Job. First, a predatory band of Sabeans drive off his oxen, and another of Chaldeans his camels; each band slaughtering all the attendants. Next, with awful suddenness, the fatal lightning destroys both sheep and shepherds: whilst, forthwith, a violent whirlwind seizes on the dwelling, in which a joyous party are met for conviviality, and buries his ten children in the ruins.

These successive disasters are ascribed, in explicit terms, to the direct interference of the Author of evil. 'Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not Thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath, on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth Thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse Thee to Thy face. And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, *all that he hath* is in thy power. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.' Then followed, in immediate sequence, and as *the effect of the malice and instrumentality of the Demon*, the heavy distresses enumerated,—plunder of property, murder of servants, and bereavement of offspring. By what form of words the connection between agency and result, between causal influence and designed events, could be more distinctly intimated, we cannot imagine. Nor, so far as relates to the point under dis-

cussion, does it seem material in what light we view the passage: whether as a narrative or an allegory, a historical statement, or a figurative representation.

It should be remembered, that even allegory the most poetical in structure, or metaphor however bold and fanciful, must teach *truth*. Whatever instruction it conveys must be *sound*; consonant to the other doctrines of the Word, or in harmony with fact. We cannot conceive of a sacred Writer employing it as a vehicle of error, or with the intention of producing a false impression. Reverence for the dictates of Inspiration forbids the idea of such studied deception. Yet, that, in the present case, it must have been actually committed, seems undeniable on any supposition save the natural and obvious one. These particulars stand in close connection; the Divine permission,—‘all that he hath is in thy power;’ the departure of the Adversary,—‘so he went forth;’ the fourfold report of evil tidings—bearer treading on the heels of bearer, till the sorrowful news is brought, that rapine and violence, fire and storm, have wrought such desolation, that the late proprietor, master, and father, finds himself bereft of his earthly all. What ground is there to doubt of the guilty cause?

Surely, it is enough. Behold him, who had so lately been at ease and in prosperity. The rod of affliction stripes him. He is stunned with the suddenness and severity of blows, which have left him penniless, childless,

and solitary. An oppressive load of grief overburdens his heart. But, even these woes satisfy not the Fiend. Distressful, indeed, is the outward estate; but the *person* is untouched. Holy Providence is pleased to grant further license to the Cruel. Speedily the sufferer has experience of other trials: into his cup, already so full of what nature nauseates, is poured a mixture of most bitter ingredients. 'Sore boils,' covering the body from head to foot, rack it with pain: 'sharp arrows of the mighty,' with their piercings and poison, distract the spirit. What a measure and complication of adversities! What a specimen and proof at once of the venomous malignity of 'the Angel of the bottomless pit;' of the variety of his resources, and the degree of his ability, to harass and torture; and of the length to which, when Divine Sovereignty allows, it is competent for him to go in acting the tormentor!

It is alleged, perhaps, that our doctrine attributes too much to Satan. It arms him with a mastery over the physical world, which belongs not to the creature, but is the exclusive prerogative of the Creator. What entitles the objector, we ask, to make this affirmation? Has he measured the might of Beelzebub? Can he determine the limits of its exertions, or tell the utmost effects of which it is capable? We assign to him no such command of the properties and operations of matter, as would enable him to wield them at pleasure; to combine and muster them in what manner, or at

what instant, or for what purpose, caprice or malignity may suggest. Of no such power, no such control over the principles and agencies of Nature, do we conceive the Adversary to be possessed. The thought of it were appalling. To fancy him clothed with such terrible potency, were the weakness and credulity of superstition. Very different is the belief we entertain; and our statements, it is presumed, are sufficiently guarded to preclude a supposition so unreasonable, so extravagantly wild.

At the same time, may not the *native ability* of Satan be of an order that transcends our comprehension? May it not be competent for him, with the license of his Maker, and by the aid of auxiliary millions of similar grade and strength, to cause, on a confined scale, an atmospheric disturbance, an elemental conflict, such as the Sacred Narrative describes? To man, indeed, this is impossible: but whose knowledge of the matter authorizes him to assert, that it is also impracticable to 'the Prince of the power of the air?' Of the designations which the Holy Ghost has given, by way of eminence, to the Prime Rebel, this is one of the more remarkable. That it is equally significant and appropriate, cannot, therefore, be doubted. What is its exact import; what are the specific grounds on which it is used, or the reasons that justify its application, we stop not to inquire. To unfold its fulness of meaning, might need the exposition of a gifted interpreter; but



the phrase, rightly elucidated, might be seen to involve more than is commonly imagined,—to intimate, darkly yet certainly, the idea expressed. In other words, it may imply the capability of the aerial Ruler to produce, in the upper regions, violent agitation and strife; to send fire and wind, which shall be attended with no small ruin to dwellers on the earth.

Of this ‘power of the air,’ ascribed to Apollyon, we consider as practical proofs or exemplifications, two of the four disasters, by which the wealthiest of Eastern proprietors was so suddenly spoiled of his substance. We take the facts simply as the pen of Inspiration has recorded them. A Divine permission was given. Forthwith ensued destructive lightning, which was speedily followed by a more calamitous hurricane. What is the inference likely to be drawn by a reader, whose mind was under no perverting bias? Would he not adopt the *literal*, as the probable, construction of the passage? It would have the recommendation, at least, of being more natural and obvious than any other. Too far-fetched and fanciful, we are persuaded, is the explanation of some sagacious moderns, to occur to one in a thousand. How few, not pre-occupied by prejudice, or swayed by love of system, would dream of fiction, or allegory, or personification, as furnishing the only sound or rational principle of Exegesis! By minds of a particular calibre or cast, this may be deemed profound or ingenious: to us it appears liker the babblings

of childhood, than the sober utterances of enlightened reason, or the studied travesties of teachers of parody, than the well-weighed conclusions of legitimate criticism. We are compelled to ask, are these men in earnest, or presuming on our simplicity? Or, do they hope, by initiating us into the mysteries, to make us disciples, of the burlesque or the profane?

The case of Job, for aught we know, may have been, in some respects, *peculiar*. The license granted to Satan may have been as extraordinary, as the injury inflicted on the sufferer was overwhelming. But admitting, what our method of Exposition requires, the instrumentality of the former in the generating of the thunder and the whirlwind; we have an incontestible proof of his *ability*, whensoever allowed, to trouble and convulse the atmosphere. Might not his skill have enabled him, within a certain circuit, by altering their proportions, to disarrange its gaseous constituents, and thus effect such a disposition of its more explosive materials, as suited his malevolent purpose? The antagonistic forces, thrown into a state of collision, would cause a corresponding outburst, attended with consequences alike destructive to property, and fatal to animal life.

There are those, perhaps, who coincide in our views, *if restricted to a particular occasion*. The reality of Diabolical Agency, in the calamitous events mentioned, they may not dispute; but that it was ever so dis-

played, before or since, they cannot believe. But why be shut up to this conclusion? Can our opponents show reason for its adoption? What is there, either in the nature of the case, or in the representations of the Word, to necessitate concurrence in it? The instance related, whatever might have been its specialities, we have no express warrant to pronounce a *solitary* one; or to regard the facts attested as altogether singular, without precedent or parallel in the annals of humanity. Times innumerable may they have been repeated in the history of the world: and that malignant energy, put forth with such desolating effect in the experience of the Patriarch, may, in succeeding ages, have caused, by a similar action on the elements, most painful losses and bereavements to tens of thousands, who were totally ignorant of the unseen, but direct, Author of their sufferings.

That Satan, on being Divinely permitted, should have brought sore disease upon the *person* of Job, may be more easily conceived, than his sending fire to consume, or tempest to ravage, his substance. The case is analogous to many others, narrated in subsequent pages of the Sacred Story. Of divers of those whom they possessed, what infirmities and afflictions, both various and distressing, are impure Spirits reported to have entailed on the bodies! Can it be matter of wonder, then, that the Evil One should have smitten the ancient worthy with the malady described? To those, at least, who

accept the statements of the Evangelists, the account will not seem incredible. Nor ought it to be reckoned strange, that Devils should be the immediate authors of corporeal disabilities, and sicknesses, and torments. We know that not seldom are human beings, by infection or otherwise, the guilty causes of debilitating or acute distempers, under the influence of which the unhappy patient lingers out a protracted term of oppressive weakness, or racking pain. In a certain respect, the cases are similar, rather identical: both involve a common principle of primary importance. Consequently, supposing what is asserted in the former to be incompatible with rectitude, that which is allowed in the latter cannot be reconcilable with it. Neither presents aught staggering to rational belief: though the result in the second, not depending upon testimony as in the first, but coming under actual observation, is more easily explained. We perceive, and *therefore* doubt not, its connection with the agency from which it proceeds.

We have dwelt the longer on the case of Job, not only because we hold it, rightly interpreted, to be decisive of the fact of Demoniacal influence; but, chiefly, because we consider it, with all its peculiarity, as having a deeper import, and a wider application, than, perhaps, at first sight appears, or than many seem to imagine. Instead of a solitary exception, we conceive it to be in conformity with the rule: instead of being the only instance of the kind from the beginning,

it rather appears to be a sort of specimen, or example, of an agency, the injurious effects of which have been more or less experienced, on multitudes of occasions, and, not improbably, in every land and every age. In this view we are confirmed, by cases as remarkable, and bearing no faint resemblances, which New Testament Writers have related.

These observations may serve to indicate what an amount of mischiefs, both moral and physical, Evil Spirits, under the direction, and through the instigation, of their mighty and energetic President, inflict on the human race. Of the Extent of their malignant Agency, indeed, we can have but a very vague and indistinct idea: the glimpses or revelations of Scripture are too partial and obscure, to enable us to form any thing approaching a correct or adequate conception. Enough, however, is stated to excite, in the reflecting mind, salutary alarm; to show the propriety, and induce the habit, of continual watchfulness; and to prompt to the necessary and suitable exercise of fervent and importunate prayer. Happy should we be to find, that, through the Divine blessing, impressions so useful and desirable, and attention to duties so befitting and urgent, were in any measure produced by the preceding remarks. The labour bestowed on their composition we should not deem misspent, nor the design of their publication wholly defeated.

As previously hinted, we dissent from the extreme

opinion of those, who attribute to Satan nearly all the evils, by which the purity and peace of mankind are invaded and broken. On the other hand, not to speak of those who scout the notion of his Agency, if not also of his Being, we differ widely from many, who ascribe to him very little influence in promoting the work of corruption and misery. A medium view is the one that commends itself to our adoption: in other words, while a large proportion of the wickedness and woe, of which, since the fall, the earth has been the scene, is traceable exclusively to the operation of *human* depravity, we believe that 'the Devil and his angels' have been, directly or indirectly, the authors of no inconsiderable amount of both. This view is pressed upon us, partly, by the inspired notices of their efficiency in particular instances recorded; partly, by the consideration of their *spirituality*, which capacitates them for ceaseless activity,—of their malice, which prompts them to tempt and annoy,—of their subtilty and power, which render them alike expert in device, and dangerous in execution.

'The conclusion of the whole matter' is this, that to the suggestions and operations of Demons, is imputable much of what is morally bad in the character, and much of what is afflictive in the experience, of sinful mortality. *How much*, indeed, is undefinable by any sagacity, because not defined in the announcements of the Oracle. From the general representation, however,

the inference seems warranted, that, 'filling the hearts' of the evil, as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, they sometimes originate the conception of wickedness, sometimes goad to further excesses: while, finding the good confident or unguarded, like David and Peter, they surprise them by violence, or inveigle them by deceit, into criminalities that wound reputation, defile conscience, and destroy peace. It is evident, too, that, in virtue of a certain, but permitted, control over diseases and elements, they can both produce or aggravate bodily ailments, and impair or desolate the comfort of the outward condition.

Mighty, then, must be the Agency of these cruel spoilers of human virtue and weal. Let imagination figure, if she can, the dread result, even in one age, of plots so artful, of appliances so apt, of efforts so vigorous and unwearied. Of the success of their activity, from their earliest victory, through all the generations that have come and gone, to the present hour, in propagating vice and wretchedness; of the extent and complication of evil, spiritual and physical, which, in one way or another, they have been instrumental in entailing on the posterity of Adam,—the thousand thousandth part, it is probable, would baffle the calculations of a finite understanding. What a mere fraction can be matter of cognizance even to higher Intelligences! The amazing aggregate, composed of such vast additions, and accumulating for such a continuance of centuries, the Omnis-

cient alone can comprehend. Much, no doubt, unknown now, shall be known hereafter: while, during the endless cycles of eternity, the direful effects shall be realized in the bitter experience of countless millions, whom Demons, drawing into sin, brought to perdition. Again, then, let the contemplation of their Agency, so potent and unrelaxing, beget gratitude to that gracious Lord, whose Almighty Providence holds it in check, and subordinates its workings to His own wise and holy ends: thus making their, as well as our, 'wrath to praise Him,' and, equally in the one case as in the other, 'restraining the remainder thereof.'



## CHAPTER V.

## Means: Hatred to Truth—To Piety.

THE connection of this topic with the preceding, is such as to render separate discussion somewhat difficult. Not only are they in close relationship, but, like two intertwining branches, they so blend or interlace as hardly to be dis severed. The one, naturally and necessarily, runs into the other; the Means augmenting the Extent, and the extent leading to a multiplication of Means. In the treatment of the latter, therefore, some sameness of thought, or repetition of remark, is scarcely avoidable.

Many are the Means, by which Satan seeks to strengthen and perpetuate his reign. Of these, the following claim particular notice, as among the chief. We mention,

*First*, HOSTILITY TO THE WORD.—The Word throws light upon what the artful Deceiver would fain keep in concealment. It discovers the baseness of his character, and the nature of his kingdom. It unveils the designs, the aims, and the energy of his malice. It warns of his wiles, fortifies against his seductions, and shows the way

of recovery from his snares. It is the armoury that supplies the weapons, alike appropriate and efficient, wherewith to repel his attacks. It is the instrument expressly appointed, as well as prepared, by the wisdom of the Infinite, for the defeating of his devices, and the subverting of his dominion. It likewise, in numerous instances, becomes, through the blessing of its Divine Author, 'quick and powerful.' By a potency which He imparts to it, it proves efficacious in 'opening the eyes' of the blind, in 'turning them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in Christ.'

To the Enemy of truth and righteousness, therefore, the Word is the object of implacable hatred. Great would be his joy, could he extinguish its light, and obliterate its memorial. Repeatedly, indeed, through his instigation, has the impious attempt been made. Both by heathen Princes, and by 'the Man of sin,' the Sacred Volume has been put under a ban. The former issued edicts, proscribing it as a sower of sedition and blasphemy,—as defamatory of the Gods, inimical to piety, and unfavourable to social weal; and requiring, under heavy penalties, the surrender of all copies extant within the realm, to be forthwith committed to the flames. These measures of fiery intolerance, Ecclesiastical story relates, were of frequent adoption, and were prosecuted with all the rigour which the unscrupulous

and servile functionaries of Government could employ. As might have been expected, they produced, occasionally, the desired effect on a few, whose timid and criminal compliance with the imperious mandates of authority, gained them the dishonourable name of *Traditors*.

Not dissimilar has been the course pursued by the proud Claimant of Infallibility, and self-styled Successor of St Peter. From the Vatican, where Spiritual Despotism, instigated by the Genuis of Evil, concocted its interdicts and restrictions, has gone forth many a Bull, prohibitory of the circulation, and the private perusal, of the Sacred Scriptures. The disobedient have been threatened with sentence of Excommunication, or the horrors of the Inquisition. Every available expedient has been resorted to, either to imprison in the gloom of cloisters, or to banish the pale of Roman Catholicism, the Oracles of Heaven. To consign them to silence and oblivion, was the aim alike of the wearers of the purple and the scarlet, of Imperial and Papal domination. This was a consummation for which the latter strove, with a zeal emulating that of the former: a consummation, however, which the utmost stretch of tyranny, and the ingenious devices of craft, aided, occasionally, by the wild and fitful outbursts of popular fury, have failed hitherto, as they must ever fail, to realize.

Again, hostility to the Word has assumed other

forms, and prompted to other courses. Efforts of violence not succeeding in exterminating, 'cunning craftiness' has laboured to *corrupt* it. Satan is never without resource. Fertile in devices is his practised ingenuity. He is not to be baffled in the prosecution of his object: foiled in one mode of opposition, he dexterously plans a different procedure. What though the *abolition* of the Record be found impracticable? It is, nevertheless, possible, by mutilation or misconstruction, by interpolation or false comment, to vitiate its testimony. This, then, next to its utter extermination, or the total silencing of its voice, which even 'the gates of hell' are unable to effectuate, is his determined aim: and diverse are the ways, as well as untiring the assiduity, by which he seeks to secure it.

The Word, in its native purity and entireness, is adapted, with consummate skill, to the end designed. It follows, that the more perfect or complete its form, the greater is its adaptation. The freer from human admixtures, from all additions or abbreviations, the more likely is it, through an efficacy derived from the power and the promise of its Author, to accomplish the purposes of His grace. In proportion, therefore, as he can adulterate or disfigure it, whether by expunging or explaining away its statements, or, what is equivalent, according as he can obscure or pervert its teaching; in such degree the Enemy hopes to be able to counteract its tendency, impair its influence, and neutralize its effects. If he

can neither forcibly abstract, nor furtively secrete, like treasure hid out of sight, the 'sure Word of Prophecy;' he will try, by gloss or mistification, to render it an *uncertain*, or a *lying*, 'Prophecy.' Failing to shiver in pieces, like broken pottery, and scatter in fragments along the dust, 'the sword of the Spirit;' he reckons his end so far attained, if, by blunting the edge, he can mar the efficiency, or lessen the execution, of this weapon of heavenly contrivance, and of such admirable temperament.

Many and gross have been the corruptions of our 'holy faith,' which depraved ingenuity, or misapplied learning, stimulated by vanity or pride, has conceived. Of not a few of these, extensive has been the prevalence, and long the duration, to the prejudice or ruin of beguiled or misled millions. How far they are the results, in their origination or propagation, of the Agency of Satan, cannot be known. But, neither should the connection, direct or indirect, of that Agency with them, be questioned or denied. Are they not calculated to subserve his interests? Are they not among the means, or instrumentalities, of establishing and perpetuating his dominion? Must they not accord with his views, and the spread of them, by gratifying his wishes, and answering his designs, yield, proportionally to its extent, a malicious satisfaction? Why, then, dispute the reality of his influence both in their device and maintenance?

Indeed, who that considers the subject with attention,

and as it is exhibited by the light of Revelation, can reasonably doubt, that, in the multifarious *wrestings* of Sacred Scripture, Diabolical Agency has had no small share? Had we a more intimate acquaintance with the invisible world; could our vision pierce the veil of secrecy, which hides from our observation the doings and contrivances of the Powers of darkness: we might find, that to their promptings and suggestions are traceable, far more than is imagined, those corruptions of its letter, and those perversions of its spirit and meaning, which have so disfigured its beauty, and weakened or hindered its efficacy. A fuller discovery than our Maker has seen meet to grant in the present state, of the energies and operations of Apostate Angels, might show us, that to the influence, imperceptible but active, of these prime promoters of evil, is to be attributed no insignificant portion of the error or heterodoxy, in all its diversities of phase and degree, that has so distorted the character, and retarded the progress, of Christianity.

*Secondly*, ENMITY AGAINST THE CHURCH.—This is a mode of Satanic Agency, or a Mean by which it is displayed, too obvious and too efficacious to be overlooked. It is also, as a little reflection may suffice to show, intimately connected with the preceding, or hostility to the Word.

The Church is a peculiar Society, distinct from the rest of mankind. ‘Ye are not of the world: I have

chosen you out of the world.' It is composed of persons; who are redeemed and regenerated; or who have experienced a change alike of state and of nature. None are its genuine members, save those who are both justified by grace, and 'born again,—born of the Spirit, through the incorruptible seed of the Word.' As to condition, they *were* condemned, but are pardoned; *were* 'enemies to God,' but are reconciled. As to character, they *were* 'dead in sins,' but are quickened; *were* wholly depraved,—the understanding darkened, the heart polluted, the ways corrupted; but are 'renewed in the spirit of their minds,' and, under the influence of gracious principle, 'walk in newness of life.' Belonging, originally, to the kingdom of Satan, they have been 'translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son.' Once, they were 'of their father the Devil, and the lusts of their father they did:' now, they are the children of a Heavenly Father, who, 'of His own will, begat them with the Word of Truth,' and whose 'seed remaineth in them, so that they cannot sin.'

Such is the Church: a select Communion, a separate Association, a company of ransomed and sanctified ones, whom supernatural grace has visited with sovereign favour, discriminating them from others, and creating them anew, 'to the praise of its glory.' Each is 'a brand plucked out of the fire;' 'a vessel of wrath' made a 'vessel of mercy;' a rebel turned to holy obedience; an heir of perdition 'begotten again to a lively hope,'

and a glorious inheritance. All, endowed with the dispositions, as well as enriched with the privileges, of the family of adoption, are animated by principles, and governed by aims, the opposite of those which previously actuated them. To 'prove what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God,' is their constant study: His honour their end, His law their rule, His service their delight, His love their portion. Thus, they are 'formed for Himself,' the workmanship of His Spirit, renewed after His image, of which the beautiful features, once impressed upon the soul, sin has marred or obliterated; and by 'doing righteousness, they furnish indubitable evidence that they 'are righteous, even as He is righteous.'

To the Adversary, therefore, the Church is most obnoxious. With her earliest appearance, dated his opposition; and through all periods of her history, has she been the object of his virulent spite and incessant attack. Her constitution and character, her interests and destinies, he regards with unabating and inextinguishable dislike. With her prosperity, is identified his adversity: for as she 'increases, he must decrease;' her successes being his defeats, her enlargement his curtailment. Her members, erewhile, were his vassals, whom he held in 'the bondage of corruption,' exercising over them a sway as imperious as it was sinful. But, by the knowledge of the Truth, and the power of the Spirit, they obtained deliverance from the dominion of



the Evil One, who can no longer, as aforetime, work in them, or tyrannize over them. Renouncing the thrall of the Usurper, they yield themselves the willing subjects, the devoted servants, of another; who is recognised as having a propriety in them, and a rightful claim to their submission, and whom, therefore, they own and obey as their Lord and Master.

This excites the wrath of the Demon. The sight of such a succession of converts cannot but gall him; as they are so many immortal spirits, whom he had enslaved, and would fain have made sharers of his plagues, saved from his iniquitous control. Against them, accordingly, both as individuals, and in their collective capacity, he vents his spleen. If he cannot ruin, he may vex and harass: if he cannot diminish their actual number, he may hinder frequency of accessions. One part of his policy all along has been, by dividing or distracting, to weaken or conquer. With this view he has, with persevering determination, and with most inauspicious effect, directed his efforts. As upon its *entireness*, depended the utility of her Lord's seamless garment; so to *it* she owes much of her strength, as well as comeliness. To break it, therefore, by internal discords and dissensions, has been the earnest study of the malicious Foe; knowing that in such degree as he succeeded, should he, to a similar extent, both disfigure her beauty and impair her power.

Hence, the spirit of sectarianism,—fierce, contentious,

reckless,—that began early to work, and without intermission, and with little relaxation, has operated throughout the past; producing mischiefs in great variety, and on an indefinite scale. Hence, the strifes and debates, the unholy wars of words, the angry and interminable discussions, carried on for such a length of time, and with a violence proverbial, a heat and acrimony unexampled in the annals of controversy: oftener, too, in relation to minor than cardinal points; not seldom about matters of doubt or forbearance, of order or ceremony; occasionally, regarding mysteries too high for human apprehension, and with respect to which passionate disputation, or dogmatic assertion, were most unbecoming and censurable. Hence, the schisms by which the Church has been shattered, and her fair face blurred, till, stript of her catholicity, and forgetful of her proper calling, she became split into a multitude of separate and opposing factions, each tearing and rending the other with the ferocity of the devourer: thus exhibiting an unsightly spectacle, not unlike that of a body maimed and bruised, the visage scarred, the frame mangled, the members paralyzed; the capacity and the heart for high enterprise, or aggressive movement, equally lacking; the energies wasted in mutual collisions, or internecine feuds.

These, with a variety of similar proceedings, have been as injurious as they were unseemly. Not only have they blemished the character of the Church, and

lowered the tone of her spirituality, by engendering or fostering a state of sentiment and feeling inconsistent with elevated sanctity, or inimical to the growth of vital, healthful piety: they have also hindered her extension, unfitting for the brilliant achievements that might have crowned unanimity and co-operation, and arresting the progress of conquest and triumph. Attention has been diverted from objects of primary importance, and efforts of imperative obligation, and time and strength have been sinfully wasted in the 'wraths and emulations' of fiery zealots, or the recriminations and wranglings of keen polemics; to whom victory was dearer than Truth, whose delight was the display, and whose ambition the fame, of intellectual gladiatorship. Instead of 'endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,' they cherished a factious disposition, and followed divisive courses: preferring the aims of selfishness to the general good, and more intent upon securing the interests or ascendancy of a party, than to promote the 'common salvation,' or maintain the honour of the catholic faith. The 'house, thus divided against itself,' was powerless alike for attack and defence.

That all this complication of evils, with their pernicious results, must have been gratifying to Satan and his accomplices, cannot be gainsayed. His territories, that might, otherwise, have suffered many an encroachment, were the more guarded against invasion. His subjects, neglected by those whom duty and compassion

should have prompted, in the use of appointed means, and in dependence upon Divine aid, to seek their spiritual emancipation, were more firmly held under restraint. 'The Ruler of the darkness of this world' sat in undisturbed security upon the throne he had usurped, and wielded, without check or restraint, over a widely-spread empire, the sceptre of unrighteousness. 'The strong man armed kept the house, and the goods were in peace.' When, too, it is considered how congenial to the feelings of the Adversary such heterodoxies, and separations, and fightings must be; can there be a doubt of his active interference, in every possible mode, and to the utmost of his ability, in fomenting and multiplying disorders so accordant with his wishes, and so subservient to his designs?

Equally certain is it, that to the same invisible Agency, whence resulted, in part at least, these internal broils and unhappy distractions, has been traceable no small portion of the *persecutions*, by which the Church has been so often and so bitterly assailed. From the first, 'he that was born after the flesh, persecuted him that was born after the Spirit.' As it has been heretofore, so, in one form and measure or another, may it henceforth be. But, of the ways in which the Serpent himself, as well as 'his seed,' has testified his enmity against 'the generation of the righteous,' this is one of the more common and principal. With what mournful frequency has he, in paroxysms of vengeful

ire, 'cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood!' True, in regard to the sufferings alluded to, we cannot say how far they were the effects, more immediately, of infernal, and how far of human, malevolence: in other words, assign to the two classes of foes their respective shares in the grievous wrongs, which their *united* violence may have inflicted; or even determine in what cases, beyond those of inspired Testimony, they may have acted conjointly,—the latter impelled, though unconsciously, by the urgency of the former. Our ignorance, however, does not warrant the inference which some would draw, or necessitate a denial of the fact; any more than our not being sensible of the operations of the Divine Spirit upon the mind, would entitle us to question or discredit their reality.

## CHAPTER VI.

*Means: False Religion—Infidelity.*

HATRED to Truth and to Piety, or, Hostility to the Word, and Enmity against the Church, were the two particulars discussed in the last Chapter. It is proposed, in this one, to direct attention briefly to two others. Each has a most malign influence, and, in every age, has been fraught with results corresponding in nature and amount. Each is a firmly-rooted and vigorous stem, from which have shot numerous spreading boughs, all laden with poisonous fruits: 'their grapes are grapes of gall, and their clusters are bitter.' Both, therefore, have been employed, alike skilfully and extensively, by the Adversary, as instruments of moral ruin. We begin with,

*First, FALSE RELIGION.*—That this is one of the chief Means, by which Diabolical Agency is exerted, will not be controverted by any reflecting person, who admits the reality of such Agency. Under the general head of False Religion, may be comprehended the grand divisions of Polytheism, Mohammedanism, and Popery.

The First began to prevail at an early date. It spread

with mournful rapidity, till, in process of time, it became all but universal. It teaches to 'worship and serve the creature instead of the Creator.' It leads its votaries to transfer to vanities—fictitious beings, or deceased mortals, or demons—the homage due to Him, who is the sole Object of religious veneration. In each of its modifications, which are almost endless, it is alike irrational and impious: the more refined and philosophical, as well as the more sanguinary and impure, of its forms or varieties, instil sentiments and enjoin observances, not less repugnant to the dictates of reason, and degrading to the nature of man, than they are derogatory to the honour, in contrariety to the claims and requirements, of the Father of spirits. Thus Polytheism, with its false beliefs and corrupting practices, has been, through a long revolution of ages, both one of the main bulwarks of the kingdom of darkness, and a principal engine for its extension and consolidation; at once enlarging its boundaries, and riveting the fetters of its subjects.

Is it conceivable, then, that to the framing of such a manifold and pernicious LIE,—to the device and propagation of such a hideous compound of delusion and ungodliness, the arch Deceiver was not accessory? May it not be presumed, that whatever aid his superior sagacity was competent to furnish, his malice would prompt him to impart? That he would leave no art untried, to further the reception of the 'abominable

idolatries' proposed; that whatever craft could suggest to give them plausibility, or influence could do to ensure their prevalence,—any expedient likely to recommend them, or any measure fitted to enforce their adoption, his skill would not fail to employ; among other devices, combining, in their support, the slaves of interest and prejudice: that similar to what we have indicated would be his procedure, such the appliances, adroitly and successfully though secretly, put into requisition, may be affirmed without hesitation. On this point, indeed, no dubiety can be felt by any one, who examines, however superficially, the character and principles of Paganism; who considers the tendency, so direct and powerful, of the whole complex system, in the multiplicity of its ramifications, to uphold his supremacy, and prolong his dominion.

Is it in the least probable, then, that Diabolical cunning had no concern in the contrivance, or Diabolical Agency in the maintenance and extension, of a scheme of folly and wickedness, which is, unquestionably, the firmest prop of the throne, the mightiest and most effective defence of the realm, of Moral Evil? Every rational view of the subject appears to favour the opposite conclusion. It would, also, seem to derive countenance from various expressions in Scripture. Take, as a specimen, the following, recorded in the sixteenth chapter of the Book of Acts, relative to an incident that occurred during Paul's residence at



Philippi. 'It came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination'—a Pythonic spirit—'met us; and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the Most High God, who show unto us the way of salvation.' Python was the name of the priestess of Apollo at Delphi. That designation the sacred historian applies to the Demon, who inhabited this young woman. May we not regard him as thus intimating, that either the identical Demon, or one of the same order, actuated both? May it not further be inferred, that generally throughout the heathen world, the responses of the Oracles were, in part at least, the utterances of devils; and that audacious pretenders to the office of prophets, spake under their inspiration, or by their suggestion?

That this was the opinion commonly, if not universally, held by the more distinguished among the primitive Fathers, is notorious to all who are conversant with their writings. This, indeed, is no valid argument for its soundness, nor a sufficient reason why it should be implicitly received by us. The best of them were as fallible as their distant successors; while with the views of not a few, it must be allowed, a mixture of superstition, or false philosophy, was blended. Though worthy of the respect due to men of enlightened piety, they are no *authorities* in matters of faith: and all articles of their belief, with whatever confidence maintained, are to be tried by the one supreme standard, to which their

ascertained correspondence, or disconformity, must determine our acceptance or rejection. Not as having the weight of their sanction, but as being in harmony with Scripture, is any tenet to be embraced. Touching the point in question, many modern theologians go, perhaps, to the other extreme; some wholly discarding, others barely admitting it. Judging these to be mistaken, we coincide rather with the ancients, whom we conceive to be nearer the truth.

A similar style of remark is applicable, both to the vile Imposture embodied in the Khoran, and to those two base Counterfeits of Christianity so extensively propagated, the one by 'the Man of Sin,' the other by the Eastern or Greek Church. The first differs from Polytheism, in that it teaches the Unity of God, and contains many precious fragments of Truth, filched from the treasury of Revelation. It is, however, so overloaded with the inventions of a darkened understanding, and a licentious imagination,—so copiously interspersed with what is unsound in doctrine, puerile in precept, and vitiating in tendency, as to render the whole a most hateful and deleterious medley of falsehood and pollution. Aught more agreeable to the perverted taste, more suited to the lowest propensities of depraved humanity, more adapted to perpetuate a state of ignorance, to deteriorate the moral nature, to cherish the desires, and confirm the habits, of sensual indulgence, it were difficult to conceive. Considering its accommo-

dation to prevalent sentiments and manners, and remembering the aid it derived from the sword, we marvel not at the rapidity of its spread, or the duration of its existence. What successive millions, through the delusions of Islamism, have been held in degrading captivity, under the 'power of Satan!' Is it credible, then, that an instrumentality, so calculated to extend his sway, owed nothing of its aptitude to the genius, or of its efficiency to the agency, of 'the Terrible One;' though the actual amount of his influence, in either respect, it is not given us to know?

Respecting that 'pestilent Superstition,' misnamed Catholicism, whether of Greck or Roman peculiarity, substantially the same averment may be hazarded. Each is an odious caricature of what it purports to be the likeness; a wretched distortion of what it professes faithfully to portray. Each brings 'another Gospel' than that which proclaims, in union with 'glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will to men.' How diverse soever the lights in which they exhibit Christianity, both present it under aspects very forbidding: display it in a form, and with characteristics, in most particulars dissimilar, in not a few directly opposite, to those of its own lovely and inviting image, as drawn by the hand, and stamped with the impress, of its gracious Author.

What avails their pretended regard for the Scriptures of Truth, when they elevate to co-ordinate, if not

superior, authority the ravings of folly, or the dreams of ignorance? What matters it, that they point to the Atoning Lamb, when, with the Divine method of forgiveness, they combine other means of reconciliation: that they direct to the one Mediator, when they encourage application to saintly or angelic intercessors: that they set forth the only Saviour, when they recommend a false dependence,—cherish trust in what is imaginary or deceitful? They thus virtually subvert the true foundation, and cut off the hope of the sinner. They ‘take away the key of knowledge,’ and ‘shut the kingdom of heaven’ against those who would enter. They ‘teach for doctrines the commandments of men,’ and ‘render the Word of God of none effect by their traditions.’ They inculcate idolatry as real, though incorporated with much that is Scriptural, as any of the manifold systems of unmingled Paganism.

To the malignant heart of Satan, the baneful corruptions of Christianity, sanctioned respectively by the Greek and Latin Churches, must be productive of no ordinary pleasure. Of his policy, Popery in particular has, perhaps not unaptly, been called the masterpiece. As an engine of moral evil, it is nearly perfect. Rarely has the ingenuity evinced in its contrivance been equalled, never surpassed. In its constitution and substance, its theological dogmas and preceptive code, or its doctrine and ceremonial, of which not a little of both is of heathen origin, though palmed off under the guise

of a sacred but profaned name : in the whole of its conception and structure, this unholy Institute has been framed, with consummate craft, so as at once to answer the ends of spiritual lordship, and beguile or terrify into unquestioning conformity.

How must it have delighted the Adversary, to witness the progress of the great Apostasy : its perversions of 'the right ways of the Lord ;' its adulterations of the Word of life ; its substitutions of error for truth, of fable or legend for Divine declaration ; its counteractions of the benign and saving influence of the Gospel ; its baneful potency, in superinducing over Christendom the darkness of a long night, of which the dreariness was only relieved by some straggling rays, that served to illumine the faithful, but maligned and persecuted few ! Nor was he a mere passive, though exulting, spectator of these deplorable mischiefs. Of his energy in furthering the cause of the Mystery of Iniquity, with which that of his own kingdom is so largely identified ; of his co-operation with the Beast and the False Prophet, in support of their impositions, and usurpations, and blasphemies, the Book of Revelation contains clear and ample evidence. The Apostle Paul also affirms, in words already quoted, concerning 'that Wicked,' whose early appearance and speedy ascendancy, as well as ultimate doom, he foretold : 'Whose coming is *after the working of Satan*, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness.'

*Secondly, INFIDELITY.*—This has, both in earlier and later times, been a prolific source of evil. It is one of the chosen resorts, a principal stronghold, of Spiritual Wickednesses; among the more pernicious of the instrumentalities, by which the Father of lies carries on his work of deception.

In our day, Infidelity wears a bolder aspect, and, like a giant refreshed with wine, puts forth unwonted activity of effort. For half a century, she seemed abashed, partly, by the strong expression of public opinion, partly, by the conclusiveness of the replies, which her blasphemies provoked. Worsted in every encounter, foiled in all her artifices, driven out of each subterfuge, and exposed to the scorn of the enlightened and reflecting, she meanly skulked into obscurity. Not that she had been exorcised; not that vitality had gone out of her; not that she had been even shamed into silence. Proofs, many and unmistakable, both of her actual existence, and of the rancour of her spirit, she still continued to give. Ever and anon, her malignant scowl was witnessed; her profane utterances were heard; her poisoned arrows were darted. But these failed to attract much notice, or excite any alarm; proceeding, as they generally did, from vulgar panderers to corruption, or flippant retailers of hackneyed and oft-repeated quibbles and fallacies. Her men of renown had fallen in succession: and, although one and another volunteered to fight her battles, there seemed to be

none fit to take the place of those standard-bearers, who had won an unenviable notoriety for the dexterity and skill with which they had wielded her weapons. Of what use, it was thought, to maintain the strife with unscrupulous gainsayers, whom arguments were not likely to convince; or puny assailants, whom it was no honour to defeat?

More recently, however, Infidelity has numbered among her adherents spirits of a superior class: men, whom it is painful to see wasting their labour, and prostituting fine powers, in the promotion of deadly error. Their appearance in her ranks swells her pride, and flatters her vanity. With defiant mien she stands forth, openly avowing her disbeliefs, and challenging to conflict. Like a wily deceiver, she changes her tactics. The foundations of our faith she seeks to subvert, less by former modes of attack, than by a new species of warfare. Scholarship and Philosophy have been enlisted in her service; and no little ingenuity has been shown, by rifling the treasures of the one, and perverting the teachings of the other, in bending them to her purpose. Thus, her reasonings, however fallacious, are apt to be pronounced just, and her speculations, though the most airy or superficial, pass for solid or profound. Invested with a semblance of plausibility, which renders them peculiarly ensnaring to the young and the uninformed, they are fitted to seduce the unwary among both: and even established Christians need to

be on their guard, lest they 'also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from their own steadfastness.'

Now, indeed, as of old, Infidelity sometimes impugns, directly, the authority of the Bible. Rejecting the divinity of its authorship, or its claims to a Revelation, she deems it a fraud, a fable, an imposture. The inspiration of its penmen she holds to be equally unfounded with that of the lying prophets of Paganism; and the announcements of the former, to be no more entitled to the designation, 'the true sayings of God,' than the responses of the latter. Sometimes, Infidelity professes a degree of reverence for the Bible; yet treats it with most unhallowed freedom. Those of its verities, which baffle her comprehension, or appear mysterious, she repudiates as irrational or incredible. Others she receives, but not in their full and genuine acceptance. By a process of torturing criticism, which deprives Holy Writ of its spirit and import, she expunges or explains away all in its statements that accords not with her views, opposes her favourite theories, or is unpalatable to her taste. Thus, while affecting to venerate, she vilifies the Bible; sitting in judgment on its contents as if they were, not the Oracles of Wisdom, but the opinions of fallible mortals.

Of late, Infidelity has begun to spread in this country under the form of Pantheism. This modification of it



disallows the doctrine of a *personal* God: a Supreme Intelligence, anterior to, and independent of, creation: an Infinite Spirit, presiding over all worlds, maintaining a righteous moral rule, and requiring the homage of His rational offspring: a Being, who is 'over all, and in all, and through all,' yet distinct *from* all. Pantheism, it is true, acknowledges a God; but what avails the acknowledgment? What better is it than the denial of the Atheist: seeing the Cause is confounded with the effect, the Architect with the building; as if Nature and her Author were one and undistinguishable?

Pantheism, as the term imports, considers God and the Universe as synonymes. The varying conditions and aspects of the latter, are just the changing manifestations, or exhibitions, of the former. Every individual, every object, within the range of the Universe, is a part of God. The beast of the field or the fish of the sea, the reptile crawling in the dust or the insect sporting in the air, the savage or the sage, whatever exists, animate or inanimate: each is a separate constituent in that wonderful Whole called God. I myself am an emanation from God,—so much, however infinitesimal, of His substance: my soul, a ray of His spirituality; my body, a portion of His materialism. At death, the one, like a drop of water in the ocean, is absorbed in His invisible, while the other mixes with His visible, essence. All things are *of* God, because all

things *are* God. This is downright raving: not only has it the stamp of impiety; it revolts reason, insults the understanding.

This strange theology is not of yesterday. It dates from a high antiquity. It was taught in at least one of the more celebrated Schools of Greece. It has been embraced, for many centuries, by millions of Pagans in different parts of Asia. It has been of considerable standing in Fatherland; some of whose brilliant dreamers have given it countenance, and, arraying it in a curious drapery of mysticism, have contributed to its currency. It is but of recent introduction into Britain, whither it was imported by certain admirers of the startling in theory, or the wild and antichristian in speculation. Already, from the attractions of novelty, combined with pride of intellect and love of singularity, as well as ignorance or dislike of a pure Evangelism, its converts are not few. But, it bids fair to gain a much wider acceptation, through the proselytizing zeal of daring spirits, of whom some are in equal repute for talent and godlessness: talent, of which many of the vaunted proofs appear to us meagre or equivocal; godlessness, which breathes offensively in almost every page of their writings, but, instead of being abhorred, is relished, by those who have learned to 'put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.'

Pantheism, however, is but one of the phases of Infidelity. The latter is multiform; though all its

modifications are not alike chargeable with error and impiety. Some partake of these qualities in a far less degree than others. Yet each, the milder as well as the grósser, is fatal in its tendency and consequences. Whichever is embraced, is of little moment as to *spiritual* goodness, or ultimate weal: the adoption of any interposes an insuperable bar to salvation—is incompatible with a state of acceptance and grace. The false views and corrupt principles, with which Infidelity, under any of her names or varieties, imbues her disciples, are in direct antagonism to the doctrines of Inspiration. They are the chains, by which, as in bands of iron, the Tyrant keeps secure possession of his deluded captives. By such means he so effectually blinds the mind, as to prevent ‘the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ from shining into it.’

## CHAPTER VII.

## Means: Miscellaneous.

OF the Means, by which the Adversary seeks to establish and perpetuate his ascendancy over the human race, we have enumerated four. There is *Hostility to the Word*; which he has tried, by every measure of force and severity, to annihilate, but which, failing in his efforts to destroy it, he has laboured, with equal ingenuity and success, to corrupt. There is *Enmity against the Church*; to which he bears a deadly grudge, and which it has been his unceasing aim, by every possible expedient, the artful devices of malice and cruelty, to harass and injure: endeavouring, by error and heresy, to violate her soundness in the faith, or by immoralities, to taint her purity of practice; gendering schisms, hurtful alike to her comeliness and influence, by the rending of her unity, and the impairing of her energies; inflicting, not rarely, disabilities and penalties as grievous as policy or power allowed. There is *False Religion*, especially, in the three grand forms prevalent in Pagan, Mohammedan, and Papal lands; each of which is a complex system of delusion and impiety.

There is *Infidelity*; which, indeed, has many diversities, but, in all, breathes a spirit of bitter enmity to the scheme of 'grace and truth,' unfolded in Holy Scripture.

In our day, perhaps, the greatest danger is to be apprehended from the last. Infidelity of every shade has its complement of teachers, with a host, more or less numerous, of advocates and disciples. These, with a zeal and an industry which, if displayed in a better cause, would merit high commendation, attempt its propagation. In its leading forms, and through the several gradations of each, it is being pressed energetically into more general notice. With wonderful tact, too, it suits itself to the diversified tastes, capacities, and attainments, of those whose attention and acceptance it solicits. To the vulgar, its speech is rude or homely, not seldom offensively coarse: to the educated and refined, its style of address is free from the vices of gross diction, often polished and scholarly. Now, it wears a garb adapted to the partialities and habitudes of the sons of toil, in the field, the workshop, or the factory: again, it appears in a dress of finer texture and costlier elegance,—ornaments fitted to please fastidiousness, or charm fashion. With the deceitfulness of the serpent, it insinuates itself into every circle; seeks its victims, especially, among the young, the superficial, the volatile, the worldly; whom, too frequently, it succeeds in fascinating as with the potency

of a spell, and entwining in toils, from which escape is both rare and difficult.

That Infidelity, so accommodating in its spirit, so flattering to pride of understanding, so indulgent to the inclinations of depraved nature, should make progress, however much to be deplored, cannot be matter of surprise. Still less ground will there be for astonishment, if we reflect on the undoubted talents and accomplishments of not a few among its champions. That on its side,—not excepting any of its chief modifications, Deism, Scepticism, Pantheism, Atheism,—genius, learning, and oratory, of no mean order, are arrayed, it were foolish or uncandid to deny. That, indeed, a monopoly, or even a superiority, of such endowments is possessed by the enemies of the faith, we do not grant. How loath soever vanity may be to admit it, we are confident that, in the loftier attributes of mind, the foremost will find his equal in the ranks of the orthodox. But the eminence of some in ability and literature, joined with the popularity of their names, renders them proportionally dangerous as disseminators of error; particularly to those, of whom the number is large, who are actuated by a morbid fondness for the novel, or wanting in intelligent convictions of Christian doctrine. While works of sterling excellence, embodying sound instruction and pure morality, and not inferior in intellectual power or artistic beauty, are neglected or disrelished; their productions are perused

with avidity, and their loose opinions or wild speculations implicitly received.

That, on the ground mentioned, our alarm is not without cause, must be evident from a little attention to no inconsiderable portion of the issues of the Press. In justification of it, appeal might be made to numerous Publications. Take a few sentences at random, from the writings of two Authors, whom the boldness of their spirit as much as the splendour of their genius, has gained notoriety. By the one, the Universe is affirmed to be 'a remoter and inferior incarnation of God.' Christianity he represents as 'an Eastern monarchy, built up by indolence and fear.' As to Religion, he asserts, 'Our colossal theologies of Judaism, Christism, Buddhism, Mahometism, are the necessary and structural action of the human mind.' Regarding Prayer he thus raves, 'As soon as the man is at one with God, he will not beg. He will then see prayer in all action. The prayer of the farmer, kneeling in his field to weed it; the prayer of the rower, kneeling with the stroke of his oar, are true prayers, heard throughout nature, though for cheap ends.'

Hear how the other discourses of the sacred: 'The great Cathedral of Immensity,' is the temple in which he worships. 'The Supreme Silences, the Destinies, the Immensities, the Eternities,' are the objects of his reverence. Christian creeds he pronounces 'unbelievabilities, reminiscences, extinct traditions, worn-out

symbolisms:’ the adoption of them, a ‘stealing into Heaven by sticking ostrich-like our head into fallacies on earth.’ Connection with the community of saints he expressly disclaims: ‘Adieu, O Church; thy road is that way, mine is this: in God’s name, adieu!’ He avers, ‘Rituals, Liturgies, Credos, Sinai thunder: I know more or less the history of these; the rise, progress, decline, and fall of these. Can thunder from all the thirty-two azimuths, repeated daily for centuries of years, make God’s laws more Godlike to me? Brother, no. Perhaps I am grown to be a man now; and do not need the thunder and the terror any longer! Perhaps I am above being frightened: perhaps it is not fear, but reverence alone, that shall now lead me! Revelations, Inspirations! Yes: and thy own God-created soul; dost thou not call that a Revelation?’

We cannot disfigure our pages with more of this jargon. It thickly studs the Volumes from which it is quoted, and their readers will allow, that the specimens selected are not the worst. Whoever doubts our statement, and can submit to the crucifixion of feeling, as well as waste of time, which the unpleasant task inflicts, may see, on examination, that the samples and the stock correspond in quality. Yet, by tens of thousands, who distinguish not the true from the false, the sound from the corrupt, these pompous crudities are accounted sublime philosophy; these insane effusions, rational theology. Perhaps, the question might draw on us the



wrathful rebuke of not a few, should we, in our simplicity, inquire, concerning either of the twin brothers alluded to, whence those strange discordances that grate the ear? Over the land, mingled with wild voices from Massachussets, float frantic utterances from the Thames. But, what call the Transatlantic, or what the Cisatlantic, screamer: maniac or demoniac? We pretend not to say. But, whether such rhapsodies and blasphemies, if not indicating aberration of intellect, could have proceeded from aught but the spirit of Antichrist, or a spirit of Python,—let others judge.

Yet these, and such as these, are the men, to whose transcendent genius we are asked to bow; whose dogmas we are required to accept as the announcements of Wisdom! These are they, who set themselves up as 'guides of the blind, lights of them who are in darkness, instructors of the foolish, teachers of babes, who have the form of knowledge and of the Truth!' Many, alas! are their followers: great is the influence of their names, and extensive the circulation of their beliefs or disbeliefs. Much evil they have done, and far more they are likely to do, unless efforts are made, promptly and vigorously, to counteract their operations, and guard against the infection of their sentiments. For the admired or the worshipped, we feel, not respect, but indignation; regarding them as promoters of the 'instruction which causeth to err.' Give them their will, and soon would 'the foundations be destroyed,'

and the faith which sanctifies and saves,—the only ‘sure anchor of hope,’ and unfailing spring of consolation,—be banished from the earth. Towards the admirers or the worshippers, we cherish pity rather than anger; esteeming them the dupes of able deceivers, daring empirics in Religion or Philosophy; yet viewing their proselytism as more their *crime* than their infelicity.

Alas! for the country or community, in which such teachers, whatever be their talents or attainments, are held in high repute. Proportionally to the diffusion of their writings, and the adoption of their tenets, will be the poison instilled into the public mind; the quantity of soul-ruining error, the loose opinions, the false principles, the ‘damnable heresies,’ embraced. If, therefore, the friends of Revelation would not see its authority subverted, its oracles discarded, its worship contemned; if they would grieve to behold the population gradually imbued with notions, of all complexions, contrary to ‘good doctrine;’ they must bestir themselves to neutralize, in every legitimate mode, and by every available instrumentality, the activity of those who are striving with their might to realize such mischiefs. While Popery, galled by the remembrance of the past, and terrified at the foreshadowings of the future, is roused to desperation, and with the convulsive efforts of one in a spasmodic fit, yet with the artifice of an experienced strategist, endeavours partly to hold fast pre-

sent possessions, partly to recover lost territory, partly to acquire new dominion, by the subjection to her creed and ceremonial of distant tribes and heathen nations: Infidelity, quickened into new life, toils equally hard to gain converts, and, by subtle sophistries and plausible pretensions, succeeds, in instances too frequent, in entrapping the giddy, the uninformed, the indevout. Considering the varied learning and perverted ingenuity enlisted in its advocacy, we apprehend, from the cold negations of the latter, at least as much harm as from the gross superstitions of the former.

Again, then, would we sound the alarm in the ears of the orthodox. In the name of Religion, whose credentials are impugned, as well as her incorruptness threatened; in the name of the Saviour, whose character is assailed, and His claims repudiated; in the name of humanity, whose dearest interests are imperilled: for your own sakes, for your children's sakes, 'for your friends' and brethren's sakes,' who are in danger of being 'spoiled through philosophy and vain deceit,'—we would urge you to earnest, appropriate, energetic exertion. 'A man sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.' So here: Christians may hearken to no warning. But, while they fold their hands in slumber, or look on with listless indifference,

others are awake and busy. In silence, yet with vigour, may the work be carried on, till, when too late to be remedied, the evil of inaction may be witnessed in a luxuriant crop of irreligious conceits. Then, with remorse at the thought of their remissness, and grief at the sight of the consequences, may they stammer out the sorrowful acknowledgment: 'An enemy'—THE ENEMY, by his agents, while we slept—'hath done this.'

There is also, as distinguished from that which is speculative, Practical Infidelity. The one is expressed in speech, the other embodied in conduct: the one avowed, the other exemplified. The latter is far the more common, numbering, for the thousands of the former, tens of thousands. Many, who disclaim the first in any of its forms, and are forward to denounce, as false prophets, its abettors, are deeply tinged with the evils of the second. They 'hold the Truth in unrighteousness.' Orthodox in faith; they are heterodox in life. They 'name the name of Christ,' but do not depart from iniquity: 'profess to know God, but in works deny Him.' They recognise not His nearness, and regard not His operations; neither reverence His authority, nor aim at His glory; are not sincere believers of His doctrines, nor followers of His precepts; rejoice not in His promises, and tremble not at His threatenings. They live as if persuaded that there is no God, or that He takes no cognizance of their actions, and will never call them to account; and that 'the

terrors of the Lord,' and 'the day of judgment,' and 'the wrath to come,' are mere fictions, the creations of a gloomy fancy. Too often their inconsistencies prove stumbling-blocks to others; while the grossness of the disorders, the foulness of the pollutions, with which they are chargeable, give occasion to the foes of Christianity to 'speak reproachfully.'

There are others, however, of whom no such scandals can be affirmed. Their characters are unstained by any offensive blots. Their general deportment is correct, and their attention to moral duty exemplary. For what is external in religion, too, its positive injunctions or ordinances, they may testify regard; and rites, for which they themselves are zealous, they may be earnest in recommending to the respect and observance of others. But, with the exhibition of what is fair and seemly, is not combined the operation of the genuine and the essential. 'The root of the matter' is wanting. The vital and animating principle, without which all appearances are worthless, is absent. Is the body, without the spirit, a MAN? No more are they entitled to the appellation, Christians, who have the semblance without the reality, profession without grace. Well may they be compared to sepulchres, outwardly beautiful, but inwardly loathsome; or to platters, clean on the outside, but filled with 'extortion and excess.' However they may deceive others, or be deceived themselves, they are, in the Divine estimate, base as 'repro-

bate silver,' valueless as 'withered branches.' They are *hearers* only, not *doers* of the law. 'With their mouth they may show much love, but their heart goeth after its covetousness.' While maintaining the *form*, they are strangers to the *power*, of godliness. Their sacrifices consist wholly of 'the lame and the blind.' The tree being bad, the fruit is bad. The character, with all its speciousness, is vile: the soul, though apparently alive, is dead.

This Formalism, in whatever way manifested, or from whatever motive proceeding, is not confined to time or place. In every age, and through all her sections, it has more or less disfigured the Church; though, at certain periods, or in particular Communion, it may have been especially prevalent. It is of the essence, and partakes of the guilt, of Infidelity. In influence, it is most illusory, fostering complacency, and nourishing vain hopes; while, in the issue, it will prove as fatal as the extremest phase of theoretical disbelief. That what so inflates with 'high imaginations,' and, of necessity, genders aversion for the humbling doctrines of grace,—what so tends, as through a pleasing dream, or by the fascination of a charm, to lure to perdition, is one of the more select and efficient, as it is among the more common, of the instrumentalities, by which Diabolical Agency accomplishes, in the moral world, the ends to which it is perseveringly directed: this, we should suppose, is a point that scarcely admits of dispute.

Those specified are fraught with mischievous results, which, both in number and amount, exceed all calculation. They are not, however, the only Means, by which the Wicked One exerts an evil influence over the children of men; blinding the mind, stimulating the passions, and deteriorating the character. There are not a few others, of a kind less general and comprehensive, but, perhaps, according to their respective scales, not less efficient. Easy were it greatly to extend our enumeration: nor might this be unattended, in some instances, with practical benefit. The service could not be deemed profitless, if, through the Divine blessing, it led, on the part of those who, from culpable carelessness, had treated it with indifference or neglect, to a solemn and prayerful consideration of a subject, which the Holy Ghost has judged of mighty interest and importance; a subject, which touches so closely the personal experience, and affects so deeply the spiritual condition and comfort, of every human being.

## CHAPTER VIII.

*Means: Miscellaneous—continued.*

ON what are understood to be some of the leading or more effective modes, which malignant Spirits employ in corrupting the human mind, a few remarks have been offered. The enumeration is far from complete. But, not to be tedious, we forbear, at present, farther to particularize. Suffice it to say generally, that, among the Means by which Satan carries on his operations, and exercises such a sovereignty over the 'workers of iniquity,' the following may be classed. The various systems of Superstition, and forms of Heterodoxy, theories of Pseudo-Philosophy: every imposition, whether rite or dogma, of an inventive Priestcraft: all tenets contradictory of sound Theology, or observances at variance with acceptable Worship: whatever, in sentiment or principle, disagrees with 'the Law and the Testimony,' or consists not with 'the truth as it is in Jesus.'

Each, proportionally to its deviation from the infallible standard, partakes of the false, and, consequently, becomes, in such degree, a vehicle or engine of error.



It thus exerts an influence diffused as the circuit of its extension, and deleterious as its peculiar delusions; affecting the spiritual man as injuriously, as a stupefying potion, or a virulent poison, the physical. Can we, then, imagine the Enemy to be an indifferent spectator of its success? Will it be alleged, that, while beholding with pleasure, he *strives* not to promote, the progress of opinions and idolatries, by which his ascendancy, as 'the God of the world,' is upheld? Surely, it is more reasonable to believe, that he takes an *active* interest in their spread; that, though we cannot tell *how*, he plies, with apposite motives, their respective adherents; that the abler of their abettors he counsels and urges, not only to support, but, by the likeliest methods, to enforce and propagate them.

To these multitudinous embodiments of error, might be added a vast variety of popular customs or usages, of a more or less exceptionable character. Of these, some, to the reproach and detriment of the communities among which they have prevailed, have had a wide and lengthened reign. In the same connexion, or as belonging to the same category, may be mentioned Political Tyrannies, with a host of civil establishments, or 'domestic institutions.' Based in selfishness, the contrivances of grasping ambition or heartless avarice, they should have been granted no tolerance, not even for an hour. The very 'thought of them was sin.' Yet, where is the region of the earth, where the tribe or

kindred, barbarous or refined, Pagan or Christian, Popish or Protestant, that has not, from time immemorial, been afflicted with one or other of their diversities?

Sad is it to think, that, in countries blessed with the purer forms of the Gospel, some of the worst of these evils,—pregnant equally with shame to their authors, and suffering to their victims,—have long existed. Not to speak of Feudalism, once of European predominance, or its cognate Serfdom, still prevalent in the North: take Slavery as an instance. Under the protecting wing of Britain, how firm became the root, how gigantic the stature, how extended the boughs, of this Upas tree! In those of her Dependencies, which its pestilential presence had blighted and cursed, how recent has been its extirpation, and at what a cost of effort and treasure accomplished! Through a large Section of the Western Union, how strenuously is this atrocious scheme of fraud and cruelty yet defended: sanctioned by public opinion, guarded by the secular arm, vindicated by the Pulpit and the Press; none daring, but at his peril, to plead the abolition of the most heinous of legalized wrongs.

Yes! America, claiming precedence among the nations, for the excellence of her legislation, and the splendour of her benevolent Institutions; famed for her Educational system, and her Temperance Societies; unrivalled for the growth of her Churches, the series of her Revivals, the extent of her Home and Foreign

Missions: America,—noble Daughter of a high-souled Mother,—Originator of not a few approved plans of utility,—Patroness of every scheme conducive to the improvement, physical, intellectual, and moral, of man; vying with Britain in the hallowed emulation to emancipate and convert the votaries of idolatry: America, whose ‘Pilgrim Fathers,’ rather than submit to the vexatious exactions of England, crossed the stormy Atlantic, to seek, in a remote Continent, and among the children of the wilderness, a quiet habitation, where, exempt from the annoyances of civil and ecclesiastical usurpation, they might freely exercise their holy religion: America, the land of Penn and Washington, of Edwards and Mason, with a goodly array of Patriots and Divines, of liberal views and ardent philanthropy, of philosophic cast and Scriptural theology, whose memories are fragrant, as their renown will be deathless: America, so intolerant of domination, so jealous of her honour, so sensitive to her interests: Enlightened America, scouting, as the veriest folly, nobility of blood or aristocracy of title, and viewing all men, as equal by birth, equal in law and in privilege; Republican America, boastful of her admirable Constitution, and, in the pride of self-esteem and the exuberance of youthful ardour, proclaiming her immunity from the vices inherent in the frame, or connected with the working, of the Governments of the Old World; Christian America, so glowing with zeal, so fruitful in mea-

tures, so liberal of resources, for the triumphs of Evangelization, and of whose sons and daughters the toils and exploits in the best of enterprises have won her reputation,—which, it is our hope and prayer, will continue to increase, till, like a bright and brightening halo, it encircles her wide expanse, and the Church in the midst of her, her palladium and her glory, appear ‘fair as the moon’ without cloud, and in full orb: even America is ‘verily guilty concerning our brethren!’

We know we digress. The enormity of the case, with its *presumed bearing on the position maintained*, is our apology. With unparalleled inconsistency,—a selfishness that contrasts with her acknowledged largeness of heart, and generosity of character,—America ‘grieves not for the afflictions’ of her population of African descent. In sorrow more than in anger, we record her dogged persistence in a course, which causes her ‘good to be evil spoken of.’ Deaf to the voice of remonstrance, forgetful of the golden rule of equity, and swayed by the prejudice of colour,—a prejudice in force as potent, and in effect as malignant, as that of caste,—she denies the petition, and heeds not the woes, of the oppressed. To her own disgrace, and to the scandal of Christianity, which she professes, and contributes largely to support and extend, but whose spirit frowns upon her ways; she holds in bitter bondage **THREE MILLIONS** of her offspring; while cupidity prompts her, as she can, to swell the number. Where-

fore are they thus debarred from the rights of citizenship, doomed to perpetual toil, and treated as human animals? With no fault are they charged, save the unpardonable fault of wearing a sable skin. *Therefore* a great, an intelligent, a religious people convert into *property*, degrade into *chattels*, fellow-creatures with minds as good, and souls as precious, as their own!

Again, we would ask, concerning this hateful system, is 'the Son of Wickedness' to be accounted free from all participation in it? Rather, may not the opposite be inferred from the representations given of him in Scripture? Think of his craft, his subtilty, his malevolence; of his unflagging zeal and pauseless activity, by every practicable method, in encouraging wrong and producing misery. Then say if our conclusion does not seem fairly warranted.

Passing notice may be here taken of the Arts of Divination. In all ages, and among every people, they have been common. Hence the frequent references, especially in Old Testament Scripture, to astrology, soothsaying, necromancy, witchcraft. In modern times, and throughout Christian as well as Pagan lands, the same nefarious arts have been practised. Impostors, in long succession, have appeared, who pretended to the gift of prescience, or professed such an acquaintance with the future, as enabled them to foretell what was veiled from vulgar apprehension. Amazingly have they succeeded in deceiving ignorant and credulous

multitudes, who superstitiously regarded them as a sort of superior beings. Believing them to be possessed of the prophetic spirit, they consulted them in perplexity, or from a curiosity to foreknow coming events. In reality, however, these diviners, or revealers of secrets, were knaves, who, with as little foresight as others, traded in lies; unprincipled idlers, who lived at the expense, and by the delusion, of the simple. So trained to falsehood and cunning, proficient in the tricks and feats of magic, they were fit agents for carrying on the dark designs of the mighty Conjuror, who, through their sorceries, has toiled unweariedly, alas! not in vain, to blind and beguile.

By the Means adverted to, and a multiplicity of others kindred to them, Satan now, as heretofore, 'worketh in the children of disobedience.' He thus exemplifies, with mournful efficiency, the odious character with which the Spirit of Truth has branded him: **THE RULER OF THE DARKNESS OF THIS WORLD.**

Deeply, indeed, is Diabolical Agency to be deplored, in the *blinding of the mind*, and the *depraving of the nature*. Such, however, are not the only ways, nor is the Moral the only department, in which it is displayed. *The body, and the outward estate*, as already remarked, furnish additional scope and opportunity for its operations. Here is another vast province, not without its appropriate expedients and instrumentalities. Here, also, it is believed, Apollyon continues, as really as in

'the beginning of the Gospel,' though, perhaps, with curtailed license, and to an inferior degree, to exert his hurtful activity.

On this point, enough was stated in a previous Chapter, to indicate the view we hold; a view, which the analogy of Scripture, and a 'comparison of spiritual things with spiritual,' incline us to adopt. To say more, is deemed superfluous. We would remember, besides, that we tread debateable ground. We approach a region, which no ray from 'the excellent glory' illumines. We treat of a matter, in regard to which some latitude is allowable, and, among those who are agreed as to the general doctrine, a difference of opinion does obtain. We would not, therefore, on such a theme, assume the confident tone of the complacent dogmatist, who, as from the chair of authority, pronounces his oracular utterances. We would not willingly venture beyond our line: would not dare to speculate, as in a familiar realm, and under sure guidance, where the notices of the Record are too faint or dubious to afford direction. If we affirm, it would be, though with decision, yet with humility: decision, so far as 'what is written' clearly warrants; humility, recollecting that we discourse of a mystery, which 'we know but in part,' and of which, therefore, we can 'prophesy but in part.'

If it is asked, How does Demoniacal influence affect the corporeal frame? One mode, we reply, seems

obviously to be, through the medium, or by the operation, of *diseases*. Of these, some would greatly limit the number. That the body is, occasionally at least, the subject of such influence, they believe; but its exertions they confine, chiefly if not solely, to palsy, epilepsy, lunacy, madness, and, perhaps, a few other more afflictive or violent disorders. In this opinion we cannot concur. It is unsupported by a single statement of the Word. To us it appears altogether arbitrary,—a mere and indefensible assumption. That the Enemy, indeed, as a Mean of more effectually accomplishing his cruel intentions, often avails himself of such maladies as are of a more painful or melancholy character, is highly credible. But, why associate his Agency with those only of the classes specified? May he not, whensoever, and to whatever degree, Providence wills it, intensify the sufferings of patients, who labour under *any* of the distempers to which mortality is liable?

Glancing over the Sacred Narratives, we cannot fail to mark, in the cases related, a considerable variety of disease. In none of them, perhaps, should we, unless distinctly apprized of the fact, have suspected 'the working of Satan.' The explicit declarations of the inspired penmen, however, put the matter beyond doubt. On their authority, we accept the doctrine of his interference, direct though unperceived, in the numerous instances recorded; in other words, to him



we are taught to ascribe, under Divine restraint, the infliction or the aggravation of physical distresses, both severe and miscellaneous. But, will it be said, that those mentioned by the Evangelists, as examples of miraculous cure, were the *only* cases in which, at that period, he possessed and debilitated the bodies of men? Let the proof, express or inferential, be produced. Those, too, we read of in Apostolic times, resembled apparently, in all material respects, others which not seldom come under our observation. The outward symptoms are similar, or rather identical; while the nature, the designs, and the activity of Devils are the same. How, then, is it contended, that they are never permitted now, as formerly, to prostrate by infirmity, or torture with acute disease? Ignorant of the reasons which conduct to this conclusion, we desiderate the statement of them. The contrary supposition we deem, on the grounds alleged, the more probable. However a proud Philosophy may deride it as the illusion of a dream, it is our belief: and whoever would convince us of its erroneousness, must, instead of assailing with ridicule, or charges of superstition, employ argument or Scripture.

Nor let us be twitted with credulity, in holding that Satanic Agency may, at times, so dispose or excite the elements of Nature, so direct the operation of her mighty forces, as to destroy the comfort and blast the hopes of man. The competence of that Agency, indeed,

for such an achievement, unless attested by facts which preclude hesitation or controversy, we might be slow to believe. Its competence, however, will not be questioned, at least by those who adopt our interpretation, which seems the most rational and consistent, of the inspired narrative of Job's overwhelming disasters. If that Agency was adequate to the production, in the instance alluded to, of the thunder and the whirlwind; whence the inability to repeat, with sad frequency, the same calamitous processes? If the Adversary got permission, at one memorable epoch, to deprive, by violent atmospheric commotions, a revered Patriarch of substance and offspring; may not license have been granted him, on many a subsequent occasion, to enact, by similar instrumentalities, tragedies as distressful?

The subject, we allow, is mysterious. Scripture gives no decision on the point—offers no solution of the difficulty. Neither Prophet nor Apostle utters his voice; and where they are silent, it becomes not us to pronounce. But, where is the presumption in merely intimating an opinion, which, the more the case is considered, appears the more likely; insomuch, indeed, that we might almost call it our persuasion? That opinion is, that the Evil One, possessed of superhuman skill and strength, may often, for wise and holy though unrevealed ends, obtain liberty to exert both, with a malevolent design, over the hidden powers of earth and air. In other words, not seldom may he, with limitations, or

within certain bounds, have his desire to put into activity and strife physical forces, and thus, by the operation of natural causes, or through a conflict of material elements, plunge into misery the victims of his malice. Is the opinion deemed improbable? On what ground? Of reason? Of Scripture? No: argument is wanting. What then? The lack is supplied by convenient substitutes,—flat contradiction, or sneer and cavil. Till those from whom we differ *prove* what they assert, we must be excused for adhering to our view.

That, formerly, Infernal Agency did, often by corporeal seizure, at least once by lightning, and again by hurricane, entail much suffering and loss, the Oracle affirms. Will any maintain, that it *cannot* still, in similar ways, occasionally affect the body with pain, or the estate with injury? If it does not, will they tell us wherefore? Think they its potency has waned, or its malignity abated, with the flight of centuries? The reverse, we may confidently aver, is the fact. That it does not frequently desolate, by ‘storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire,’ the homes and possessions of men, we believe to be owing solely to Divine checks or prohibitions. The Supreme wills it otherwise, or not rarely might our eyes witness scenes as harrowing as those, described in ancient story, which occurred in the land of Uz.

In short, every popular delusion, every Antichristian system, every belief discordant with the faith, or prac-

tice repugnant to the morality, of the Bible; whatever conflicts with Truth, or holiness, or right, including error, superstition, and iniquity, in all their multiformity: these we apprehend to be the external Means, the diversity of ingenious expedients, by which, with equal expertness and assiduity, the Tempter, personally or through accomplices, plies his arts of seduction. May not the prevalence of each, too, or the extent of its adoption, be taken as the test of its suitability, and the measure of its efficiency?

But, in addition, *inherent corruptions* supply Means, ever ready and appropriate, of incalculable mischief. Not unaptly may the depraved heart be compared to a magazine of combustibles. Apply a spark to one, and forthwith may break out a flame. So in regard to pride or vanity, ambition or cupidity, sensuality or revenge, hatred, envy, malice. Let any be 'set on fire of hell,' and presently it will 'set on fire the course of nature.' Then may ensue effects more lamentable than those of the deadliest explosion. 'Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth!' Well, too, do Evil Spirits, whom high intellect and long experience have rendered adepts in deception, know how to influence the springs of human conduct; to operate on those malignant passions and 'vile affections,' which are the stimulants to crime, the grand propellers to courses of wickedness. With Means so various and complicate at command, while so quick in discerning seasons, and so dexterous in im-

proving advantages, they may well excite dread and alarm. The thought, too, of such resources, such subtilty, such alertness, is eminently fitted to check self-confidence, to gender a feeling of dependence, to induce the habit of watchfulness, and prompt to fervent and persevering prayer.

## CHAPTER IX.

## Objections.

THE Scriptural doctrine of Diabolical Agency has been much opposed. Its impugners have striven, after their own fashion, to bring it into popular discredit. Seldom, if ever, have they attempted the refutation of it by fair discussion, or by aught entitled to the dignity of argument. Their modes of attack have been of a very different kind,—more suited to the genius of Scepticism, more in keeping with the principles of captious and unreasonable men, more conducive to their unhallowed purposes and aims. Quibble, and sophism, and misrepresentation, are the weapons with which they have usually assailed it; while for its advocates they have affected the pity or contempt, which superior enlightenment entertains for blind ignorance, or intractable folly. Not sparing to twit them with weakness or credulity, as unfit for logical disquisition, or incapable of calm ratiocination, they have sought, by sneer and raillery, to put them out of countenance as the dupes of childish fable, or antiquated prejudice.

Often have we desiderated, by some disputant of

acknowledged ability, a formal and elaborate defence of the position he holds; or a full and explicit statement of the grounds, on which the tenet in question is disbelieved. It has been our wish to see in as complete array, both as to number and force, as their ingenuity and learning could present them, the objections of our opponents. This would at once have exhibited their united strength, and enabled us the better to examine and rebut them in order. In the absence, however, of any such regular exposition, or compact summary of them, the production of which seems not to accord with the taste or the convenience of their abettors, there is no alternative but to give them as they have come under our notice. Of some of them, too, we rather guess, than perceive, the exact import or bearing, from the fragmentary forms in which we have found them bodied, or the vague generalities in which we have heard them expressed. They are of more frequent occurrence in oral than in written discourse; and are conveyed, rather by hint or insinuation, than in distinct proposition, or plain announcement.

This Chapter shall be devoted to a short consideration of some of the more common, or leading objections. Having no object but truth, we desire neither to evade their apparent force, nor to deal unfairly with their authors. They are, therefore, given without intentional distortion or mutilation,—such, as nearly as possible, as they have repeatedly met our eye or our ear.

On the theory of PERSONIFICATION, we make no further comments. What has been stated in some preceding pages, may suffice to expose its utter absurdity, as well as the impiety which suggested it. A more critical and extended refutation, besides being unsuitable in a Dissertation of a professedly popular cast, seems unnecessary for the satisfaction of the candid or the reasonable; while, in regard to the prejudiced or the unreflecting, it might be so much labour misspent. We record it with sorrow, yet as our unfeigned and deliberate sentiment, confirmed by the experience of many years, that slender is our hope, by any process of argumentation, by the clearest demonstration of fallacy or mistake, to convince such of their errors, or win them to the adoption of sounder views. They are 'joined to their idols'—wedded incurably to their misconceptions and conceits. 'A deceived heart hath turned them aside, that they cannot deliver their souls, nor say, Is there not a lie in our right hand?' What greater infatuation, what more of the blindness of delusion, could we suppose them, in general, to display, though a voice from heaven declared them to be the victims of spiritual judgment? The saying may appear harsh, and a spurious charity may denounce it as illiberal; but we submit, whether the course, which it recommends, be not that of wisdom and prudence,—'Let them alone.'

As to the theory, or scheme of Interpretation, alluded to, we can only express our astonishment, that it should



have been espoused by men, not only of proved ability and scholarship, but professing reverence for Holy Writ. Are they sincere in their advocacy of it? In other words, do they cleave to the principle of PROSOPOPEIA, from a persuasion, that it will stand the application of the proper tests, or furnishes the only right key? If so, we cannot help classing this among the odder specimens, the stranger phases, of hallucination. The fact must be ascribed to an illusion, alike pitiable and criminal, from which even minds of superior power and culture would seem not to be exempt. It shows how ensnaring is tenacity of system, or partiality for hypothesis: to what extremes the fervour of zeal will carry pledged supporters.

But, away with the profession of respect for Sacred Scripture. It insults the common understanding: it presumes too much on its want of perspicacity, or its easiness of belief. If not a mere pretext, it bespeaks sad misapprehension. If not the hypocrisy of the Angel of darkness, 'transforming himself into an Angel of light,' it is gross self-deception. How veneration for the Record can consist with such unceremonious treatment—such perversion of its meaning, if not also corruption of its letter—is to us inconceivable. With what propriety can those be said to revere the 'lively Oracles,' who, by modes the most reprehensible, torture them into confessions of their own fancies; who, in violation of all rule, turn 'the words of truth and sober-

ness' into utterances of contradiction or folly; who, retaining the prophecy, put on it an Interpretation so strained, so foreign, as to give it an air of ridicule? Persuade us that discordances may harmonize, or contrarieties unite, and we will allow the possibility of the regard pretended. But, not to dwell on an Exegesis so exceptionable, so unworthy of the patronage of those who would pass for *rational* Christians, let us proceed to examine certain other cavils.

On this Second Head, the objection, which was started against the preceding, has been raised. The doctrine of the Agency, like that of the Existence, of Devils, it is alleged, is *unphilosophical*. Our reply, in both cases, is the same,—a direct negative. What is asserted with so much confidence, we emphatically deny. Our opponents cannot *prove* their position. They 'understand neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.' They believe without evidence: with all their pretensions to superior illumination and sobriety of judgment, they display a credulity as marvellous, as their impiety is shocking.

They who expunge from their creed the Being, or the Influence, of Demons, speak like 'the fool,' who 'says in his heart, No God.' The language, in either case, is the utterance of a *wish*, rather than the declaration of *belief*: it expresses the dictate of the heart, rather than the persuasion of the intellect, or the deduction of patient inquiry. The conclusion has no foun-

dation in Reason. It derives no countenance from sound Philosophy. The most laborious research cannot give it the least support, or even appearance of plausibility. It is a gratuitous assumption—a mere fancy—a vain imagination; groundless as ‘the baseless fabric of a vision.’ While the light of nature, or unassisted investigation, cannot furnish one particle of evidence, a shadow of argument, in its favour, the concurrent voices of inspired teachers, in instances innumerable, and with the utmost explicitness, assert the contrary.

The conceits of their own erring minds, or opinions which coincide with their perverted views, men may regard as the suggestions of wisdom, and dignify with the name of Philosophy. On the other hand, principles, alike true and important, which their corrupt tastes disrelish, or that clash with their cherished notions, they are apt, in the rashness of a misjudging but supercilious dogmatism, to pronounce unphilosophical. These they repudiate—why? Not because they are assured, on careful and candid examination, of their falsity; but through the blindness of ignorance, or prejudice, or depravity. It is thus that the doctrine of Diabolical Agency has been discarded as a vulgar notion, an educational error, a dream of superstition, or an invention of priestcraft.

Before the doctrine can be set aside as a theological vagary, a popular delusion, one of two things must be established. Either it must be shown, that such a

tenet is not taught in the Record, from which alone we profess to derive the knowledge of it: or that the Record, instead of having been 'given by inspiration of God,' is but a human composition, embodying the opinions or sentiments of fallible men. In the former case, we should be at liberty to receive or reject it, as it appeared to us accordant, or incongruous, with right reason. On the latter supposition only—that the Writers, although well-meaning, were equally imperfect with ourselves, possessed of just ordinary powers and intelligence—could it be maintained, that what they affirm, respecting this or any other topic, is the fair subject of criticism. This supposition, however, being demonstrably false, it follows, that their statements are entitled to a reverence, to which those of mortal wisdom have no claim. We accept them with the implicit credit due to the 'true sayings of God.'

Again, to the doctrine of Satanic Agency, it has been objected, that it *impeaches the Divine character*. But, that it conflicts either with the goodness or the equity of the Supreme Ruler, is mere assertion, or unsupported hypothesis. In favour of the point at issue, it is no slight presumption, that it accords with what is matter of universal observation and experience. We influence one another, without aught of physical force, or direct and positive violence, and simply by such considerations as are adapted to move and sway Mind: the good counselling what is holy, and the bad prompt-

ing to what is sinful. This is a fact of such continual occurrence, and so attested by the consciousness of each, that no doubt as to its reality can be entertained. It is witnessed and confirmed, every day and every hour, in the intercourses of human life: so that, being an unquestionable verity, it must be allowed to be compatible with the righteousness of God.

Why, then, we ask, should the granting of a similar license to *incorporeal* beings, supposing such to exist, be thought irreconcilable with His adorable perfections? What is admitted, in the former case, is denied, in the latter, to be in harmony with the principles of His administration. But, on what ground rests the denial? Wherein lies the mighty difference between the two cases, to warrant such contrary conclusions? They appear to be so far analagous as to lead us, in each, to draw the same inference. The doctrine we hold cannot be true in the one case, and false in the other. In the second, any more than in the first, it cannot be pronounced inconsistent with the Divine rectitude or benevolence. In neither, has there been shown the least repugnance, but, in both, there seems to be equal and perfect consonance, to the procedure of holy Sovereignty.

Further, the doctrine maintained, it has been contended, *conflicts with that of human responsibility*. In other words, Diabolical Agency is supposed, in a certain degree, to interfere with the liberty, and proportionably

to destroy the accountability, of man. Did it trench on moral freedom, it undoubtedly would, so far, affect or infringe amenableness. But, that such is either its tendency or its effect, is not conceded: so that we can see no more weight in this than in the previous objection. Concerning the Agency of Demons, nothing is asserted beyond what may be affirmed of the corrupting influence, which is known to be attempted, often, alas! too successfully, to be exercised over men by their sinful fellows. They continually entice one another to sin; yet, in spite of every enticement, how persuasive or prevailing soever, the seduced are invariably regarded as subjects of moral blame.

Satan and his confederates, it was formerly remarked, are under restraint. Not only are they limited, as creatures, in their capabilities of mischief; but they are subject, every moment and in every instance, to the control of Omnipotence. It is not competent to them, therefore, to do as they please. However they may suggest or prompt, they cannot *execute* beyond what the will of the Highest permits. In a manner not unlike that so common among depraved mortals, though with the adroitness and the potency of superior Intelligences, their malignant activity is exerted; and similar in kind, if not also, perhaps, greater and more various, is the danger to be apprehended from it. Like wicked men, Devils may tempt, but cannot *compel*, to the commission of evil. They may ply with suasion, present

to hope or to fear the objects suited to awaken these passions, and, by plausible representations, try to deter from the pursuit of right, and to stimulate to the practice of wrong. But, with all their craft and might, they cannot *necessitate* compliance. Those whom they successfully assail, whatever be the fury or the frequency of their assaults, are reprehensible. They must not seek to exculpate themselves by laying the blame upon Satan: to them alone is imputable the guilt, and they alone must abide the consequences, of yielding. 'Every man is tempted, when he is *drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.*'

Moreover, the doctrine we hold has been impugned on the ground, that it ascribes to Satan *a sort of omnipresence*. This objection, however, is evidently founded in misconception. How common is it to speak of things as the result of *individual* effort, which imply *united* exertion, or the co-operation of many! Thus, a superior is represented as doing what he merely authorizes, or accomplishes by the intervention of subordinates: a king, by his ministers; a general, by his armies; a government, by its functionaries. So is it in reference to the Wicked One. The language of Scripture with respect to his Agency, must be understood in a sense somewhat similar. As 'the Prince of devils,' the Chief of infernal apostates, the Head of a principality of evil, he 'has servants under him; and he says to one, Go, and he goeth; and to another,

Come, and he cometh.' To him, therefore, in ordinary phrase, we attribute the performance of much that is traceable, more immediately, to the interference of others; because they are instruments executing his orders, or accomplices acting under his sanction, or in pursuance of his policy.

It is incorrect, then, to allege, that the doctrine advocated invests Satan with *ubiquity*. His presence, like that of every creature, exalted or mean, immaterial or corporeal, is necessarily limited to a single place at once. Consequently, his *personal* activity cannot be exerted, at the same instant, in different localities, or on separate individuals, as the objection seems to assume. But, not to mention his consummate ability, or his untiring energy, consider the celerity of motion proper to him as a Spirit. With an expedition resembling the quickness of lightning, he may transport himself hither and thither; assailing some here, others there, in such rapid succession, and in such a brief space of time, as exceeds conception. Think, also, of the numbers, thousands of thousands, at his command, and ready to do his bidding: their views, inclinations, and interests identical with his own: all subtile in scheming, and indefatigable in working: all, with a like resoluteness of intention, and the same promptitude and sleeplessness of effort, prosecuting the designs and aims of their Potentate. The mischiefs, therefore, of which they are the *direct* authors, are, in strict propriety,



though in a qualified or secondary sense, imputable to him.

Such is our interpretation of the phraseology, SATANIC AGENCY, or DEMONIACAL INFLUENCE. It imports not, always or solely, *individual* operation, but the *joint* action of a multitude: the combined or aggregate force of a mighty Alliance, a formidable phalanx, composed of myriads of fallen spirits; all owning subjection to one Despot of pre-eminent rank and capacity, who, with the arbitrariness of tyrannical rule, compels their ministrations; and all leagued for the promotion of common purposes and projects. We merely, then, ascribe to the Master, what, in obedience to his mandates, or in fulfilment of his wishes, is done by the vassals or associates.

## CHAPTER X.

## Objections—continued.

FINALLY, our doctrine is charged with teaching *what is incomprehensible*. It has been asked, How have Devils access to our souls? How can they excite in us evil thoughts and desires? How do they instigate us to overt wickedness? To such inquiries, our answer is simple but explicit—we cannot tell. These are among the thousand points, regarding which our Maker has given us no information. Instead, therefore, of aping a wisdom which we do not possess, we frankly confess our incompetence to solve the difficulty. To us, as to all the partakers of ‘flesh and blood,’ they are profound MYSTERIES: and we are content that they remain hidden, till He, who consults our good equally in what He withholds and in what He communicates, be pleased to reveal them. ‘Secret things belong unto the Lord;’ and into them we have as little wish as ability to pry, assured that the discovery, though practicable, would be unattended with benefit.

But, that we cannot explain the *mode*, does not entitle us to discredit the *fact*, of Satanic Agency.

Between *ignorance* of the one, and *disbelief* of the other, there is no bond of connexion. To assert the opposite, were to rave. To call this sense, or reason, or philosophy, were an abuse of language, or indicative of a confusion of ideas. We would not employ terms unnecessarily severe: but, what right have such ungodly blunderers to take offence, if we indict them of imbecility or disingenuousness? Have they calmly considered, and do they sincerely *believe*, what they aver? If so, the answer of our mingled pity and astonishment to each of them is, 'O man, great is thy faith!' We know not if it be exceeded by that of the veriest weakling, or the most credulous votary of superstition. Something else than 'much learning,' it is to be feared, has disordered thy brain. It is high time, surely, for friendship to interpose its gentle offices of kindly solicitude.

We ask the objector, if he has ascertained in what *way* Mind operates, for good or for evil, upon Mind. In the ordinary intercourses of life, this is matter of daily observation, often of wondering remark, expressive of painful or agreeable surprise. But, can the disputer of 'the doctrine of Devils,' give the information desiderated? The fact mentioned he readily concedes: can he throw the faintest gleam of light on the *manner* of it? Is not *that* as inexplicable to him, as is the *manner* of what, we are assured by Divine testimony, is also a fact? The truth is, the *mode*, in both cases, is beyond our cognizance; veiled, equally in the one as in the

other, in impenetrable obscurity. Wherefore, then, the credence in the one, and the scepticism in the other? Is this reasonable,—the dictate of candour and intelligence? Does it not rather appear to be the offspring of irrational prejudice? Regard to consistency requires a very different procedure.

Let it not be said, that the cases are not parallel. Men are *embodied*, while spirits are *immaterial*, beings: men have vocal organs, and converse by means of the faculty of speech; whereas spirits possess no such media, or instruments, of communication. The dissimilarity is granted; but it affects not the point in debate. At most, it removes the difficulty only a single step. Is it forgotten, that sounds, or words, are not *thoughts*, or motives, or arguments? They are but their signs, or symbols, or vehicles. In the present state, according to the existing constitution of things, they are indispensable: the established methods of correspondence, the common ways of conveying intelligence, and enforcing suasion, between man and man.

But, will it be contended, that *modes* of intercourse adapted to the condition of *compound* creatures, are necessary to the communion of *incorporeal* natures? May not the economies of the visible and invisible worlds be so diverse, that what is suited to the one, were totally inapplicable to the other? In the colloquies of beings clothed with physical organizations, articulate sounds, with the variety of external conven-

tionalties to which custom has familiarized us, seem absolutely requisite. But who imagines, that, in the mutual converse of pure Intelligences, who are unprovided with such organisms, they, or others analagous to them, either do subsist, or *can* be employed? *How* their fellowship is conducted, in the relation of tidings, the interchange of sentiment, and the reciprocation of feeling, is to us inscrutable: yet, not more mysterious than *how* they perceive the presence, or recognise the persons, of one another.

But, whatever be the *manner* of communing among the unseen orders, the fact of their mutually receiving and imparting knowledge and impressions, cannot be reasonably doubted. Not more ground is there for scepticism or disbelief, as to their having, in ways appropriate to spirits, though incomprehensible to us, direct and constant access to *our* minds. Wherefore, then, impugn the credibility of such a doctrine? What does it appear to teach, either disparaging to the Divine character, or unsuitable to the human condition? How, in other words, would the permission of the Agency in question be unrighteous in the Moral Ruler, or incompatible with the freedom and responsibility of His subjects? Is it rational to discard the notion of it, on the score of ignorance of its *mode*, or inability to conjecture *how* it is exercised?

Nor is this all. May not the denial of Demonology, if followed out to the legitimate consequences, be found

to involve more than the disputer apprehends; to exclude the influence of the Creator Himself on the souls that He has formed? At least, so far as respects the *manner*, we are as completely in the dark in the one case as in the other. *How* He operates on the minds of His people; *how* He enlightens, restrains, or quickens them; *how* He makes them 'willing in a day of power;' *how* He 'worketh in them to will and to do of His good pleasure,' beginning and carrying on, with invincible energy, a process of purification in their hearts,—and all without violating the laws of their spiritual constitution, or impairing their liberty as free and voluntary agents: These are inquiries, to which no satisfactory reply can be given. Our pretended explanations, though gratifying to vanity, may but 'darken counsel by words without knowledge.' Let us beware, then, of speculating on points of this nature. It is presumption, which, instead of profiting, can only bewilder or 'puff up.' The language of the Psalmist, in reference to another of the Divine secrets, is that which befits the lips of humble piety: 'Such knowledge is too wonderful for me: it is high, I cannot attain to it.'

The objection, in short, like the others glanced at, seems utterly destitute of force. Indeed, it is so futile as not to deserve a serious answer: to state is to rebut it. How so shallow a fallacy could impose upon any one capable of reflection, and in his sober judgment, it is not easy to see. Something is propounded as matter

of fact: but there are mysteries connected with it, which we are not competent to unravel. *Therefore* it is repudiated as a figment of the imagination, or derided as a dogma of superstition! They, too, who thus speak, would be thought superior to vulgar prejudice, men of enlightened reason, the disciples of a sound philosophy! We ask them if, in that province of the intellectual kingdom, to which they more immediately belong, there are not agencies or operations, of a similar kind, perpetually carrying on, which they themselves acknowledge as certainties, but which the very same difficulties attend: agencies or operations, respecting the *manner* of which, it is confessed, they have no cognizance whatever? Why, then, be believers of the latter, but sceptics or infidels as to the former? Surely, as the objection applies to them equally, consistency requires that they be treated alike. Either admit both, as attested facts, notwithstanding the mysteriousness of the mode; or, discrediting the one because inexplicable, on the same ground, or for the same reason, deny also the other.

What are understood to be the principal objections to the doctrine of Scripture, in reference to fallen Angels, — a numerous class of invisible, yet real, malignant, and powerful beings, we have thus reviewed. To some, the review may seem too cursory and superficial to be satisfactory or complete: an examination more sifting and elaborate, they may think desirable. To others, the

remarks offered may appear sufficiently lengthened; the refutation, while successful so far as it goes, quite as full as is needed, and even more extended than is deserved. The latter being our own opinion, enlargement is deemed superfluous.

What has been said may serve the purpose for which it has been penned—to expose the fallacies, the sophisms, or misapprehensions, on which we have so freely animadverted. These, with others of a kindred description, are, it is to be feared, gaining increasing currency, and insensibly infecting the minds, and unsettling the thoughts, of not a few, especially among those who would be reckoned wiser than the ancients,—spouters of certain vain philosophies, or smatterers in ‘science falsely so called.’ Did such but exercise their judgments, instead of passively allowing themselves to be blindfolded and duped by this or that plausible deceiver, we should have little dread of their being misled by cavils, which, with whatever confidence advanced, whatever show of learning paraded, whatever attractions or novelties of style clothed, cannot bear close inquiry.

By those who are established in the faith, Diabolical Agency is one of the articles ‘most surely believed.’ In relation to them, therefore, our strictures and defences are unnecessary, either for conviction or confirmation: though, even in their case, they may be useful for drawing attention to a subject, which God



has introduced with peculiar frequency into His Word, and which, perhaps, engages too little of the meditations of professing Christians. To the young and the inconsiderate, in particular, whose views of Sacred Truth are often exceedingly partial or confused, it may be of no small advantage to exhibit, in their proper light, the errors and reasonings of those who would prejudice them against the distinctive discoveries of Revelation: errors and reasonings, which, in the present instance, wear the twofold stamp of absurdity and impiety.

As for those who are committed to a denial of Demonology, at least if in the habit of treating it with sneer and ridicule, we have little expectation of changing their opinions. Their hostility has too little alliance with intellect, and is too much the offspring of 'a deceived heart,' to be subdued by force of argument. Of the reverence for Holy Writ, which some of them affect, we make no account, as to us it seems irreconcilable with their repudiation of the doctrine under discussion. For, if Satanic Agency be not there propounded, in almost every page, and so clearly that 'he who runs may read' it, we hardly know a single truth, which the Bible can be regarded as indisputably teaching. What wonder, that they who cannot find among its disclosures that of a *personal* Devil, should fail to recognise in it the announcement either of a *personal* God, or of a *personal* Christ!

We submit, whether such cavillers would not act more honestly, because more in accordance with their real notions or private sentiments, if, instead of pretending veneration, they expressed disrespect, for the Oracles of Inspiration. It is difficult to resist the impression, that, however restrained from avowing, they secretly favour or adopt, the extreme infidelity of two bold blasphemers, each the representative and leader of a class. The Gospel, according to the one, is 'a hornet-nest of fables;' while the conclusion of the other, regarding the writings of Prophets and Apostles, is, that they are 'Hebrew old clothes, or extinguished Jewish lights.' Whence the afflatus: from above, or from beneath? Not the former; for what comes *from* heaven, savours *of* heaven, and points *to* heaven. The tone and tendency indicate too plainly a different origin: not celestial, but infernal. O the profaneness, the desperate wickedness, that breathed forth such revolting effusions!

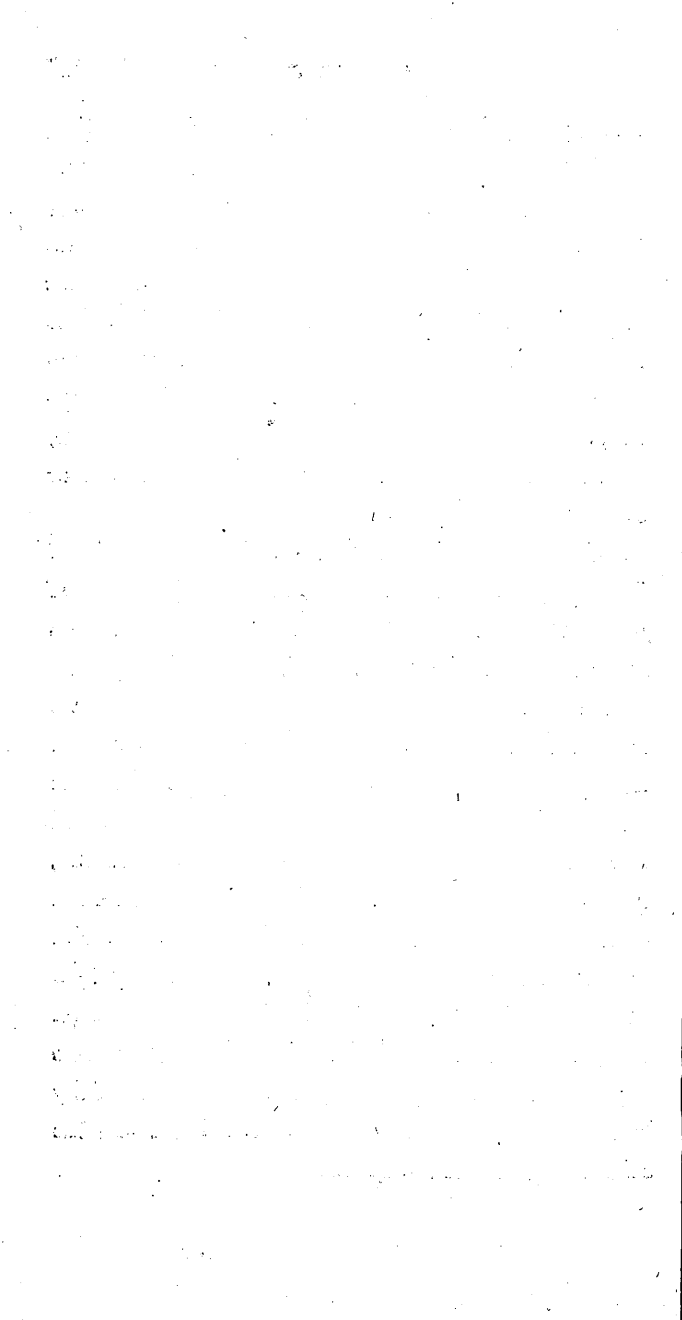
'A hornet-nest of fables!' No. What, vain man, thou revilest, contains 'the words of truth and soberness; the words of eternal life; words whereby we may be saved.' To many has it been, to thee may it be, blessed as the instrument of deliverance from companionships, more to be dreaded, more tormenting, than the stings of hornets.—As mendacious, as vile a lie, is the other representation. What are called *old clothes*, look as fair and comely as ever. No traces of age are discernible on the 'garments of salvation:' time im-

pairs not the beauty of the 'robe of righteousness.' The *lights* said to be *extinguished*, shed through all periods, and on all lands which their rays visit, the same clear and undecaying lustre; guiding thousands, amid the shades of earth, to the realms of day. But, some there are who 'come not to the light, lest their deeds should be reprovèd:' they 'love darkness rather than light, their deeds being evil.' Their own pens proclaim, that they themselves are verifications, alike striking and mournful, of the saying: 'The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness apprehendeth it not.'

We are tempted to ask, is there a rivalry between the Saxon and the Scot, which shall excel in the language of Ashdod; which shall receive the palm for pre-eminence in iniquity? 'A hornet-nest of fables!' 'Hebrew old clothes: Extinguished Jewish lights!' Who thus speaks,—the servant, or the Master? A veritable man, whom vanity and ungodliness have infatuated; or a 'foul Spirit,' through a hapless mortal, whom he inspires? Who thus lifts his mouth against the heavens, and gives his voice blasphemy? *Merely* one 'beside himself,'—a phrenzied rhapsodist: *only* the egotist of the age, the high priest of Anglican infidelity, the apostle and prophet of a refined species of Pantheistic philosophy? Or a great Unseen, the old Calumniator, the Prototype and Exemplar of truthlessness, venting, through a human organ, the boilings of his spleen? May it not be a question, whether there is

here a practical confirmation of our doctrine: whether, in the person of this vituperative scribe, we are presented with a case of actual possession: whether he who 'put it into the heart' of an ancient to betray his Master, also moves a modern so shamelessly to vilify the production of the Holy Ghost? Should any incline to the affirmative, on what pretext, or with what show of reason, can they be blamed? Against proof so presumptive, slanders and lampoons so base and so gratuitous, hard will it be to convict them of a want of charity or candour.

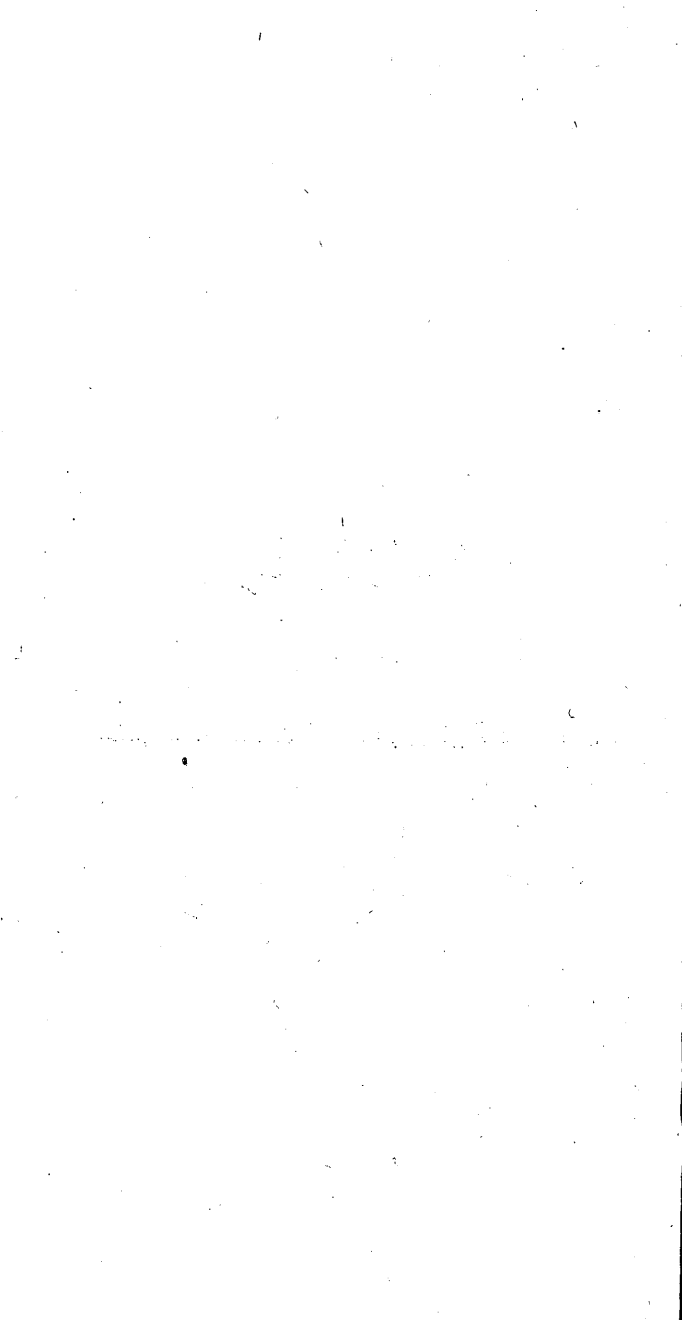
'What shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue? Sharp arrows of the mighty, and burning coals of juniper?' No, haughty scorner. Never mayest thou reap as thou hast sown! While indignant at thy mad folly, and lamenting its hurtful effects on others, we harbour toward thyself no evil wish, cherish no unkind feeling. We pity thee; we grieve for thee. Thine is a noble intellect—capable of high achievement—entitled to rank among Mental Peers. In thy moral nature, too, personally unknown to us though thou art, we can discover some fine traits. Our 'heart's desire and prayer' for thee are, that He who showed mercy to a blaspheming Saul, may remember with similar favour an erring Thomas. The Good Lord pardon thy horrible impiety! May the Spirit of grace convince thee of thy heterodoxy, and convert thee to the belief and the acknowledgment of the Truth!



# Part Third.

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Diabolical Agency, with Collateral Topics.



# PART THIRD.

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## CHAPTER I.

### *Diabolical Agency—Its Duration.*

THIS topic scarcely, perhaps, comes within the scope of the plan proposed. But, though not properly belonging, as a distinct and component part, to the subject under discussion, neither is it altogether unrelated to it. On the contrary, its connection with it, taken as a complex whole, or viewed in its comprehensive aspects and bearings, is alike intimate and evident. It also possesses deep and terrible interest. Its peculiar nature and intrinsic importance entitle it to serious and frequent consideration. It refers to the continuance of an Agency of matchless efficiency, as well as purely malignant in its character: subtle, impalpable, mysterious, yet alarmingly potent, and unceasingly operative. It thus contains matter both for painful and pleasant musing; is calculated at once to excite anxious solicitude, and to inspire grateful joy. It begets solicitude, at the idea of exposure to the antagonism, the stealthiness or the violence, of an influence so superhuman,



and so pernicious: it awakens joy, at the thought that, while subject to Divine control, which restrains and overrules its workings, this influence is of limited duration.

Though, therefore, it is not meant to enlarge upon the topic, neither is it judged proper wholly to omit the notice of it. A few remarks, in passing, may not be out of place, or foreign to our purpose. For the reason stated, however, they shall be both brief and general. Here, the testimony of Holy Writ, our sole authority, and by whose intimations our belief must be regulated, is sufficiently full and explicit.

To the first human pair, immediately after the Fall, and prior to their expulsion from the bowers of Eden, it was announced, 'The Seed of the Woman shall bruise the head of the Serpent.' An inspired penman thus expresses one grand end of the Incarnation,—an end, too, which in its wider relations and ulterior consequences, may be considered as embracing every other: 'Forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death, *He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil.*' The Apostle John, in phraseology of similar import, conveys the same truth: 'For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that *He might destroy the works of the Devil.*' On a certain occasion, also, when, in answer to the prayer, 'Father, glorify Thy Name,' a voice from heaven bore

audible attestation to His character and mission, our Lord, with holy exultation, and in prospect of their complete fulfilment, uttered these memorable words, so emphatic, and so pregnant with precious meaning: 'Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the Prince of this world be cast out.'

These Scriptures, in harmony with which are numerous others equally plain and decisive, indicate, without obscurity or ambiguity, the design for which He who was 'in the form of God,' condescended to be 'made in the likeness of men.' The object contemplated was, both in its immediate and its final results, transcendently great and glorious: to counteract the evils introduced, and abolish the dominion exercised, by the arch Adversary of God and man. This object, so momentous and so desirable, Divine Wisdom did not deem it fit to accomplish by a simple exertion of omnipotence. Of the sufficiency of an attribute, indeed, whose resources are infinite, to have terminated instantaneously the prevalence of the mischiefs to be corrected, there cannot exist a doubt, any more than of its adequacy to have prevented the origination of them. Such a procedure, however, not appearing meet or proper, it was decreed in the councils of eternity, to bring about, in a very different manner, the blessed effects mentioned. For this purpose, an Economy was devised, which, in its progressive developments, should serve to display and illustrate, in beauteous accord and co-operation, the

various, and seemingly conflicting, perfections of the Godhead. At the same time, this arrangement, alike wise and gracious, furnished new matter for the adoring contemplations, with scope and opportunity, which had otherwise been wanting for the benevolent activities, of superior orders of holy intelligence, whose valuable services are thus laid under contribution.

Satan we are taught to regard in the light of a Usurper. His supremacy over mankind is represented as an atrocious *iniquity*, as well as the most hateful despotism. It was acquired by one of the vilest expedients imaginable: a device of mendacity and deception, concocted with an artfulness, and plied with a dexterity, worthy of the ingenuity and adroitness of the Father of lies: while the malice and sagacity of the Tempter were further evinced, both by the *victim*, and the *season*, selected,—the one, the ‘weaker vessel,’ the other, the absence of her partner. By every scheme of fraud or force, which cunning was competent to contrive, or power to employ, this supremacy has hitherto been maintained. It is characterized equally by unrighteousness and impiety; or partakes as much of injustice to man, whom it seeks to ruin, as of opposition towards God, whom it would dethrone. It is altogether and essentially bad: bad in its origin and exercise, in its means, tendencies, and issues. It exhibits moral evil operating with fearful energy, and on the largest scale; embodied in a stupendous, well-organized system of

misrule; exemplifying principles, and directed to aims, alike subversive of Divine authority, and destructive of human virtue and happiness.

To the Head of this direful principality of sin, man was brought into subjection through the Fall. Planned and effected, with the basest intentions, by Diabolical craft, that mournful catastrophe entirely altered his relations to his Maker. The friend became an enemy; the dutiful servant, a rebel; the object of complacential love, a victim of displeasure. Stung with a consciousness of guilt, agitated by remorse, and dreading the threatened penalty, the newly-formed couple, spoiled of their primitive integrity, shunned the presence of Him, with whom, in the day of innocence, they had delighted to commune. Harkening to the temptation, to which they should have turned a deaf ear, or that ought to have been sternly repelled with a 'Thus saith the Lord,' they were thoughtlessly betrayed into transgression. God, therefore, whom they disobeyed, in spite of the awful sanction with which the prohibition was enforced, 'delivered them to Satan,' to whose solicitation, urged with such deceptive plausibility, they, in an unguarded moment, had yielded. Such is the lapsed condition of the whole posterity of Adam: connected with him as a Federal Representative, they 'sinned in him, and fell with him, in his first transgression.' Consequently, they are all, in virtue of that transgression, and as born into the world, under the thrall of the Wicked One.

Hence, he is styled 'the Prince,' and 'the God, of this world;' while he is also described as 'working in the children of disobedience,' as 'seeking whom he may devour,' and as 'having the power of death.'

Concerning the domination in question, two things, plainly intimated by the Scriptural account, may be remarked. First, it is the very *extreme of wrong*. Not, certainly, on the part of God. He is righteous in permitting it; for man, by eating the fruit of which, as the test of allegiance, he had been forbidden to partake, violated His authoritative command. The transgressor, therefore, in being given up to the power of his Betrayer, 'received the due reward of his deed.' The seductive influence wielded against him, he possessed full ability, as he was under most imperative obligation, to withstand. That influence, however, through his own fault, in not remembering the obligation and exerting the ability, prevailed to allure him into sin. Hence, as one penal consequence of his criminality, the Destroyer of his innocence is suffered to domineer over him. But, without controversy, this subjection of man to Diabolical rule, though his proper desert, or the merited 'recompense of his error,' is, as it respects Satan, flagrantly contrary to right. Appointed, in equity, by the Moral Governor, for the punishment of disobedience,—a punishment, both in its mode and its severity, strikingly illustrative of the saying, 'Thine own wickedness shall correct thee;' this rule is, notwithstanding, *in itself*, unjust. Not only the

means by which it was obtained, but the manner, the spirit, and the purposes of its exercise, clearly show it to be cruelly oppressive: in fact, a form or specimen of tyranny, equally in kind and in degree, the most perfect conceivable.

Secondly, The supremacy of the infernal Potentate over mankind, as already observed, is *restricted*. Great, indeed, is his natural capacity, intense are the promptings of his misanthropy, while mightily improved, by many centuries of experience, amid every variety of character and condition, must be his skill in the 'deceivableness of unrighteousness.' Yet, with all his energy, and propensities, and advantages, he cannot, in any particular, exceed, in injuriousness, the precise bounds, exactly defined though not made known to us, which Almighty Goodness, in the arrangements of its wise sovereignty, has prescribed to him. God, for reasons consistent with the rectitude of His administration, but of the propriety of which we are not competent judges, may, on occasions, greatly extend his liberty. So far as the permission warrants, he may go; not one hair's-breadth farther.

The Devil, it is true, is represented as 'having the power of death.' It is evident, however, from the nature of the case, that such an affirmation must be understood in a very qualified or subordinate sense. Death is the curse of the law, 'the wages of sin,' the doom denounced upon man as a sinner. To Adam,

yet crowned with uprightness, his Maker said, 'Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou *shalt surely die.*' This was the penalty which 'the righteous Lord, who loveth righteousness,' annexed to transgression. The infliction of it, therefore, in vindication of His insulted Majesty, belongs exclusively to Him as His unchallengeable prerogative. His is the absolute dominion over Death: whether in its wider acceptation, as comprehending spiritual and eternal consequences, or in its more limited import, as denoting the dissolution of the connection between soul and body. Accordingly, 'He who liveth, and was dead, and is alive for evermore,' thus expressly asserts His sovereignty over it: 'I have the keys of Hades and of death.'

It follows, that the power attributed to the Devil, though formidable, is circumscribed. It is only what is agreeable to the Divine pleasure, and subservient to the ends of punitive justice. It is merely ministerial; not unlike that of the officer, to whom is intrusted the executing on a criminal of the sentence pronounced by the judge. Here, may we not mark at once the righteous severity of God, and an aggravating circumstance in the human condition? We refer to the *instrumentality*, by which the threatened recompense is inflicted. It is that of him, through whose instigation the offence was committed. How humiliating to man: yet how grati-

ying to Satan! Entirely accordant with his feelings is the function assigned to him, and in discharge of it, doubtless, he experiences a malicious delight; though, meanwhile, he is thereby enhancing his guilt, and, however unconsciously or recklessly, 'treasuring up to himself wrath against the day of wrath.' Great, then, must be the limitation of the dominion, which Satan has over death. For, as to death temporal, the time, with all the concomitants, is of Divine appointment: while, as to death eternal, the measure of future woes is precisely determined, so that into the 'cup of trembling,' of which the accursed are made to drink, Demoniacal Agency cannot infuse a superfluous ingredient, one drop of bitterness more than strict equity apportions.

To abolish this terrific usurpation, was the grand object contemplated by the Remedial Economy. Its accomplishment involved a variety of marvels; displays of wisdom, condescension, and grace, without parallel, and beyond compare. In pursuance of this design, the Brightness of the Father's glory veils the splendours of Deity, and 'takes on Him the form of a servant.' The Creator allies Himself to the creature; the Equal and Fellow of Jehovah, to humanity; the Second Person in the Blessed Trinity, to 'dust and ashes.' The Only-Begotten becomes the Seed of the Woman; the Son of the Highest, the Progeny of the Virgin. 'The Word is made flesh,' and tabernacles upon earth, differing, in



no outward respect, from the common heirs of mortality, apparently an ordinary descendent of Adam. 'To us a Child is born,' whose name is Emmanuel; even He who is 'the mighty God,' and whose 'goings forth were of old, from everlasting.' How astonishing! Stupendous humiliation, transcending angelic conception, and furnishing, through endless ages, matter of admiring wonder to loftiest intelligences, and a theme of profoundest adoration and grateful praise to redeemed humanity! 'Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness.'

In this assumed nature, or, rather, in its personal union with His original, the Lord Jesus appeared as Mediator between God and man; the Daysman, who was qualified, as he had undertaken, to 'lay His hand upon both.' As the Substitute of the guilty, He did and suffered whatever was necessary to their deliverance from perdition. On their behalf, He 'magnified the law,' and satisfied the demands of justice. For them He 'fulfilled all righteousness,' by the obedience of His life; and 'made reconciliation for iniquity,' by the endurance of death. He was made a curse, to 'redeem them from the curse;' was 'made sin for them, that they might be made the righteousness of God in Him.' He was 'wounded for their transgressions,' and bore 'the chastisement of their peace'—the 'stripes' by which they are 'healed.' He 'gave Himself for them, an offering and a sacrifice.' Such, too, is

the sufficiency, the infinite value, of that one oblation, that it has 'perfected for ever' those to whom is granted the application of its expiatory efficacy. Here, is laid a foundation for the exercise of forgiveness on the part of the offended Sovereign; and to criminals under sentence of condemnation, is dispensed, consistently with the honour of the Divine character, and the rectitude of the Divine government, a free and irrevocable pardon. Thus, 'what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.' Now, by this singular expedient, every barrier which justice interposed being removed, and clemency having full and unobstructed scope for its visitations; 'God is in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing trespasses to them.'

That Christ, however, 'bare our sins in his own body on the tree,' or 'put them away by the sacrifice of Himself,' was not enough. Man is depraved, as well as guilty; inherently vile, or 'altogether unclean,' as well as obnoxious to wrath. His necessities, therefore, are twofold: in other words, his nature, equally with his state, requires to be changed. Accordingly, provision has been made alike for his justification and his sanctification. 'A fountain has been opened for *sin* and for *uncleanness*.' By 'the blood of the Covenant,' the obligation to punishment is cancelled; while, by the influences of the Holy Spirit, the soul is purified from its

native pollution. As the gift of the Saviour's love, the effect of His death, and the fruit of His intercession, yet as a voluntary and sovereign Agent, He, the Third Person in the Trinity, comes forth to effect this moral transformation. His peculiar office it is to enlighten the dark mind, to quicken the dead in sin, to beautify the unlovely; and, through His renovation, the children of corruption are created anew, impressed with the Divine likeness, and meetened for the society and the inheritance of the undefiled. Thus, by the subjects of His operations, a change as complete as it is delightful is experienced. Both their condition and their character are reversed. Not only are they, in virtue of the atonement, freed from condemnation: they are also, by the grace of the Sanctifier, 'redeemed from iniquity,' and constituted, in newness of heart and of life, 'a peculiar people, zealous of good works.'

What a total alteration, in a spiritual view, do the subjects of justifying and redeeming grace experience! Theirs is the blessed privilege to be 'delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son.' Originally, they were in bondage as hopeless as it was degrading. One was their Master, even Satan; and to him, with the willingness of congenial natures, they 'yielded themselves servants to obey. He, pre-eminently the Evil One, was their father; whose image they bore, whose spirit they cherished, and whose 'lusts they did.' Over them

in their unrenewed state, he exercised despotic sway; but, contemporaneously with their pardon and regeneration, this unholy dominion terminated. Then is verified the prediction, 'The prey of the mighty shall be retaken; and the spoil seized by the terrible shall be rescued.' Then, to the captive, is actually granted liberty; and to the enslaved, enlargement.

Emancipated from 'the power of Satan,' these privileged persons own another Ruler,—the 'King who reigns in righteousness,' and to whose authority submission is proper and reasonable. In them He 'sees of the travail of His soul.' They belong to 'the election of grace,' the 'chosen' and 'predestinated,' who were given to Him in covenant, and whom He ransomed with His blood. He, therefore, considers them as His 'purchased possession;' and when the *set* time for favour, 'the year of His redeemed,' is come, He asserts and vindicates His property in them. By the 'renewing of their minds,' too, He disposes them to holy obedience: so that the homage which He claims as His due, the sacrifice of self-consecration, is rendered with cordial pleasure. His law is in their hearts: to do His will is their delight. With convictions of duty, combine sentiments of gratitude and love. Through the joint influence of these, they feel constrained to devote themselves to the service of Him, who 'bought them with a price,' and whom, when acting in accordance

with their principles, they make it their habitual aim to 'glorify in their bodies and their souls.'

To promote these grand designs, various means have been appointed. They are admirable alike for simplicity and fitness, indicating, in both respects, consummate wisdom; while the careful improvement of them, by all who possess so distinguished a blessing, is matter of imperative obligation. There is the Word, with its plenary instructions, its excellent precepts, its precious promises, its salutary warnings, and admonitions, and threatenings. There is prayer, by which the child of necessity communicates his wants, his sorrows, his desires, to Him who, while ready to hear, and able to help, commands and encourages such humble application. There are sacred ordinances, the exercises of social worship and private devotion, which claim our reverent regard, as intended for our benefit, the prescriptions of goodness no less than of authority. In connection with these institutions is imparted that Divine influence, when they derive their efficiency, and through which is carried forward that process of purification, whereby the soul, when illumined and quickened, is gradually purged from corruption, and assimilated to 'the Perfection of beauty.'

## CHAPTER II.

## Diabolical Agency: Its Duration—continued.

IN the way intimated in the preceding Chapter, is established, 'to the praise of the glory of grace,' a new and spiritual kingdom. Its subjects were erewhile rebels, leagued in revolt, under the supremacy of Beelzebub, against the God of heaven; the disaffection of the heart attested by the disobedience of the life. Its blessed Founder, entertaining towards them 'thoughts of peace,' instead of vexing them in His anger, redeemed them by price, and subdued them by power. Each is a vassal rescued from the domination of the Usurper, who, though still suffered to harass, shall not henceforth enthrall them. Conversion is the era from which dates the cessation of his reign; while glorification places them for ever beyond the reach of all future annoyance. Thus is actually accomplishing the final purpose of our Lord's manifestation in the flesh,—*'the destruction of the works of the Devil.'* Thus is 'the judgment of this world' becoming a palpable and delightful fact: a government is being set up, in all particulars the opposite of that which had previously

existed; a government, of which the distinguishing characteristics are 'righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost,' while the boundaries are destined progressively to enlarge, till they include the circle of the globe. Thus is 'the Prince of this world cast out:' dispossessed of the dominion, which, commencing with the conquest in Paradise, he has, through all ages and all climes, rigorously maintained, from their first to their latest breath, over the human kind. Exceptions, indeed, there have been in every generation,—exceptions, too, in the aggregate innumerable, though *comparatively* few: those whom, as specimens of its power, and trophies to its honour, sovereign grace wrested from the hold of the Tyrant.

Of this happy consummation—the subverting, and, ultimately, the abolishing, of Diabolical ascendancy—the meritorious or procuring cause is, the death of Christ. The reasons have been stated. His death laid a basis for the exercise of pardon: it opened a channel for the communication of saving influence: it removed every obstacle to the establishment of a Mediatorial kingdom. This kingdom has been actually introduced; and, as symbolized by the 'stone cut out without hands, that became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth,' is, by Divine ordination, and through gracious Agency, to increase till it become universal. Nor are the blessed fruits of that death merely posterior, or subsequent to its occurrence: its glorious efficacy is

also retrospective. What multitudes, anterior to the event, during the many centuries that intervened between 'righteous Abel' and the ransomed malefactor on the cross, were redeemed from spiritual slavery, or 'turned from the power of Satan unto God!' Is it asked, why, or how? We answer, only in virtue of 'the decease which Jesus accomplished at Jerusalem:' on the ground of the perfect expiation effected by it, and through the application to them of its merits. In other words, it was owing to the atonement made by the suffering obedience, and their prospective and believing regard to the substitution, of Him who *was to be* 'stricken for the transgression of His people,' that they owed their deliverance from the guilt of sin, and, consequently, from the captivity of the Devil. With what sublime satisfaction, then, with what triumphant joy, must our Lord, in the near prospect of that Crucifixion, from which were to flow issues of such magnitude, have declared: '*Now* shall the Prince of this world be cast out!'

These remarks, while illustrating the character, and indicating the degree, may suffice to ascertain the *term*, of that lordship which the great Apostate has usurped over man. It includes the entire race; not a child of mortality, while unjustified, being exempted. In regard to the family of adoption, it ceases with the transition of its members from death to life: the moment of deliverance from condemnation is, to each



the commencement of everlasting escape from its control. Their number, at any period, is the measure, at that period, of its sphere: the increase or diminution of the one, determines the extension or contraction of the other. Not to speak of former times, when it was nearly universal, how ample, even at present, is the range of the latter! Of the thousand millions existing upon the earth, it still, notwithstanding the recent triumphs of Christianity, and the frequent accessions to the faithful from the ranks of Paganism, enchains in willing servitude the vast proportion. How greatly, and with what accelerating rapidity, may we expect it to be abridged, through the fulfilment, in a more remarkable manner, of the promise of the Spirit! This is the grand promise, the distinctive blessing, of the Evangelical Dispensation. And does not prophecy warrant the hope of larger bestowments of 'the heavenly gift' than are yet witnessed; gracious effusions rivalling, in copiousness and effect, the plentiful outpourings of Pentecostal days? This sacred influence, of which, however, the impartation stands connected with prayer, *will* be shed forth abundantly as 'floods upon the dry ground.' Accompanying, as a vital and vivifying energy, the use of appointed means, it will evince, by the sure evidence of practical proofs, both their aptitude and efficacy. The Word, otherwise weak, it renders powerful, as 'the rod of the Redeemer's strength,' by which He 'rules in the midst of His enemies;' sub-

duing opposition, bowing into submission, and making, of the rebellious, a 'willing people.'

Thus shall the Mediator, through the agency of the Spirit, and by the instrumentality of the Truth, extend, by a gradual yet quickening process, that kingdom which He came to establish. Its subjects consist of those, on whose behalf He 'travailed in the greatness of His strength,' for whom He 'gave His life a ransom,' and whom he freed from a yoke as debasing as it is oppressive: the prey of which, by redemption and by conquest, He 'spoiled Principalities and Powers.' Its enlargement, so deeply concerning the honour of His Name, the glory of God, and the weal of man, must afford Him delight. Indeed, what is this enlargement but the application, on an expanded and expanding scale, of the virtues of His Cross, the omnipotence of His grace, and the force of His doctrine? Nor is such prosperity problematical, or a pleasing probability: it is absolutely certain, guaranteed by express stipulation and inviolable promise. 'Ask of me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession. He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. The isles shall wait for His law. All the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee.' What 'the mouth of the Lord hath spoken, the zeal of the Lord' will perform. What the seer, to whom were granted visions of the distant future, an-

nounced, and what, after the revolution of nearly thirty centuries, is but very partially accomplished, coming generations shall behold realized in its fullest import. To Messiah the Prince 'there were given dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.'

But, this numerical increase of the subjects of the Mediator, implies a corresponding decrease of those of the Usurper. The one is the obvious and necessary consequent of the other. Those composing the constituency of the kingdom of light, are so many deducted from the complement of the kingdom of darkness, to which, originally, they, in common with the unregenerate, belonged. They are a favoured people, whose peculiar happiness it is, as the effect of distinguishing mercy, to have exchanged Lords. He, whom they formerly served, who claimed them as his vassals, and used them as ministers of his will, no longer commands their obedience. His sceptre, in regard to them, is broken; and, henceforth, he 'shall not have dominion over' them. They are 'under grace:' so that much as he may, in the meantime, entice or disquiet them, never shall he gratify his malice in tormenting them, never have the privilege of acting towards one of them. he destroyer. 'Neither Angel, nor Principality, nor

Power, shall be able to separate them from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'

Our doctrine, then, is, that they whom grace has reinstated in the Divine favour, and restored to the Divine image, are no longer in bondage or captivity to the Wicked One. In proportion as they are multiplied, the sphere of his domination is narrowed. The Oracle speaks of times, when, in respect of number as well as holy beauty, they will be comparable to the drops of dew in the morning. In Zion's King, 'men shall be blessed: *all* nations shall call Him blessed.' Those will be times distinguished by the communication of the Spirit, and the prevalence of sacred knowledge, through all lands, and among the diversified tribes of humanity. Then, wherever the eye turns, will it 'behold Satan fall as lightning from heaven.' Where still 'his seat is,' and subjection is yielded to his yoke, he will be dispossessed and ejected. 'He, whose right it is, having taken to Him His great power,' will overturn the throne of iniquity, and 'in His majesty ride prosperously, because of truth, meekness, and righteousness.' Then, in every tongue and through every clime, will burst, from exultant voices, the joyful proclamation: 'Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the Accuser of our brethren is cast down; who accused them before our God day and night.'

: That even at this period, so conspicuous for the

universal diffusion of the light, and the general experience of the efficacy, of 'the Gospel of the grace of God,' *every individual* will be a Christian in reality as well as in name, is not affirmed. But, this being the character of the immense majority, the domain of Satanic sovereignty will, in consequence, be of comparatively diminutive proportions. Still, at the eras of highest Evangelical prosperity, and throughout the succession of generations, he will, it may be presumed, have more or fewer subjects. To the end it will hold true, 'that which is born of the flesh is flesh.' In other words, every one will hereafter enter, as every one has hitherto entered, upon life a depraved creature, and, therefore, harsh as it may sound, a child of the Devil. Nor shall an individual ever obtain exemption from his rule, save in the twofold way described. These are the indispensable requisites, and these the actual provisions, of the Restorative Dispensation; the same substantially in all ages, and applying with equal force to all, severally and collectively, who are 'predestinated unto the adoption of children.' The person must be justified, through the righteousness of the Surety; and the soul must be purified, by 'the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.' How numerous, beyond the realizations of any preceding epoch, the wonders of grace, the emancipations from Diabolical enthrallment, in those auspicious times, when Christianity, not only in word but in power, shall have gained her predicted prevalence:

her 'glory filling the whole earth;' her doctrine enlightening docile myriads; her disciples found in all the abodes of humanity; her spirit animating the hearts, her graces beautifying the characters, her precepts regulating the practice, of the most of every kindred; all lands vocal with the praise, and their dwellers bowing in lowly reverence to the authority, of her Great Teacher! Allelujah! 'The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ.'

Bearing upon this point are two statements, not without both interest and instruction, in the Apocalypse. At present, we conclude with merely adverting to them. The first is, that after the scenes of terror and desolation caused by a series of awful judgments,—after the silencing of the False Prophet, and the final overthrow of Antichrist, by the pouring out of the last vial upon the seat of the Beast: then commences a season of unrivalled illumination, purity, and peace. 'The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High.' The sacred picture will be exemplified: 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.' This blissful season is spoken of as 'a thousand years;' but, whether *literal* or *prophetical* years are meant, we pause not to inquire. Throughout its lengthened course, Satan is denied the liberty,

previously granted him, to deceive and corrupt. Then, perhaps for the first time since the Fall, mankind enjoy immunity from his temptations; for he is 'bound, and cast into the bottomless pit, and shut up, under a seal.'

The second statement is, that on the expiry of the Millennium—whether literal or prophetic—'Satan shall be loosed out of his prison.' Then, in company with his accomplices, he will again move to and fro over the earth. In anticipation, it may be, of the briefness of his reprieve, the shortness of the term allowed him for mischief, he will ply, with renewed energy and dexterity, his seductive arts. Mournful success will attend his efforts. 'Iniquity abounding, the love of many shall wax cold.' The 'fruits of the Spirit' will give place to the 'works of the flesh;' and to the prevalence of piety, will succeed the spread of ungodliness. Such, indeed, will be the progress of degeneracy, that the question will not be inappropriate, 'When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?' What may be the continuance of this state of matters, we pretend not to say; though, without presumption, the conjecture may be hazarded, that it will not be very long. One thing is certain, it will be terminated suddenly, by the unexpected appearance of the Judge. In scoffing tone Infidelity may be asking, 'Where is the promise of His coming?' Lo! while the words are on the tongue, He shall be 'revealed from heaven,' with a glory befitting His dignity and function, terrible to His enemies, but

gladdening to His friends. On the former, He will 'take vengeance:' by the latter, He will be 'admired,' and in them be 'glorified.'

Then shall 'the mystery of God,' respecting the humankind upon earth, be 'finished.' The righteous and the wicked, having received their respective sentences, shall enter on their final allotments; the one class in the mansions of unchanging bliss, the other in the regions of unending woe. Then, too, will be 'the judgment of the great day,' to which the arch Culprit is said to be 'reserved.' Like a condemned malefactor, to whom a respite had been given, but whose hour of suffering has arrived, he must meet his doom; the penalty which justice awarded, but which Providence, for so long a time, had mysteriously suspended. No more reprieve—no more license—no more misrule: imprisonment, henceforth and for ever, is his portion. Straightway he goes, under the frown of Omnipotence, into the 'everlasting fire prepared for himself and his Angels.'

Thus, according to the account of Scripture, will be annihilated that mischievous Agency, which, from the beginning to the close of his earthly existence, is exerted, with such baneful efficiency, against man. It procured his liability to punishment: it brought him under 'the bondage of corruption:' it caused annoyance and vexation to those whom it could not ruin: it effectuated the perdition of countless myriads. Its



entire abolition, though determined and foretold, is an event of remote futurity : it is deferred to 'the end of the world,' and will be simultaneous with the winding up of the drama of its history. Thrice happy they, who, in virtue of 'the blood of sprinkling,' and through 'sanctification of the Spirit,' have been recovered from the captivity of the Terrible. Hereafter, secure from the possibility of assault, and grateful for deliverance from horrors, of which no description, and no comparison, can give an adequate idea,—but faintly imaged by the perils of the 'lions' den,' or the 'mountain of the leopards:' they shall celebrate, in song ever new, and with gladness ever swelling, the interpositions and the triumphs of Mercy. 'Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler : the snare is broken, and we are escaped.' To Him who has 'done great things' for them, their rapturous praises, in symphony with the doxologies of seraphim, shall be hymned without pause, and without end. 'Hosanna to the Son of David : Blessed be He that came in the name of the Lord ; Hosanna in the highest !' How is the Mighty fallen ! Over the Lion of hell the Lion of the tribe of Judah has 'triumphed gloriously.' Perfect and everlasting is the salvation of the perishing. 'O give thanks unto the Lord, who remembered us in our low estate : for His mercy endureth for ever : and redeemed us from the hand of our enemies : for His mercy endureth for ever.'

## CHAPTER III.

## Summary.

OUR remarks have extended to a greater length than was at first contemplated. It is proposed, in this Chapter, to exhibit them in a more succinct or condensed form. Of what has been spread over the preceding pages, the substance may be thus briefly stated.

Within the compass of Nature, there are what may, for the sake of distinction, be called an *inner* and an *outer* circle. The former we confine to the human inhabitants of the earth. It embraces MAN,—not the individual but the race, together with the mutual relations, and reciprocal intercourses, of the members, including the practical effects; or, the influences, direct and reflex, to which, from connexion with their fellows, they are severally exposed. These influences, so various in kind, incalculable in number, and continual in operation, tend, as by a plastic power, to mould the character, which is thus, insensibly yet surely, improved or deteriorated. Of this realm we now speak, as it appears to the common view, isolated from the rest of the mental kingdom, exempt from all foreign agencies,

unaffected, for better or worse, by dwellers in other provinces, or creatures of other grades.

Exterior, however, to the boundary, which separates the seen from the unseen, lies a region, of wide but unascertained dimensions. By beings in a state of mortality, it is unexplored and unexplorable. Into it the keenest eye cannot pierce: darkness impenetrable shrouds it from universal observation. This unperceived region spreads indefinitely around. We believe it to be peopled, as well as the other, with rational Existences. These Intelligences are of different order, of elevated rank, of superior knowledge and strength, and of untold, but possibly countless, multitude. They are undiscernible by sight; the visual faculty not being formed to detect objects of that description. Hence, impalpable to sense, they may often be present with us, in solitude or the solemn assembly, in the closet of prayer, or the scene of temptation, without our being aware of it. Their *nearness*, and their *agency*, may be both matters of certainty, yet neither be distinctly recognised by us.

We believe that such Intelligences, though imperceptible, not only are, but, in their appropriate spheres, are unceasingly active. Their Existence there is no valid reason to doubt or deny. *In itself*, it is extremely probable. From man, to the connecting link between animated and vegetable natures, we observe a graduated scale of being. May it not be presumed, that above

him stretches upward a line of equal, if not much greater, length? Does not this presumption derive likelihood from the discoveries of Astronomy, which has so enlarged our views of the amplitude of the universe? Yet, the whole, immeasurable as it appears to us, and perhaps, as far exceeding the comprehension of more capacious intellects, dwindles into littleness, a mere speck or atom, compared with the immensity of Him, whom 'heaven, and the heaven of heavens, cannot contain.' Hence, between that Great Being, whose presence fills space, and the noblest of creatures, however exalted in dignity, however transcendent in power or excellence, there is, and, to eternity, will be, notwithstanding the progressive improvements of its interminable cycles, a distance absolutely infinite.

But, not only is the Existence of superior Spirits a probability: it is a *fact*, attested by the voice of Inspiration. On this ground, we give it our entire and implicit credence. But, further, these invisible Ones, the same authority teaches, exert, as well over the family of Adam, as over their respective associates, a moral influence. That influence, as put forth by either of the two classes to which all belong, is as opposite in its character as are their natures. In other words, the virtuous, or those who retained their innocence, prompt to holiness: the disloyal, or those who renounced allegiance to the heavenly King, entice to disobedience. If, however, in the latter case, man fall into sin, he is

wholly responsible: the fault is his own, as his freedom was not invaded, his will not controlled. His Tempters, no doubt, by their seductive wiles, aggravate their personal guilt, and shall be visited with more condign punishment; but that consideration extenuates not his criminality. The influence in question, is not compulsory, but persuasive: consequently, compliance is *voluntary*; not of necessity, but of choice. The tempted, with whatever urgency assailed, is inexcusable now, and will be 'speechless' hereafter.

By what avenues Spiritual Wickednesses find entrance into the interior of the human breast: in what ways they attack the citadel of the heart, and establish a lodgement within, like besieging troops entrenching themselves in a stronghold, which, by force or stratagem, they have taken: *how* they employ motives, and ply with solicitations,—*how* they prevail to overcome the resistance, and induce the surrender, of their hapless victims: these are questions not embraced among the disclosures of the Oracle, and insoluble by the sagacity of mortals. Even to hazard a conjecture respecting them, we should deem impertinent presumption. With what so baffles our ability to explain, we decline intermeddling, and, as an exercise more suited to their taste, leave such queries to the cogitations of those, who, 'vainly puffed up by their fleshly minds, intrude into things which they have not seen.' As befits us, we frankly acknowledge our ignorance, and

prefer the silence of humility to the pretensions of affected wisdom.

The Existence and the Agency of Devils, are matters which the light of nature does not reveal. Reason, how vigorous or penetrating soever, could not have discovered them. Philosophy, in her highest improvement, says, It is not in me. To ascertain their reality, fruitless had been all the labours of investigation. Beyond the pages of the Book, which claims a Divine authorship, no semblance of a proof, not even the faintest glimpse or notice, is obtainable. From the Sacred Scriptures alone, is derived our knowledge of this twofold doctrine. Believing them to have proceeded from the God of truth, and to contain only words of truth, we receive as part, and not the least important, of their verities, the information communicated in regard to the Spirits of darkness. Our faith of it thus rests on surer ground than the authority of man. It is supported by evidence infinitely preferable to the speculations of fallible wisdom, or the uncertain conclusions of sagacious but unassisted research,—the testimony of Him who cannot lie.

Having proved the Being, or Personality, of Evil Spirits, we called attention, more particularly, to their Agency. Its REALITY we attempted to establish, by a few specimens, from a long list of Scriptures, equally apposite and decisive, which either explicitly assert, or manifestly imply it; insomuch, indeed, that, on any

other principle or hypothesis, none of them admit of fair and natural interpretation, while most would be unintelligible or absurd. We next adverted to its **EXTENT**, as witnessed both in the moral and physical worlds; or as illustrated by the amount, vast though incomputable, both of sin and suffering, traceable, directly or indirectly, to its exertions. We then pointed out the **MEANS**, by which it usually operates, or some of the principal modes and instruments of its exercise; comprehending all without that corrupts and enslaves mind or body, and all within that has the taint and bias of depravity. Such is Diabolical Agency: a mysterious but indisputable certainty; whence, from the birth of time, have sprung, in painful continuity, crimes and woes, inconceivable in measure, and varied as the follies and distresses of humanity. Not that to Devils, at least as the proximate causes, are attributable all the evils, natural or moral, in the lot of man; for, undoubtedly, much of both is owing to indiscretion, or to the operation of innate depravity: but that a large proportion is the direct result of their rancorous and cruel spite.

The doctrine we advocate has been contested. That it should be discredited by the enemies of Revelation, is not surprising. But, among those who feign veneration for the Sacred Writings, not a few avow disbelief of it. How inconsistent, to profess to take them as the rule of faith, yet discard one of their peculiar and dis-

tinctive verities! To us their procedure appears very reprehensible, indicating a spirit irreconcilable with that of candid inquirers. Their treatment of the Word is such as, if attempted with uninspired compositions, would be considered arrogance calling for the severity of censure, or disingenuousness meriting the bitterness of contempt. The tenet in question they do not allow to be contained in those passages, which, interpreted fairly, or in accordance with the acknowledged idioms of language, and the understood acceptation of the terms, teach it with the utmost explicitness and perspicuity. What we, in our blundering ignorance, conceive to be moral Agents, these sage instructors tell us are only figures of speech,—myths, allegories, enigmas, fictions of poetry. In other words, phrases which, in their natural and ordinary sense, suggest the idea of sinful Intelligences, it is affirmed, merely personify Evil, or certain evil confederacies or powers.

Such a scheme of Exposition we hold to be quite indefensible, radically erroneous, worthy of the strongest reprobation. It violates every law, or established principle, of Exegesis. It shocks reason, and revolts piety. It degrades into designing mystics, inditers of fable or romance in the name of 'Oracles,' the amanuenses of the Holy Ghost. Their teachings, on one momentous theme, it represents as rhapsodies, fallacious as the utterances of folly or the impostures of knavery, expressed in a style of studied obscurity, so as to hide



the real meaning from all save the favoured *illuminati*, whom the Genius of Rationalism or Neology has gifted with the faculty of divining it. On them has descended the spirit of a Daniel, and, filled with wisdom, they deign, in very pity, to correct our sad mistakes, and enlighten the world on a matter in regard to which ages and generations had been in the dark; a matter, too, respecting which, but for the superior discernment of these modern Seers, that has penetrated the riddle, misapprehension might have continued to be indulged. The discovery has been made, that a Devil 'is nothing in the world;' that the opposite notion is a phantasy, a whim of popular credulity; that the numerous statements, which were supposed to intimate it, have been misinterpreted; that such Scriptures are to be taken, not in their literal import, but as specimens of the pomp of Eastern style, or illustrations of the caprice of poetic license; and are to be understood, not as discoursing of *persons*, but as embodying trope, or metaphor, or prosopopeia!

The principal objections to our doctrine have been briefly considered. In opposition to those who assert its contrariety, we maintain its consonance, to Reason and Philosophy: and, persuaded that their conclusion is false, we call on them either to disclaim or to vindicate it. While not unphilosophical, neither is our doctrine derogatory to the Moral Ruler: for, if it consists with righteousness or benevolence to permit tempta-

tion by corporeal, how not also by spiritual, beings? Surely, such a permission, in the latter case, no more impeaches His character or administration, than in the former. As little does Demonology conflict with human responsibility. Excluding the idea of compulsion or violence, it implies no infringement of liberty, no interference with freedom of action; while resistance, though difficult, is both imperative, and, by the Divine blessing on the use of appointed means, practicable.

Not only is Diabolical influence not invincible, but the theory of it, as developed in the inspired page, ascribes not omnipresence to Satan. This, the attribute of the Infinite Spirit, belongs to no creature. Yet, think of the greatness of his ability, both native and acquired; of the legions, perhaps innumerable, of angels ever executing the orders of the infernal Prince; of their velocity of transference from place to place,—a fleetness of motion inconceivable by us, who are clogged with incumbrances of clay. Endowed with such properties, and possessing such facilities, may not the Devil be said, in a modified sense, to have a universal presence, a sort of terrestrial *ubiquity*?—Nor is the mysteriousness of Diabolical Agency any disproof of it, or even presumption against it. In thousands of cases, facts are admitted, the *manner* of which is equally inexplicable. Why, then, in the present instance, doubt or impugn the reality, merely because we cannot comprehend the *mode* of operation? Here, the illustration

or comparison of our Lord is as apposite, as in its original application: 'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is' *tempted of Satan*.

To the doctrines of the Being and the Influence of Evil Spirits, the objections commonly urged, we have seen, possess no validity. Of both we should, but for the informations of the Record, have been in profound ignorance. Both we receive, upon its authority, as 'faithful sayings.' For their truth we desire, as we can obtain, no other evidence than its attestation. This we deem sufficient and decisive. Is it asked, why? Our reply is, because, on grounds which bear the strictest scrutiny, which Infidelity has laboured in vain to impair, and which, the more they have been investigated, appear the firmer,—we believe the Record to have the seal of Divinity. Assured of its authenticity and genuineness, as the Word of God, we regard its instructions, not as matters of question or dubiety, but the announcements of Veracity,—revelations of Infallibility.

Among these are the two propositions, in defence and elucidation of which the present Tractate has been penned. To strip them of their significance, lawless Criticism, alike unscrupulous and godless, has stuck at no device of unfairness. To the 'words of the Holy Ghost,' it has offered extreme violence; a violence, without parallel among the grossest perversions, or

arbitrary misconstructions, of 'the words of man's wisdom.' In no department of Classical literature would such freedoms be tolerated; nor would any Commentator, who valued the reputation for integrity or saneness, dare, even by approximation, to practise it. On passages and expressions, too plain for the simplest to misunderstand, a meaning has been imposed, of which no unsophisticated mind could have dreamed; a meaning, so strange, so fanciful, so wanting in verisimilitude, as to partake of the ludicrous, and excite the surmise that its authors are in sport. The suggestion of it, if not symptomatic of fatuity, or some phase of monomania, betokens a profaneness, an irreverence of spirit, which deserves to be chastised without mercy.

Demonology, or the existence of living Tempters, invisible Adversaries—'the Devil and his angels'—the Scriptures, it would seem, shall not be permitted to propound. Such a doctrine, indeed, their phraseology does *apparently* teach; but its import is not to be determined by the ordinary rules of interpretation. However disparaging to the judgment or candour of the Sacred Writers, their language, instead of being taken literally, must be explained metaphorically, and a sense attached to it totally different from that, which those unskilled in the subtleties of a Pseudo-Biblical Criticism suppose it to bear. This process the exigencies of the case require: accommodation to a theory that suits the taste of Rationalism, and has the merit, if not of

novelty, yet of repugnance to the vulgar creed, which has descended from a hoary antiquity, through the incompetence of theologians, whose stereotyped prejudices have perpetuated the belief of a vanity or a superstition. By strainings, or forced expositions, similar to those by which Scripture is robbed of the doctrines of a Divine Saviour, and a Holy Spirit, it is expurgated of that of a *real* Satan.

To argue with men, who, to support a wild opinion hatched by their distorted fancies, can thus recklessly violate every established law of Exegesis, were to 'beat the air.' Their quibbles and sophistries, were it not for apprehension of the injury they are calculated to do to the unwary or the partially-instructed, we should deem beneath notice. Whence their origin, or their leading qualities: whether they proceed from the love of singularity, or the bitterness of hostility to Revelation; whether they have more the stamp of the impious or the absurd: these are questions which we pretend not to determine. Not bearing upon our subject, they are passed over without remark: referred, however, to the judgment of the discriminating, or the reflections of those whom the decision more immediately concerns. On behalf of all such corrupters of the faith, our fervent prayer is presented, that He, whose peculiar prerogative it is, may 'open their understandings, to understand the Scriptures;' and their hearts, to 'receive the love of the Truth, that they may be saved!'

## CHAPTER IV.

*Summary—continued.*

WHAT a revolting picture do the preceding remarks give of the character of Demons! We contemplate, in these primitive reprobates, the finished Patterns, the Prototypes and Exemplars, of utter worthlessness. They exhibit the union, the concentration, in their highest state of activity, of all the depravities that can deteriorate the moral nature. Here meet and combine, without one modifying ingredient, the least admixture of the contrary qualities, ambition and pride, malice and envy, hatred and cruelty, duplicity, falsehood, and cunning. In a degree, or with a virulence and energy, to which unregenerate humanity, even in its vilest specimens, or most offensive manifestations, presents no parallel, hardly an approximation, these odious affections and passions rankle in the bosom, and are displayed in the operations, of fallen Angels. To them applies, with a peculiarity of meaning and emphasis, the inspired description of the carnal mind—‘enmity against God: every imagination of the thoughts of the heart is only evil continually.’

To these Apostates, the Spirit has given various names and designations. All of them are significant, while their appropriateness will not be disputed. They rather, however, convey an idea, vague and general, of their *mental greatness*, than impart clear and definite knowledge of their respective natures, or of their ranks, relatively to other orders, in the scale of intelligence. The epithets used acquaint us, chiefly, with the malignancy of their disposition, and the quality of their employment: the *kind* of work in which they find their delight, and to which they devote, constantly and without reserve, their capacities and their being. There is One, in particular, of whom frequent and special notice is taken. The reason of his being thus singled out, or why to him has been assigned the first place on the roll of infamy, we are not told: whether from his pre-eminence in dignity and might, or from his priority in transgression, or from the ardour and the efficiency of his zeal in promoting rebellion. Be that, however, as it may, certain it is, that He whose verdict is infallible, pronounces him the arch offender in the universe. It is by descriptive epithets and figures such as the following, the most forcible and damnatory which language supplies; that the Lip of Truth brands the Chief of sinners.

He is called 'the Wicked One,' by way of distinction: 'the Devil,' which signifies accuser or slanderer: 'Satan,' by interpretation, the enemy: the 'Adversary,'

intimating the inveteracy and dangerousness of his opposition: 'Apollyon,' and 'Abaddon,' synonymes which may be translated, the destroyer: 'the Tempter,' an appellation expressive of his assiduity and pleasure in seducing: the 'Old Serpent,' in allusion to the medium through which he beguiled Eve: 'the Great Dragon,' an image peculiarly fitted to inspire terror. In accordance with these denominatives are other representations, which portray him as 'the Angel of the bottomless pit:' as a 'roaring Lion, walking about seeking whom he may devour:' as 'the Spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience:' as 'the Ruler of the darkness of this world:' as 'deceiving the nations, the whole world,' with the dexterity of a practised enchanter, skilled in the preparation of suitable spells and charms: as 'resisting' the righteous, infuriating the ungodly against them, and occasionally, by means of these 'sons of Belial,' whose hatred and violence he studies to foment, raising persecutions, which, like devouring fires or whelming floods, threaten destruction to their persons or their cause.

In those terrible dramas, which the visions of the Apocalypse, as by panoramic glimpses, bring, in rapid succession, so vividly and impressively before us, how strikingly is the truth now stated exemplified! In each opening scene, men are the ostensible actors, and to their misdoings are traceable, directly and proximately, the confusion and turmoil that ensue. The Prophet,



however, to whom 'the Spirit of revelation' fore-showed events in connection with their causes, remote as well as mediate, speaks repeatedly, and in unambiguous terms, of a different Personage: and to him, though impalpable to sense, is attributed no small influence in the accomplishment of those distressing occurrences, which, in such lengthened series, a mysterious Providence, in the progress of its evolutions, realizes. No eye sees him, no ear hears him, nor may any one be cognizant of his presence, or aware of his suggestions; yet is he the principal Agent, the prime Mover. Those who figure on the stage, the partakers of flesh and blood, are comparative puppets—convenient tools—useful auxiliaries—the willing instruments, the compliant slaves, of a crafty Instigator, who shrouds alike himself and his operations in a veil of secrecy. His pleasure they perform in fulfilling their own designs, and his promptings, while they coincide with the tendencies of depraved inclination, quicken and invigorate them.

Of the Scriptural characters of Satan, there is none, perhaps, of larger or more terrific import than this: 'The Prince of the power of the air.' Its exact signification, or what it definitely includes, is not quite obvious. Accordingly, it has been differently interpreted. Some, as was formerly hinted, understand it to intimate a certain mastery over the air; an ability, limited, indeed, but superhuman, to control and direct the elements. This ability some suppose adequate to

the causing, at least within a narrow range, of fire and storm, of noxious vapour or pestilential malaria. To others, however, the supposition appears improbable. It involves, in their opinion, what trenches on the prerogative of the God of nature; for, to the production of the effects mentioned, they hold any power inferior to Omnipotence to be incompetent. Without pausing to argue, we merely remark, that it is not for us to say what creatures of exalted grade can, or cannot, do. May we not err by *defect*, as well as by excess; by ascribing too little, as well as too much, to the exertion of their energies? They 'excel in strength,'—which is true equally of the sinful and the holy: and what is impracticable to puny mortals, may be possible to high Intelligences. Human weakness is not the measure of Angelic might.

Some, to whom the explanation offered is unsatisfactory, adopt another exposition of the phrase. The words translated, Power and Air, they conceive to be used by the Apostle as collective terms, or nouns of multitude. It may also be remarked, that the substantive rendered air, wind, or breath, is employed to denote Spirit, whether created or uncreated. By the supporters of this second view, the passage is read thus: 'Prince of the powers'—hosts or armies—'of spirits—the spirits that now work in the children of disobedience.' The doctrine which such a form of speech conveys, we hold to be the same that is taught, both by the general

bearing, and by many plain statements, of Scripture. But, whether it be that which the Sacred Writer meant here to propound, admits of controversy. In two successive clauses, occur, as synonymes, two different substantives, —*aëros* and *pneumatos*. Supposing them to be interchangeable, would not the repetition of either have more accorded with propriety? Hence arises an objection, not altogether, perhaps, destitute of force.

A third exegesis has been proposed. It represents Satan as ‘Prince of the powers’—the legions—‘of the air,—of the spirit’—the vicious spirit, or corrupt principle—‘that worketh in the children of disobedience.’ In other words, it ascribes to him a certain rule—a degree, undefined yet considerable, of controlling and governing influence, over both kindred fiends and depraved humanity. This exegesis is agreeable to the construction of the original, while it has the sanction of Expositors, whose judgment is entitled to deference, as well as their piety to respect. To examine, however, its merits more particularly, were aside from our purpose.

We only add, that the *reason* assigned for the designation in the former clause, meets not our approval. We speak of the ‘fish of the sea,’ and the ‘fowls of the air;’ indicating, respectively, the elements in which these creatures swim or fly. May not Devils, then, be called ‘the powers,’ or armies, ‘of the air,’ on a similar account? They are so denominated, we presume, like

the winged tribes, from the *medium* of their translation. It is because, instead of moving along the ground as we, the occupants of corporeal frames, are necessitated to do, they, unencumbered with 'weights of clay,' transport themselves hither and thither, at pleasure, *through the atmosphere*. What some have maintained we cannot allow, that the representation is founded on the alleged fact, that they tenant the aerial regions as their habitation, or people them with their multitude. That such a notion prevailed among the Jews, is no proof of its soundness; for many were their unauthorized traditions, the absurd fables and superstitious legends, which, in connection with religion, gained popular credit. Nor are we entitled to infer, from the expression reviewed, and which is susceptible of a more rational and probable explanation, that this notion, however commonly believed by his countrymen, received the countenance of the Apostle.

The designation, whichever way interpreted, conveys an appalling idea of the person to whom it is applied. No description can picture him in a more formidable character,—a light more adapted to excite dread and alarm. Yet Satan is but *one* of many; the Captain of hosts, each wicked and malevolent as himself, each ready to execute his commissions. Consequently, there is the more ground for apprehension, as the plurality of adversaries augments, in a proportionate degree, the danger that threatens human safety. What their num-

bers are we know not. Such information the Spirit of revelation has, for reasons doubtless wise, withheld. It had evidently been of no *practical* utility; could not have tended, in any conceivable way, to our benefit. It has, therefore, been reserved among the 'secret things,' which 'belong unto the Lord.' Worthless, of course, are any speculations or statements on the point: not included among the announcements of inspired instructors, they can be regarded as no better than mere guesses,—vague, if not impertinent, conjectures.

Yet, that Devils exist in *great numbers*, may be inferred, with high probability, from the phraseology of Scripture. May they not be even too multitudinous for arithmetic to express, or imagination to compute? That such, indeed, is the fact, we do not assert; but much less is any one entitled to deny it. As formerly mentioned, a 'legion' of them is represented as having, at once, temporary possession of a demoniac: though 'legion,' we apprehend, is there to be understood, not literally, but, like most general terms, in an indefinite sense; not as denoting *six thousand*, but as conveying, according to the explanation immediately subjoined, the idea of 'many.' We hence gather, indirectly, that their hosts must be vast. For, what hundreds, in Judea, might one or more of them, *at the same time*, have been similarly afflicting: not to speak of the millions, throughout the Gentile world, with whom others might have been present! What may be their aggre-

gate, or the extent of their armies, cannot be ascertained even by approximation ; but that it consists of ' numbers without number,' appears not an improbable supposition.

These would seem to be all leagued in one body ; a mighty Federation of wickedness. Differing in opinion as they may, they are all animated by the same spirit, and zealous in the same cause. Though 'hating one another,' as well as individually 'hateful,' they cooperate, with the readiness of willing associates, in the work of iniquity. Whatever be their diversities of view, of inclination, or capacity ; here, in the furthering of plans of mischief, are unanimity of sentiment, harmony of feeling, and union of effort. Among them appear to be gradations of rank and power, perhaps, on a scale proportioned to the greatness of their number. For, the probability is, that in hell as in heaven, are Thrones, Principalities, Powers, Might, Dominions. These terms, indeed, convey to us no definite notions of the Dignities described. They are borrowed from earthly things, which cannot be supposed to have, among the arrangements of the invisible world, their exact correspondents or counterparts. Doubtless, however, they are significant. In general, they may be interpreted to express certain varieties of government, or degrees of authority. 'These differences of administration' or of function, too, we apprehend, are connected with, or founded upon, similar *original* differences of nature.

At the head of this Unholy Alliance, comprising, it may be, numerous rebels of many distinct orders, is One of matchless subtilty and daring, if not likewise pre-eminent in rank. To this Autocrat, those untold legions, whether by constraint, or from choice, or partly through both, are in passive subjection. This ascendancy, which towering ambition prompted him to usurp, indomitable energy determines him to maintain; while his craft, ever fertile in devices, supplies the aptest expedients. Are any curious to know what these appliances are; or, *how* he so dexterously and successfully accomplishes his desire? That it may be in modes, or by a cunning system of agency, analogous to what, among mankind, is matter of too familiar observation and bitter experience, is quite conceivable. In other words, the infernal Potentate may display his supremacy, or exercise his sovereign rule, not so much *personally*, or by direct and immediate influence on each, as by means of an organized and disciplined Executive, consisting of hundreds or thousands of subordinate Chiefs, whom he has attached to his interest, or overawes by his greatness, and who, severally, exert a control, persuasive or compulsory, over more or fewer inferiors. Thus may his administration, in its fundamental principle and practical working, bear a resemblance to the mode of procedure adopted by earthly tyrants; who enforce their despotic measures, and prosecute their unworthy aims, by representatives

or deputies, vested with delegated powers, which they are expected to use, not for their own aggrandizement, but for the support of the government, and the honour of the Prince.

Think of these invisible Adversaries: their number,—very many, possibly, too many for enumeration; their might,—the meanest superior in nature, and, therefore, in faculty, to man, and the higher gifted with transcendent abilities, which exercise through an unknown course of ages must have wonderfully improved; their spirituality,—both fitting them for unwearying activity, and inconceivable fleetness of transport, and affording them facilities of continual access to the soul; their conspiracy,—all combined to resist the authority, or contravene the will, of the Creator, and to secure to the race, whom their wickedness seduced from rectitude, an inheritance of shame and woe; their President or Leader, and also, most probably, their, not less than our, original Tempter and Murderer,—a creature of exalted station, of great vigour of intellect, and variety of resource, as well as of unequalled malignity. Think seriously of these things. Regard them not as chimeras of the fancy, or even bare possibilities, but as awful realities. They are realities, too, which merit deep and universal attention: with them each child of Adam has, during every hour of this earthly existence, directly and constantly to do. The contemplation of them, therefore, is well



fitted to inspire fear,—even a fear ‘gendering unto bondage.’

Impressed with a sense of danger, and conscious of inability to combat, in our own strength which is weakness, our spiritual Antagonists, the feeblest of whom is more powerful than the mighty, and bands of whom might, but for the prohibitions of Providence, or the restraints of Grace, speedily assail, while their resistless force could not fail as speedily to vanquish,—inflicting disease of body, or causing anguish of mind, or hurling into perdition: let us, as humble suppliants, approach the Hearer of prayer, the Succourer of the needy, with the invocation of the pious Jehoshaphat, when informed of the proximity of the armed squadrons, on their march to invade and desolate Judea. Having to contend with Opponents more formidable, and sensible of our own utter insufficiency for the strife, let us, after the example of the good king of Israel, apply to Him, to whom the petition of believing importunity was never addressed in vain. ‘O our God, wilt Thou not judge them? For we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but *our eyes are upon Thee.*’ Our prayer, presented in faith, will engage the aid of Omnipotence; and eventually, over the most formidable muster of those who hate us, we shall be ‘more than conquerors, through Him that loved us.’

## CHAPTER V.

## Difficulties Obliated.

THE preceding Summary may, not improperly, be followed up by a few supplementary remarks. We shall occupy this Chapter and the next, by anticipating one or two objections, which may be made to some statements advanced in a previous Section. We refer to what was said regarding the infliction, by Diabolical Agency, of physical distress, especially in the *outward condition*. Some, whose views on the general doctrine coincide with our own, may dissent from the opinion expressed, as to the interference of that Agency in the manner, or to the extent, represented.

There are those who, while believing in its reality, question whether it ever had a *causal* influence in atmospheric agitations or disturbances. Consequently, they would account, irrespectively of it, for the elemental wars, which, in their sudden violence, proved so disastrous to Job. To the production of such effects, they hold it to be inadequate. In all cases, as well as in the two specified, they are maintained to be, not mediately but directly, the doings of Him, to whom

alone it belongs to 'send forth lightnings,' and to 'bring the wind out of its treasuries.' The contrary supposition, it is thought, implies an ascription to the creature, of the unalienable powers and prerogatives of the Uncreated Majesty.

The validity of the objection we do not admit. That the view impugned, attributes to Satan a potency incompatible with the capabilities of a finite nature, requires to be proved. On a point so debatable, however,—a point, too, respecting which there are no data to lead to a definite conclusion,—we do not insist. Granting that, the thunder and the whirlwind, in the instance adduced, were the effects of merely natural causes, or resulted, like other phenomena of continual occurrence in the physical world, from the operation of ascertained and established laws: we ask, might not the Adversary have imagined, that now was the 'convenient season' for testing the sincerity of the Patriarch? Providence having furnished the occasion and the means, might he not have promptly seized the opportunity thus afforded to vent his malevolence, in the hope, if not of substantiating his charges of hypocrisy and mercenariness, of at least entailing grievous injury on the accused? Might he not, for this purpose, and as a very likely way of compassing his end, have *directed* the fatal bolt against the cattle, and the terrible blast against the dwelling?

This Science enables even men to do on a small

scale. Can it, then, be deemed impossible to beings of superior order, whose faculties, originally stronger, have been much improved by the experience of millennia? Vastly deeper, it may be presumed, is their insight into the secrets of Nature, and proportionally more extensive their command over its processes. To some, who discard the former view, the latter appears quite credible. Not sympathizing with their difficulties, we rather incline to the other. Instead, however, of clinging to it with tenacity, we hold it with a degree of wavering; like one who feels a hesitancy of judgment begetting suspense. Further information relative to the measure of Angelic power, were necessary to authorize us to speak with more decision. The first or the second, we apprehend, suggests the right solution: nor does it seem to us very material which is preferred. Either represents Satan as the chief Actor in the scene, or the direct and sole Author of the mischief; though the latter, perhaps, less terrifically than the former. For, allowing him to have guided in their course the fire and the storm, the destruction that ensued was as really his work, as if he had actually *originated* the elemental strife.

The idea of *supernatural* Agency, in this or in any similar instance, we consider wholly inadmissible. To such a supposition we feel insuperable objections. That the God of holiness and love exerted His power, in a miraculous manner, at the request, or to gratify the

malice, of the Wicked One, is what we cannot conceive. The thought shocks our moral sentiments: it is repugnant to all the apprehensions, which Scripture teaches us to form of the righteous and benevolent Ruler. Nor will it do to allege, that the miracle was wrought, not to gratify, but to *mortify*, the Slanderer, by exposing his vile misrepresentations. The wisdom or propriety of such a procedure is not very evident; for what matters it to the Father of lies, provided his designs of cruelty are accomplished, to be convicted of falsehood the most atrocious? We cannot concede, then, that 'Jehovah did these things *in conformity to Satan's malignant wish and suggestion*, with a view to the trial of His servant, and at the same time, along with the manifestation of the falsity of the Devil's accusations, in order to the purification of his graces from the alloy of corruption with which they were still blended.'

We are thus brought into collision with a Writer of distinguished repute, the soundness of whose judgment, coupled with the weight of his character, entitles his opinion, on any controverted point in Theology, to respectful consideration. The following are his statements on the subject. 'Creatures may produce their little imitations of the wonderful phenomena of nature; but to wield on such a scale the material elements, belongs, I am fully persuaded, exclusively to Omnipotence. What are we to make, on any other supposition, of the appeals of Jehovah, throughout His Word,

to such control as one of His own prerogatives, and the sign of His presence and interposition? What are we to make of His sublime appeals in this very book? "Who hath divided a watercourse for the overflowing of waters, or a way for the lightning of the thunder?"—"Canst thou send lightnings that they may go, and say unto thee, Here are we?"—"Hast thou an arm like God? Canst thou thunder with a voice like Him?"

'The thought is to me insufferable, of any inferior agent actually possessing such power as this. If you once admit the principle,—then, when the rolling thunder and the resistless lightning fill your spirit with the sublime emotions of reverential awe, and the shrinking humility of a conscious impotence, and

"'Tis listening fear, and dumb amazement all;"

or when the tempest bursts forth in its impetuous fury, bearing all before it, sweeping away the property and the habitations of men, and strewing the ocean with wrecks: how distressingly are our minds disturbed, amidst the full and solemn recognition of the might and majesty of the omnipotent God, by the intruding recollection, that the immediate agency by which all these tremendous scenes are produced, is, or may be, the agency of the Prince of darkness! Nor do I feel myself at all satisfied or relieved by being told, that the dependent and malignant agent can go no further than

he is *permitted*. The question still recurs, Does the Wicked One possess power, even *when* permitted, such as enables him to perform these wonders—to wield the elements of nature in the thunder and the storm? If he does, how inevitably and how painfully is the impression impaired of the peculiar and exclusive omnipotence of that Infinite Being, who, for the purpose of giving us this impression, makes His lofty appeal to these very scenes, as the special manifestations of His own power!\* In reading an ode of such incomparable sublimity as the twenty-ninth Psalm, how would our minds be affected, were we told, that “the voice of Jehovah,—powerful, and full of majesty—breaking the cedars of Lebanon—making the mountains to skip like a young unicorn—dividing the flames of fire—shaking the wilderness—making the hinds to calve—and discovering the forests:” that this voice, with all its over-awing effects, is no more than Evil Angels, *if but permitted*, can produce! What a deduction would such an assurance make from the energy and elevation of the closing words—“In His temple doth every one speak of His glory.”

This language is strong and decided. It fails, however, not only to carry conviction to our minds, but even to lead us to modify our views. With all our admiration of the worth, and with becoming deference to the judgment, of its venerable and accomplished

\* Ps. cxxxv. 7, cxlvii. 18, lxxvii. 18; Job xxvi. 14; Amos iv. 13.

Author,\* we must express our dissent from the view which he so eloquently advocates. For the reasons already assigned, we consider Satan as the immediate cause of Job's losses and bereavements. In one or other of the ways indicated, he effected the destruction of sheep, servants, and children. Not by any additional power imparted to him on the occasion, and in subservience to his malicious designs, but by his own native ability: either, *with a Divine permission*, producing the violent commotion of the elements; or, on its production in the ordinary course of operations, and as the result of gradual changes in the atmosphere, taking advantage of it, by virtue of his superhuman skill and might, as a suitable means, a prepared and efficient instrument, of calamity. That is, on the latter hypothesis, he so controlled the currents, both of the electric fluid and the raging tempest, as to turn their deadly force in the direction wished, and against the objects devoted. In this view of the case, we neither see, on the one hand, aught of the miraculous, nor, on the other, how confidently soever some may hold the affirmative, the least trenching on Sovereign Prerogative, the slightest usurpation of what pertains to the Lord of nature.

There are those, we are aware, who contend that Spirits, whether good or bad, have no control over matter. They deny them the power of altering its

\* Dr Wardlaw.



forms, or influencing its conditions; of availing themselves of a knowledge of its properties to subserve a purpose, either of benevolence or malignity; of operating, in any mode or degree, upon its substances. The physical universe is supposed to be excluded from their sphere of action, so that none of its constituents can they turn to account, or employ as instruments of judgment or of mercy, of wrath or of blessing. From the preceding observations, it will be seen, that we differ in opinion 'wide as poles are asunder' from the abettors of such a notion. To examine, however, the grounds of their belief, or attempt to answer their objections to the popular creed, would lead us into digressions, or entangle us in discussions, aside from the design, and interfering with the plan, of these simple and cursory expositions.

To the tenet in question we cannot subscribe. It wants, in our eyes, the recommendation of probability. In no other light can we regard it than as a theological reverie, or a philosophical fancy, unworthy of being entertained by a serious and reflecting mind. Notwithstanding the respectable names arrayed in its support, we cannot help classing it among the plausible vagaries, the unwarranted conclusions, the gratuitous assumptions, which, times innumerable, learned ingenuity has laboured, though with fruitless toil, to vindicate. It is also, apparently, in discordance with the facts and representations of Holy Writ. For instance, the Evan-

gelsists relate, that, on the morning of our Lord's resurrection; 'there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow.' Grant, what does not necessarily follow, that Omnipotence both caused the earthquake, and produced the visible form in which he appeared,—a form, of which the exceeding glory so overawed the keepers, that they 'did shake, and became as dead men:' we ask, *whose* agency was it, that, according to the narrative, removed the ponderous stone from the mouth of the sepulchre? This effect is attributed, in the most explicit terms, not to Divine, but to created power. 'The *Angel*,' we are told, 'rolled it back.'

This, however, is but one instance out of many upon record. In each is displayed a mastery over matter, more or less wonderful; a power, plainly superhuman, of influencing its operations, of moulding it into desired forms, and bending it to particular purposes. Is it said, that the power, by which the phenomena alluded to were produced, was not natural or inherent, but communicated,—imparted at the moment, as in the case of the workers of miracles? In other words, is it said, that it was not an endowment permanently possessed, but only a temporary bestowment, to be exerted on rare occasions, and for extraordinary ends? We concede not the point, though neither are we disposed to assert,

in very positive phrase, the opposite. On what data, pray, is such a statement or inference founded? Before accepting it, we require proof. The demand, surely, is reasonable: to demur to it, were very unfair.

We are unable to conceive, it is alleged, how Beings purely spiritual can act upon matter. That there is a mystery here, is admitted. But, neither good logic nor sound philosophy allows our objecting to the fact, on the ground of our ignorance of the *manner*. Every department of knowledge, physical, moral, religious, acquaints us with objects or things, the reality of which we scruple not to believe, although the *mode* exceeds comprehension. Indeed, few would be the articles of our creed, small the body of acknowledged verities, if our faith were limited to what we thoroughly understood, or were competent fully to explain. We are compound creatures, whose souls come into contact with external nature through the medium, or by means, of our bodies. Spirits are differently constituted,—simple Existences, without corporeal parts, or organs of sense. Is it surprising, then, if we, whose experiences are so dissimilar, who are placed in a condition, or live under an economy, in all respects diverse, find the question too difficult for solution: In what way can they, who are themselves immaterial, influence material substances,—the unseen and impalpable, the visible and tangible?

That Spirits have, not seldom, put forth an agency

in the physical world, is testified by the voice of Inspiration. Often, too, has it been of a kind and a degree to impress with astonishment, or overwhelm with awe. Yet, was it exerted, we apprehend, not through a supernatural impulse, or under an immediate Divine illapse, but by virtue of their own proper powers, the transcendent energies with which, at their creation, their Maker had gifted them. 'Excelling in strength,' those superior orders may be able to perform, without effort and instantaneously, what to us, of comparatively humble rank and feeble faculty, as well as recent birth, not only is utterly impracticable, but even seems miraculous.

We submit, whether Man, viewed as the possessor of a compound nature, does not present, in every *outward act*, a practical refutation of the hypothesis controverted. The soul, it is true, cannot, *by itself*, or independently of its partner, operate on surrounding objects: it uses the body as its indispensable instrument. The latter, however, is, every moment, influenced directly by the former. But, *how* the rational principle, without the employment of any media, thus actuates the corporeal frame, by a simple volition moving its members, or changing its position and place: this no philosophy, no psychological investigation, can explain, any more than it can ascertain the bond of connection between them, or how the two parts of the complex whole, constituting one person, are united. Observa-

tion and experience daily familiarize us with the fact: but the *manner* is, and perhaps will ever remain, a secret.

Granting, too, the correctness of the supposition we dispute, might it not be asked, how could Devils, in the days of our Saviour, have so afflicted the bodies of men? We must imagine them to have received, for that express purpose, and at least during the continuance of the miraculous Dispensation, not only Divine permission, but also an *ability* which, naturally, they had not. How, otherwise, they could then, by the infliction or aggravation of infirmities or diseases, have disabled or tormented the human frame in the diversity of ways specified, we cannot perceive. Their malignity, in that case, must have been confined to the tempting and corrupting of the soul: how, then, shall we account for the *bodily* possessions? Besides, it deserves serious consideration, whether the hypothesis in question, fairly applied, would not equally preclude the agency of the Supreme Spirit on matter. Yet, we know that to His Omnipotence it owed its original creation; while the same Omnipotence sustains it in existence, controls and regulates its manifold operations, and gives to it the endlessly varied appearances which it assumes.

What, then, is the conclusion to which we feel ourselves shut up? It is, that Spirits, alike the good and the evil, can, to a certain extent, exert an influence, limited but superhuman, over material elements and

substances. Of the scenes of terror and spectacles of suffering, too, connected, by inspired penmen, with their activity, we conceive them to have been really the authors; and that, by their own *inherent capabilities*, not in virtue of their being suddenly 'endued with power from on high.' This, we apprehend, is the conclusion deducible from the Scriptural statements: indeed, the only conclusion which one, uninfluenced by prepossession, or guided by enlightened reason, and interpreting, agreeably to its natural construction, the language of the Oracle, would think of drawing. To Philosophy, holding to her own province, and uttering her voice on questions about which she is competent to pronounce, we pay deference; but little value do we attach to her speculations, nor are we disposed to acquiesce in her inferences, on themes like that under consideration. They lie beyond her reach; are shrouded in mystery, which her eye may not penetrate; belong to a region, too lofty for the soarings of her venturous wing. In seeking to investigate them, she exercises her ingenuity, and 'spends her strength, for nought and in vain.' Her wisdom would be, instead of starting objections, or multiplying difficulties, to hearken with reverent submission to a Divine Instructor; and where Revelation speaks with equal plainness and authority, to believe even though she cannot comprehend; assured that in it 'is nothing perverse,' but that all its disclosures are facts, and all its words verity.

## CHAPTER VI.

*Difficulties Obviated—continued.*

LET it not be said, that the admissions in the previous Chapter are far from pleasing. That they are of a gloomy cast, or calculated to gender mental disquietude, or slavish fear, we do not acknowledge. We fail to perceive aught in them, that tends necessarily to excite the perturbation of spirit, the painful distraction of thought, prognosticated by the sagacious Wardlaw, when the 'rolling thunder' peals upon the ear, and the 'resistless lightning' flashes before the eye. There is no need that 'our minds be distressingly disturbed, amidst the full and solemn recognition of the might and majesty of the omnipotent God, by the intruding recollection that the immediate agency, by which all these tremendous scenes are produced, is, or may be, the agency of the Prince of darkness.' Be his capacity as transcendent, his malignity as envenomed, his purpose to hurt as determined and eager, as it is possible to conceive: still there is no ground for agitation or alarm. It is our comfort to know, that every instant, and in every movement, he is, as completely as the puniest

mortal, under the absolute control of One, who 'rides in the whirlwind, and directs the storm.' How easily can He defeat his stratagems, abridge his freedom, or overrule his efforts! What are all the resources of the finite to those of the Infinite; the ability and skill of the creature, to the omnipotence and wisdom of the Creator? Whatever be the might or the fury of the Enemy, well may the assurance calm our fears, that he 'can have no power against us except,' and only in so far as, 'it is given him from above.'

Nor can we join in the conclusion of the philosophical Watts and others, that Evil Spirits, had they the capabilities ascribed to them, would cause, to a far greater extent than is actually experienced, terror and distress to the human race. It does not follow, that they 'would always be making wretched mischief in this natural world, and overspreading it with calamities and desolations, with plagues and fire, with earthquakes and misery and death, if they had an innate and natural power to move bodies.' Clothe them with strength superior to what they are fancied to possess; give them ability to wield the elements on even a larger scale than has been supposed, or, by tainting the air, to produce pestilence or other contagious distempers: what then? That the amount of physical suffering in the ways, or from the sources, specified, would be dreadfully augmented? No: it might not much exceed, in measure or variety, the aggregate of woes at present endured.



Such an opinion or conjecture, indeed, some may think contrary to all probability. For it, however, two reasons, in particular, may be assigned.

The first is derived from the *chief desire and aim* of Satan. These are, unquestionably, not to injure the body, but to ruin the soul; not to subject to external pain or loss, but to entice to the commission of sin. The latter being his principal object, it may be presumed, that his sagacity will be exercised in selecting the means most likely to promote it. These may not always be the deprivation of good, or the infliction of evil. The end may sometimes be attained more effectually by prosperity, which has an unhappy tendency to foster, in the depraved heart, pride and impiety, forgetfulness of God, and haughtiness toward man. The grand consideration is, how the greatest amount of harm may be done to individuals, or in what way they may be most extensively and permanently injured. Compared, then, with the miseries of spiritual enslavement, or the agonies of perdition, what are all bodily distresses or temporal calamities? On this dread consummation, involving evils without parallel and without remedy, the heart of the Demon is mainly set; and to the securing of it, the appliances of his matchless craft and energy are specially directed.

The next reason is, that Diabolical Agency is under Divine control. The one, as a force antagonistic to the other, is utterly powerless. Invest it, in imagination,

with the highest degree of potency competent to a created nature, still it falls infinitely short of Omnipotence. Nothing, therefore, can it effect contrary to the pleasure of the Supreme. He is 'wise in heart, and mighty in strength.' His rule is absolute, and His operation irresistible. To contravene the plans, or thwart the procedure, of such a Being, is a project as impracticable to 'the gates of hell,' as to the inferior combinations of earth: despite the devices and efforts of both, His 'counsel shall stand,' and His purposes shall be executed.

Indeed, the Spirits of darkness are, though in a sense and a character very different, the ministers of Jehovah, as really as the Sons of light. The latter are the loyal, who 'do His commandments, hearkening to the voice of His Word:': the former are the disobedient, who are actuated by the motives, and influenced by the views, of rebels. The second, nevertheless, bad as are their principles, subserve, equally with the first, the designs and ends of His moral administration. Diametrically opposite, however, are the feelings cherished, and the courses pursued, in the two cases. In both, the intentions of Heaven are fulfilled: but, in the one, intentionally, or from choice and with delight; in the other, unconsciously and involuntarily,—or in virtue of a power, to which all things are possible, counterworking the activity, and 'turning into foolishness' the wisdom, of Devils. By their instrumentality, good is

accomplished, though they 'mean not so, neither is it in their heart to do so.'

It is thus that the Almighty Ruler, by controlling or restraining their Agency, 'makes the wrath of' Demons 'to praise Him.' It is thus, too, that He defends from their assaults, or delivers from their power, the feeble descendants of the Pair, whom, in the morning of life, their subtilty beguiled. Stronger than we, they should otherwise prevail continually to vex, or speedily to destroy us. Subjected to their mercy, we could expect only misery: our condition, so pitiable and helpless, would be but faintly, though not unaptly, imaged by that of the lamb in the paw of the lion or the clutches of the bear. But He, whose creative goodness endowed them with superior capacity, determines the mode, the occasions, and the scope, of its exercise. In no case, dare they transgress the mandates of His authority: by no artifice of cunning, no outburst of violence, can they exceed the limits prescribed, or infringe the inhibitions imposed, by His sovereignty. In righteousness He allows them, as He does human oppressors, to go certain lengths, and even occasionally to work enormities; but He also, in mercy, forbids them to touch this or that, to harass beyond a certain point, or in a particular way. The curbs and interdicts of His holy Providence they constantly feel, so that in nothing can they, with all their innate ability, successfully resist His will. Necessity is laid upon them, however reluctantly, to

submit: nor is there a doubt, that did they, in a single instance, prove refractory, or stubbornly essay to follow their own inclination, mortifying failure, or their being remanded into 'the deep,' would display and punish the madness of the attempt.

Upon God, then, depends our safety: 'from Him cometh our help.' To His interposition it is owing that we do not, physically as well as mentally, if not also morally and spiritually, suffer to a far greater extent than is verified by actual experience, from the envy and vindictiveness of fallen Angels. To His influence, therefore, which, though secret, is efficacious,—an influence, to which their united force is no counterpoise, and opposes no difficulty: to it let us thankfully ascribe our deliverance from the perils, in which their cruelty would involve us; our protection from their attacks on person, connections, or estate. 'Jehovah is thy Keeper; Jehovah is thy shade upon thy right hand. Jehovah shall preserve thee from all ill; He shall preserve thy soul. Jehovah shall preserve thy going out, and thy coming in, from this time forth, and even for ever more.'

O man, 'under the shadow of the Almighty,' whom, or what, needest thou fear? His omnipotence is thy security: 'His truth shall be thy shield and buckler.' Threaten what may, 'there shall no evil befall thee.' Should Satan, 'desire to have thee,' like Peter, 'that he may sift thee as wheat;' should he seek to smite thee,

like Job, with loss of health, of family, of substance: remember that, *without an express permission*, he cannot harm thee. Thy Guardian, who is near, will rebuke the Adversary. In this Gracious One put thy trust. When invisible foes assail, 'He shall give His Angels charge over thee. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder; the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under foot.' Nay, malicious as are the designs of Spiritual Wickednesses, and grievous as their annoyances and buffetings are now felt to be, their hostility will, through the mysterious operation of Him who makes evil the minister of good, prove, to every member of 'the election of grace,' not injurious, but beneficial, in the issue. That such will be the final result, He who 'knows the end from the beginning' assures us: and the discovery of the process, so strange, so skilful, by which it has been gained, may be among the revelations of eternity.

These things being so, the *extent* of Satanic Agency, whether greater or less, appears to be a question of comparatively little moment. Nor does it seem to matter much, whether the malady that debilitates the frame, or deranges the intellect,—whether the commotion in the air, or the trembling in the ground, that is followed by distressful consequences: whether either is viewed as proceeding immediately from God; or as produced by the intervention of Demoniacal influence. In the latter case, though not coming *directly* from His

hand, it is referable to Him as the ultimate Cause. That it is connected, proximately, with Infernal instrumentality, affects not our assertion. Bad in principle and aim, as well as in tendency, and, therefore, implying criminality, it is the object of His high disapprobation. Nevertheless, what is indicative of extreme depravity, the offspring of rancorous malevolence, He has been pleased to permit, though a volition could have prevented it. He permits, too, not simply its occurrence, but its concomitants and effects.

Wherefore, is it asked? Not being informed of them, we pretend not to divine the reasons: though it is believed, that a fuller disclosure would enable us to reconcile, with spotless purity and unalterable rectitude, the existence both of moral evil in general, and of Diabolical temptation in particular. Our remark is merely this, that, while in no sense the *Author* of either, but regarding both with abhorrence, the King Eternal has, for purposes of His own glory, not divulged to us, *tolerated* their introduction and continuance: whereas His providence, including in the comprehensive range of its governance all beings and all actions, could easily stay their prevalence, as it could have barred their origination. In other words, what he cannot but hate, God, for sufficient reasons, does not hinder. *Permission* we must beware of confounding with *approval*: the two are quite distinct; the former not

necessarily implying the latter, but perfectly compatible, in certain cases, with its opposite.

Keeping in view the distinction pointed out, let us impress our minds with the *universality* of the Divine Agency. Perpetually is it felt within, above, around. Nature, through every province, and in every element, owns the dominion of her Lord. Of the properties with which His wisdom endued her, He controls and regulates the workings. Her laws are His 'ordinances;' her operations, His doings. He 'looketh on the earth, and it trembles: He toucheth the hills, and they smoke.' He 'covereth the heavens with clouds; holdeth the wind in His fists; stilleth the noise of the seas. The God of glory thundereth. The voice of Jehovah is powerful; the voice of Jehovah is full of majesty.' Creation, in all its movements, attests the presiding energy of the Mind that framed the stupendous whole. As without Him nothing exists, so without Him nothing *acts*. 'Fire and hail, snow and vapour, stormy wind fulfil His word.' But they 'know not the voice' of creatures; and neither, like servants obedient to the orders of a master, come they at the bidding, nor go at the command, of the mightiest more than of the meanest.

To the domain of Providence, the same remark applies. Here, equally as in the department of Nature, 'all things are of God.' The course of events, or the infinity of influences unceasingly at work in the moral

world, where causes are immediately followed by effects, which again become causes in rapid and endless series: these, with the corresponding complexity and multifariousness of their bearings on human character and well-being, in their individual or their social aspects, are the disposals of 'the Blessed and Only Potentate.' To Him, primarily, we owe the mercies that crown our lot; for, in whatever way, or through whatever channel, obtained, they are as really as if bestowed in a more direct manner, the grants of His goodness. By His wisdom, too, our trials are appointed; and with as much exactness as He 'weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure,' does He determine their number, variety, and amount. 'Shall there be evil'—affliction—'in a city, and *the Lord* hath not done it?' To rebellious Israel He said in anger, 'Thou shalt serve those enemies whom *the Lord thy God* shall send against thee.' Every incident, pleasurable or painful,—every dispensation, prosperous or adverse, merciful or punitive,—is the appointment of Him, who, 'of His own will,' gives health or sickness, quietness or trouble. In both cases, His hand is alike to be marked and acknowledged; and, while devoutly recognising it, we are admonished, in the one case to offer thanks to His Name, and in the other to bow with submission to His stroke.

That Sovereign Agency, to which are attributable;



ultimately, the good and the evil that diversify the lot of man, exerts, over 'the Devil and his angels,' an influence no less efficacious. What their actual ability is, we know not. It may, or may not, capacitate them, to some extent, to wield the elements of Nature, or to bend its operations into subserviency to their designs. It may, or may not, enable them, to a degree truly appalling, to spread, by deadly plague or infectious epidemic, 'wasting and destruction,' to enervate the body or unhinge the mind. Suppose it naturally competent to these things, yet, without an express license from the Fountain of authority, not one of them can they do. He who sits upon the throne, binds or looses them at pleasure. Himself, 'the Perfection of Beauty, Infinite Holiness, and essential Love,' they hate; but with his ALMIGHTINESS they dare not contend. When He abridges their liberty, what avails the vastness of their resources? When He lays on them the prohibition addressed to human persecutors, 'Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm;' they have no alternative, how intense soever the rankling of their spite, but to refrain.

To prevent misapprehension, we take leave, in closing this train of reflection, to repeat, that we elevate not Satan to an independent position. The power attributed to him is not arbitrary or uncontrollable, but finite; such only as is competent to a creature, high in rank, yet limited in nature and energy. His Agency,

in our view, includes not the *miraculous*. Indeed, a MIRACLE, in the proper sense of the term, we conceive him to be, in his own strength, as incapable of performing as we are. Nor is there the slightest evidence, that God ever *empowered* him to do one; or, which is equivalent, wrought any through his instrumentality, far less at his request, or in compliance with his wish. So to designate certain wonderful acts ascribed to him in Scripture,—even the grander of the scenes, the more marvellous of the operations, in which, according to the Testimony, he played the chief part,—were grossly to misunderstand or misapply language. Vast, however, may be the natural ability of the Demon: nay, so superhuman may be its measure, as to capacitate him, when not laid under inhibition, to effect what should fill our inferior race with amazement. Puny mortals, astounded at its manifestations, might fancy they saw in it ‘the finger of God.’ But, in this they should be egregiously mistaken: what they, in their ignorance or rashness, called *miraculous*, being, in reality, only proofs of transcendent might, indications of a potency far exceeding that of man.

Very different from those supported by the two Writers named, are the views here expressed. The collision we regret, but cannot help. Of either of the Worthies, few have a higher appreciation than we of the moral excellence, while none can be more ready to acknowledge the solidity of their understandings, or

the general accuracy and Scripturalness of their sentiments. Of the stars that, in later times, have illumined and adorned the spiritual firmament, we regard them as, if not ranking with the brightest, among the clearest in their lustre, and the steadiest and safest in their guidance. Now that He, who gave them their radiance, and placed them in their orbits, has transferred them to a higher sphere, where they shine in glory, long may an admiring posterity hold them in grateful remembrance! We should deem it a favourable augury indeed, one of the best tokens of good to our country or age, if the religious tenets propounded in the edifying pages of a Watts and a Wardlaw were patiently studied, rightly digested, and, upon the whole, commonly received. But, with respect to the point in debate, as well as some others, we cannot subscribe to their statements. To us the defence seems more able and plausible than sound; the reasoning, more ingenious and eloquent than conclusive. For the agitation of spirit mentioned by the one, the cause assigned we consider insufficient: still less inclined are we to assent to the dogma advanced by the other, that Spirits cannot act upon matter. Before we can coincide with either, or alter the view which reflection and inquiry have led us to adopt, we must see their respective positions established by more satisfactory arguments.

This language, it is hoped, will not be thought pre-

sumptuous. The charge we repel. That, touching motive or intention, it is groundless, 'conscience bears us witness : ' nor can it be shown to be applicable in fact. For the mature judgment of intelligent piety, far be it from us to express indifference or disregard ; but neither can we yield to it blind or implicit submission. In matters of religion, whether relating to doctrine or duty, we recognise but one AUTHORITY,—the Canon of Inspiration. Concerning points of this nature, the mortal exists not, who may 'have dominion over our faith.' Here, we 'call no man master ; ' remembering that 'One is our Master, even Christ.' What He teaches, it is incumbent upon us, without cavil or question, to believe. Not so, however, in reference to the opinions of our fellows, on any topic embraced within the compass of Theology. Gifted or enlightened as they may be, they are fallible, and with all their caution, all their assiduity, all their studiousness to avoid error, may occasionally fall into mistakes, or cling tenaciously to conceits. It thus becomes our duty, while it is equally our privilege, to 'try the spirits.' But, if the 'spirits,' why not also the *doctrines*? These ought to be examined with candour, yet with scrupulous care ; subjected, without prejudice or partiality, to the Divine ordeal ; and, according as they do, or do not, stand that only legitimate and supreme test, be received or rejected. This we hold to be a duty, the neglect of which involves criminality. It is

also a privilege, on which we set high value, and which we are bold to assert. It is a sacred trust, which fidelity and interest require to be preserved inviolate; a precious possession, of which neither fraud nor force should be suffered to deprive us.

Using this right ourselves, impressed with its importance to growth in sound knowledge or healthy piety, and aware of the evils, so manifold and serious, springing from practical forgetfulness of it; we would urge its exercise upon all whom our suasion may induce, or our reproof shame. Let that exercise be sober and discreet, yet resolute and manly: then who is entitled to find fault? Know, O man, whosoever thou art that objectest, that although an Oracle to others, thou art no Daniel to us. Assume what authority, and speak with what decision, thou pleasest, think not to fetter our understandings, or to lord it over our consciences. 'Judge ye what I say,' is the injunction delivered by one who spake under a Divine afflatus, and by Divine direction. It is alike reasonable and imperative, prescribing the course which the disciples of a heavenly Teacher are bound invariably to follow. Obedient to Apostolic command, we shall, as we best can, weigh in the balances of the Sanctuary, opinions and judgments regarding any article of the Christian creed. What signifies it to us that they bear the imprimatur of Bishop or Doctor, of Pope or Prelate, of Synod or Council, or that they purport to come from

Rome or Geneva? Their origin or authorship concerns us not: our business is, simply and exclusively, with their orthodoxy. Sitters in 'Moses' seat,' or usurpers of Peter's chair, may call this presumption. Be it so: we are not careful to answer.

Not to prolong this digression, we conclude with counselling all to follow the example. Alas! that by Protestants of every Communion the counsel should be so much needed. Why deplore the mental vassalage of the Papist, and submit passively to a vassalage of the same kind? How inconsistent, to repudiate the name, and abjure the jurisdiction, of Rome, yet cherish the spirit, and wear the badge, of Rome! Scorn to be 'in bondage to any man.' Give unquestioning credence neither to the nostrums of arrogant pretension, nor to the impositions of sanctified genius. Test sentiments and principles by the touchstone of the Word. Freedom of inquiry is your Master's bequest. What a boon! Prize it; hold it fast; use, without abusing, it. Be it equally your endeavour and your prayer, to 'stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free. But liberty, remember, is not licentiousness. Caution is required, in examining opinions. Comely is humility in the seeker after Truth. Repudiate dictation on points of doctrine: spurn the trammels of authority in the province of conscience. But respect the judgment of the wise. Haste not to differ: be slow to condemn. 'Prove all things: hold fast that which is good.'

## CHAPTER VII.

## Addenda.

FIRST: Regarding the invisible Beings of whom we have been discoursing, it has been asked, Are they unallied to materialism, like the Creator, who is a Spirit, a pure and infinite Intelligence? Or, Are they linked to peculiar species of organizations, ethereal and refined as the light? In other words, Are they, like the human soul, simple substances, possessed only of a *mental* constitution, endowed merely with the attributes of reason and affection? Or, Are they furnished with such perfect vehicles as Omnipotence is competent to frame, and which neither impede the velocity of their movements, nor hinder the ceaseless activity of their energies?

This is an inquiry more curious than profitable. Like many a problem, that has engaged much profound but useless thought, it may exercise the researches of the ingenious or the meditative. Ineffectual, however, will be their investigation, misdirected their attention; for no intenseness of study, no penetration of sagacity, can enable unaided wisdom to solve it. About a point

so unedifying and mysterious, we forbear to speculate. Certainty is unattainable, where there is no sure guidance,—at best but doubtful inferences from detached expressions, perhaps, by a little straining, susceptible of a double rendering. On such grounds, it were unwarrantable to found a decision: from such premises, to draw a positive conclusion.

Of the two opinions mentioned, we espouse the former. The latter we should be disposed to pronounce, for aught we can see, a harmless fancy. It clashes with the common belief. To some imaginative theorizers, it may wear an air of plausibility: but the question is, 'What saith the Scripture?' That it has the slightest foundation in the Word, cannot be shown, and will hardly be maintained. To repeated statements of Inspiration, it is apparently contradictory; that it is so in reality, however, is not asserted. Its abettors we do not directly charge with unsoundness. The correctness of their view we dispute, at least do not concede; yet, clearly to disprove it, might be found more difficult than those who account it fanciful or untenable apprehend.

Angels, it is true, are styled 'Spirits.' The title is applicable, equally to the fallen and the holy: both belonging, originally, to the same orders, and, consequently, participating the same constitutional or inherent qualities. But, who will aver, that they may not be invested with garments, or outward appendages, or



call them what you will, such as have been described? May not these organisms or vestments be so rarefied, so attenuated, as to be invisible to the most acute or piercing-eyed of embodied creatures? May they not entitle them, in strict propriety of speech, to the appellation, '*spiritual?*' The term, it is granted, when so employed, must be taken in a sense somewhat qualified, and inferior to that in which it is used in reference to the Supreme; who is in the highest, and, perhaps, in a *peculiar* acceptation of the epithet, IMMATERIAL.

It is worthy of notice here, that an inspired Apostle has so designated the *raised bodies* of the saints at the last day. Wonderful is the change they are destined to undergo. For, not only will they be purified from the earthliness now cleaving to them, freed from every element of infirmity, every tendency to dissolution or decay: they shall also be impressed with a beauty, and endued with susceptibilities of action and endurance, of which it is impossible, in this state of being, to have aught approaching a just conception. It is understood, however, that the bodies of the *resurrection*, whatever be the extent of their transmutation, whatever the degree of their refinement, will be far less etherealized or sublimated, than the imagined Angelic forms of which some speak.

To the former, in virtue of the new principles—the power, immortality, and glory—imparted to them, Paul, under the direction of the Holy Ghost, gives the

designation *spiritual*. He thus distinguishes them from the 'flesh and blood,' or the present gross and corruptible frames, which, it is affirmed, 'cannot inherit the kingdom of God:' the fitness or congruity of things, independently of the Divine decree, requiring a meetness or adaptation, to that abode of perfection, of the outward, as well as of the inward, part of our compound nature.' 'There is a natural body, and there is a *spiritual* body.' The expression, it is obvious, imports an alteration, not of *substance*, but of constitution and appearance; not the conversion of one *essence* into another, the transmuting of matter into spirit, but the reviviscence or resuscitation, in a vastly superior condition, of what had been resolved into dust: its assimilation to a nobler pattern, its endowment with qualities indescribably excellent and sublime, its investiture with a comeliness, a bloom and vigour, before unknown.

But, on this debatable point, which may be thought more a matter of presumptuous speculation, than of 'godly edifying,' we make no further comment. It is, therefore, dismissed with the simple intimation of our view; a view, which we, in common with the many, hold very decidedly. Its opposite may involve no serious error, while its falseness might not be so easily established; yet, to us it seems not to derive the smallest countenance from Revelation, if, indeed, even from Reason. But, what the question has to do with

the Existence, or the Agency, of Spiritual Intelligences, —its connection with the ministrations of holy, or the temptations of fallen, Angels, is not very obvious. In no other light can we regard the notion than as a suggestion of the imagination; an hypothesis, requiring the corroboration of proof, but in support of which no evidence, no Scriptural or rational argument, can be adduced. It is one of those dreams, or airy speculations, in which minds of a certain cast or temperament are too prone to indulge.

Akin to the fancy specified, is another that has sometimes been broached. We refer to the opinion, entertained by certain intruders into the unseen, regarding the condition of the soul during the state intermediate between death and the resurrection. On quitting the body, they would have us believe, it does not remain *naked*, but is provided with a suitable appurtenance or integument, a sort of *ethereal form*, which it will tenant till the period of reunion with its revived companion. This opinion we regret to find adopted by a living Writer of acknowledged genius and piety, who, with his accustomed earnestness and eloquence, has laboured to support it. We cannot help deeming it a chimera; a notion, unwarranted by the only sure and decisive authority. Search all Scripture from beginning to end, and you will not, we are persuaded, be able to point out a single text capable, save by the utmost violence, of being twisted into a favourable testimony. Every

attempt, therefore, to recommend or popularize such a fiction, will, it is hoped, utterly fail.

In one of our Paraphrases, the following stanzas occur :

‘ We know, that when the soul, uncloth’d,  
 Shall from this body fly,  
 Twill animate *a purer frame*  
 With life that cannot die.’

Here, the words seem to convey, whether intentionally or not, the very idea to which exception has just been taken. If so, the poet must have misapprehended the import of the passage. The Apostle speaks of no such organism,—a substitute, superior but temporary, for the ‘earthly tabernacle’—destined for the residence of the disembodied spirit. The allusion is, evidently, to Heaven, which is represented as the ‘Father’s house,’ ‘a city which hath foundations,’ ‘the city of the Great King.’ There, to the reverent adorers, He manifests Himself in the perfection of His beauty and the riches of His goodness, delighting their eyes with the visions of His glory, and gladdening their hearts with the fruitions of His love. The opinion, in short, by whomsoever maintained, with whatever ingenuity or plausibility advocated, we reject, because we do not see it to be confirmed by a ‘Thus saith the Lord:’ and on points of religious doctrine, we can accept no views or tenets, which appear not to be taught, expressly or by inference, in the Divine Standard of faith. On a theme

so intangible, so mysterious, 'What thinkest thou?' is a question not to be entertained, and the presumption of its proposer merits rebuke. 'How readest thou?' is the fitting inquiry; and by the answer, in every instance, belief is to be regulated.

Again: Do any inquire concerning Evil Spirits, Where, on availing themselves of the Divine permission to visit the Earth, are their favourite haunts? What are the places, which they may be supposed mostly to frequent? To such a query, no answer can be given but one expressive of our ignorance. Their appropriate receptacle is HELL; that 'place of torment,' whither, on their revolt, they were expelled from the mansions of innocence. Banished from the presence of their Maker, who pronounced them accursed, and the companionship of more worthy compeers, by whom, from being objects of fraternal regard, as alike lovely and beloved, they were viewed with abhorrence as heinous offenders, who had incurred the dread awards of righteous retribution; they were doomed, under the frown of an angry God, to perpetual exile in this abode of 'outer darkness' and irremediable despair.

But, who can say *where* Hell is situated? Whether it is comparatively near, or afar off: whether it is within, or beyond, the precincts of the Solar System: whether it is some vast but dismal region, in the centre, or towards the outskirts, of creation: this is to us unknown. Equally mysterious is it, whether there be *one*

realm of perdition or more; a *general prison* for all the disloyal of the Universe, or a plurality of penal territories, with their respective complements of suffering and hopeless depravity. Reflect on the immeasurable extent of the Moral Empire; on the incomputable myriads of its subjects, and even the numerous orders, or gradations of intelligence, of which they probably consist; on the possibility of the spirit of rebellion having, through the instigation of the prime 'movers of sedition,' infected various and remote provinces. To those who duly consider all this, the latter alternative may, perhaps, appear not unlikely; though, in the absence of positive information, we would be understood as holding neither the affirmative nor the negative.

But, however the case actually stands, we speak, at present, only of *the Demons* alluded to in Scripture, as the betrayers and final associates of the condemned among men, and of *the locality*, that fathomless abyss, appointed for the common and permanent residence of both: for of the wicked, it is said, they shall 'go into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels.' This region, which is their proper domicile, the congenial abode assigned to them, by punitive justice, as the recompense of their deserts, the sovereignty of God permits, temporarily at least, the Agents of mischief to quit. Hence the excursions which, in smaller bands or in legions, they have been in the habit of making to our world, during the period of its occupaney

by the human family, whose primogenitors, in life's early morn, their Prince succeeded in seducing into disobedience; and, through their fall, the whole race, who, represented by them in their probationary state, became necessarily involved in the fatal consequences of their first transgression.

The question, then, is, Where, on such occasions, are the chief resorts of impure Spirits? We read of one of them leaving a man for a brief season, and, after a range through *dry places*, returning with 'seven others more wicked than himself.' Are we to suppose, that he roamed in search of them through lonely wilds, or sequestered retreats, where, judging from experience, he deemed it likely some of them might be lodging? The supposition wants the semblance of probability. The language is evidently figurative; and to interpret it literally, were to stagger sober reason, by affixing to it a meaning, which no other statement of Holy Writ sanctions. These auxiliaries, wherever found, would be too earnest in their Master's service to be loitering in empty spaces. To have wandered in quest of them, therefore, through barren lands, the domain only of noxious reptiles and beasts of prey, would, we may be assured, have been a fruitless toil,—a folly, of which their companion could not have been guilty.

What, then, it may be asked, are we to understand by 'dry places?' The expression, we answer, whatever be its import, warrants not the inference, that, during

their occasional sojourns on the earth, Fiends choose for their habitations dreary deserts and frightful solitudes, or scenes devoid of human dwellings. This we apprehend to be as vain a fancy as that of the Heathen Mythology, which stored, with their presiding Genii, hill and vale, grove and fountain; or that of the vulgar Superstition, which invests, with imaginary terrors, particular spots or tenements, as haunted by the shades of the departed. Evil Ones, depend upon it, are chargeable with no such misspending of time and energy. The sphere of their work will be that of their *presence*. 'Wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together.'

Are there portions of the globe, then, peculiarly infested by the incursions of Visitants from the pit? These we should conceive to be, not the wilderness, but the city; not thinly, but densely, populated districts. Surely, they may be presumed to be the localities, where human beings are congregated into masses; or, where the unprincipled meet in conclave to plot wickedness, or the cruel combine to execute schemes of blood; or where, from talent or learning, individuals possess a reputation, or from station or office, command an influence, which, through the excitement of their ruling passion, may be turned to iniquitous ends,—purposes of fraud or violence on a more than ordinary scale.

Accordingly, the Angel who foredoomed spiritual Babylon, represented her as 'the *habitation* of Devils,



and the *hold* of every foul Spirit, and a *cage* of every unclean and hateful bird.' But, even the holiest assemblies are not exempt from the intrusion of these vile Apostates. Thus we read, once and again, that 'on a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, SATAN came also among them.' Our Lord, too, in His explanation of the Parable of the Sower, affirms: 'When any one heareth the Word, and understandeth it not, then *cometh the Wicked One*, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart—taketh away the Word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.'

Such statements intimate, clearly though figuratively, that no scene is too hallowed, no presence too august, no exercise too sacred, for the encroachments of Devils. Equally in the service of the sanctuary, in the devotion of the family, and in the meditations of the closet, their hateful influence is to be dreaded. At all seasons, on all occasions, in all places,—whether engaging in the solemnities of secret or social religion,—the worshipper is liable to the assaults of subtile beguilers, who, because unobserved, are not the less to be feared. May it not be owing, partly, to their temptations, that the saint is, at times, 'almost in all evil in the midst of the congregation and the assembly;' that the preaching of the Word so often fails to produce salutary or abiding impressions; that promising appearances not seldom prove transient as 'the morning cloud, or the

early dew?' Now, they strive to hinder the effect of the Truth, by diverting attention from it, or fostering prejudice against it: anon, they seek to plunge into distress, by exciting gloomy suspicions, or to drive to despair, by injecting blasphemous thoughts, which, like 'fiery darts,' inflame and distract.

When the Scriptures are read, or their contents are expounded, light is dispensed; light, more precious than that of the orb of day,—more grateful to the understanding than the medium of sight to the eye. Some, by such means, are savingly illumined: others, enjoying the same ministrations, continue in the darkness of unbelief. Whence the difference? The fact is matter of constant occurrence and familiar observation: how is it to be accounted for? The effect, in the former case, proceeds from the gracious operation of the Spirit, whose efficient influence alone removes obstructions, and secures the entrance of the sacred ray. That the result, in the latter case, is traceable so far to the interference of an opposite Agency, who shall deny? This, undoubtedly, is one principal cause; though others—chiefly ignorance, prejudice, pride, self-righteousness, the world—must not be overlooked. Here, in part at least, is the solution of the mystery: 'The God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into them.'

## CHAPTER VIII.

*Addenda—continued.*

OF the malice and envy of Devils, mankind are the objects. To draw them into sin, and eventually into perdition, is their aim. Those whom they cannot ruin, they harass or pollute; while their willing vassals are kept, as by the force of a mystic spell, in 'the bonds of iniquity.' With this view, principally if not solely, they wend their way to the Earth. Surely, then, wherever the victims of their spite are most numerous, there the prospect offers of their achieving, proportionally, more victories and greater success. There, therefore, it may be expected, that their visitations will be most frequently repeated, and their efforts most energetically exerted.

That Devils, when rendezvousing in our world, do occasionally withdraw into howling wastes, or 'solitary places,' is not denied. But why? May it not be, singly or by few, to practise their skill on some misguided or soured recluse, who has made the wilderness, or the cloistered cell, his dwelling? After him, we can believe, they repair into the monastery, or 'parched land.

and not inhabited;’ like the ‘wayfaring man, who turneth aside to tarry for a night.’ There, however, instead of indulging in indolent repose, they are busy in scheming, or active in working. Their design is, to strengthen the delusions of the fanatic, whom a superstitious piety has enamoured with the austerities of a hermit’s life, or fired with the passion for a hermit’s fame: or to stimulate the antipathies of the misanthrope, whom disgust with the society of his kind has forced into seclusion. Such withdrawments, however, may be assumed to be the exception, not the rule, and invariably to accomplish a purpose.

If, then, it is asked, Where are Demons to be found? We answer, wherever, within the circumference of the globe, human beings reside; with the despot and the zealot, the scoffer and the Pharisee; in the Cabinet and the Senate, the Forum and the Exchange. If it is inquired, What are the places which they *mostly* frequent? We point, without hesitation, to the spots tenanted by the larger groups of sinful mortality: to the haunts of lewdness and debauchery, where sensuality riots without shame or fear: to the cabals of intrigue or violence, of designing jesuitism or aspiring ambition, where, without scruple, knavery and oppression sacrifice, to unprincipled selfishness, truth and righteousness: to the localities notorious for the prevalence of a false theology or a lax morality, of superstition or idolatry, of vice or profaneness. There, most abound the appropriate

materials on which to work: there, peculiarly, is the sphere of their corrupting agency: there, stimulated by the hope of success, they ply with double energy the provocatives to boldness in irreligion, impiety, and crime.

But these, it has been remarked, though the principal, are not the only, resorts of Devils. The saint, as well as the sinner, they assail; for even in the former, who, whatever be his attainments in holiness, still bears about a 'body of death,' they find something on which to operate. No individual, in solitude or in company, is exempt from their temptations; no place, however hallowed, affords a secure asylum against their intrusion; no season is so solemn, as to deter their approach. Engagements the most sacred, exercises the most devotional, are liable to be blemished by the unholy thoughts and imaginations, which the polluting suggestions of these defilers excite. They may follow us into the sanctuary, or invade the privacy of the closet, or be present in the scene, and the hour, of retirement for spiritual converse and self-examination; and thus interrupt that fixedness of heart, that concentration of mind, so befitting, so essential to the right discharge of the duty, when we essay to join in public worship, or to offer secret prayer, or to reflect seriously on ourselves or Divine things. Nay, with a malevolence that horrifies, and with designs alike cruel and wicked, they may even attend the bed on which lies the dying believer, convulsed with pain, or prostrate with weakness, and

whence his soul is on the eve of her departure to glory. On all such occasions, then, how suitable, how necessary, is the petition, 'Deliver us from the Evil One!'

The propriety, the necessity, of this prayer will appear with stronger evidence, if we consider what has been already alluded to,—their fleetness of transference. A passage strikingly illustrative of this, occurs in one of the Old Testament Scriptures. The Prophet, in the solitude of his chamber, had been 'praying, and confessing his sin, and the sin of his people Israel, and presenting his supplication before the Lord his God, and for the holy mountain of his God.' He relates, '*while I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications, the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee.*' Of the vastness of the space that intervenes between heaven and earth, we cannot form even the vaguest idea; yet, this immense distance the celestial messenger must, according to the inspired account, have travelled in the course of a few minutes. Here was a speed, with which the velocity of light admits not of comparison; a speed, of which the mind has no conception, and more resembling the quickness, the instantaneousness, of thought than the rapidity of the subtlest agent in nature. It is true, the Angel named

was one, and perhaps belonged to the highest rank, of the Unfallen. But, what reason is there to suppose, that *their* natural powers of flight are superior to those possessed by the rebellious of the same orders; or that the latter may not be capable, when desirous and permitted, of moving to and fro with similar expedition?

Connect, with the other qualities which we are led to ascribe to them, that fleetness of transition, that amazing faculty of speed, of which Daniel records an instance so confirmatory; think of the quickness with which they may go from heart to heart, or from scene to scene; in what an almost incredibly short time they may visit, successively, persons or localities far remote, never satisfied, never wearying, never intermitting their efforts to inveigle and contaminate: then, not to speak of the original superiority and high improvement of their powers, consider what are their facilities, and of what opportunities they can avail themselves, for the commission of evil. How suddenly, as well as secretly, may they assail with their solicitations, and, ere their hapless victims are aware, get the advantage of them! Surely, it will be allowed, that there is just cause for apprehension. Instead of troubling ourselves with 'foolish questions' about the usual resorts, or the favourite haunts, of Beelzebub and his accomplices, let us, remembering the celerity of their movements, be impressed with the need of constant vigilance, in union with habitual 'supplication in the Spirit.'

Is there, then, any escaping the pursuit of these Tempters? Where can be found a secure retreat, a sanctuary of safety? In the desert? In the secret chamber? In 'the place of the holy?' No: to their intrusion equally accessible are solitude and society, the scene of devotion, and the mart of commerce. Go where, consort with whom, engage in what, we please, thither may they follow us. How expeditiously, too, may they break in upon our privacy! True, it was an Angel of light who flew with the inconceivable swiftness, intimated by the ancient Oracle. But, may not an Angel of darkness, endowed with similar powers and activities, be capable of the same fleetness: Satan, in celerity of transport, equal Gabriel? How distant soever from us now, some of the Fraternity of Evil may, ere we are aware, be present with us. Whether, as we believe, they are naked Spirits, or, as others fancy, they animate frames finer than ether, matters little: in an incredibly short space of time, with a rapidity of flight outstripping the motion of the solar beam, they may dart athwart half the circumference of the globe.

But, if impure Malignants are thus continually on the alert, it is our consolation to know, that there are also benevolent Ones who are no less vigilant. If the former are of untold and incomputable multitude, the latter, there is reason to think, are far more in number — 'ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of



thousands.' If those are great in intellect and strength, —crafty in planning, and vigorous in executing; these are at least their compeers—certainly not inferior either in wisdom or might. If the first, insatiate and restless as the ravening prowlers of the wood, ever roam, with malicious intent, through the habitations of mortality; the second, perceiving the dangers, and pitying the infirmities, of assaulted weakness, kindly interpose, at the proper crises, their suitable and friendly aid. Both are Watchers, whose eye sleeps not, whose energy wearies not: both are constantly on the look, the former, to seize every available mean or opportunity of hurt; the latter, to counteract their injurious operations, and defeat their base designs, by admonishing the heedless, or succouring the needy.

That, anciently, celestial Intelligences did, on many occasions, render such services to men, is Divinely attested. Now, indeed, that the age of miracles is past, and a Dispensation so different from the Patriarchal or the Jewish has been introduced, they do not, as in earlier times, appear in visible form. But, not the less real or beneficent may be their agency. Still, though undiscernible by the corporeal eye, may they perform offices similar to those which they discharged, when manifested in the semblance of humanity. 'They are all ministering Spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation.' They 'condescend to men of low estate;' disdain not to wait upon the children of

poverty, who are children of piety; and, on receiving a commission, direct their course as cheerfully to the cottage as to the palace. Often, to their seasonable, though unobserved, interference may the saints be indebted for important favours. Hence, not improbably, certain instantaneous impressions, opportune suggestions, salutary monitions, with remarkable deliverances, unexpected changes of affairs, prosperous issues or successful events, for which they who experience them are unable satisfactorily to account, but which, on the hypothesis stated, admit of a rational explanation.

Here, though it be to diverge, we may take passing notice of a high and interesting probability, suggested by the train of previous remark. To Superior Natures, both obedient and rebellious, our world is, perhaps beyond any spot within the compass of creation, the scene of absorbing anxiety, and the centre of powerful attraction. To it are constantly drawn, from the two most opposite departments of the Universe, hosts of unembodied Visitants. Hither, on wings swifter than those of the morning, speed Angels from the realms of light, and Devils from the regions of darkness. As their dispositions are contrary, so also are their errands. The former, prompted by the impulses of philanthropy, fly, at the bidding of their Lord, to guard or deliver, to warn, counsel, or encourage, the heirs of glory: the latter, rankling with envy, and intent upon mischief, haste, under the stimulant of malevolence, to entice or

pollute, to afflict or ruin. Hence, coming with designs, and for ends, so conflicting, they may often, in prosecuting their respective objects—the benefit or the injury, physical and moral, of human beings—be brought into direct, personal collision. Like combatants, who strive to counterwork and defeat each other, they seek, the first by righteous, the second by unholy, modes and endeavours, to defeat the efforts, and frustrate the expectations, of one another.

That Man is the cause or occasion, and Earth the arena, of such mysterious strifes; that frequently, on his account, and around his dwelling, Spirit meets Spirit, the good and the evil, in hostile encounter: this we hold to be no dream of superstition, nor a figment of the imagination. That such is the fact, might be inferred from a consideration of the case, as represented in 'the Volume of the Book.' But, apart from all rational views of the matter, so much seems evidently to be implied in the general tenor of the inspired statements regarding it. There are, however, a few Scriptures, which appear to intimate, almost without figure or ambiguity, the conflicts alluded to. Take the two following. The apostle Jude, while cautioning his Christian brethren against the pernicious tenets and corrupt practices of certain vile reprobates, who 'despised dominion, and spake evil of dignities,' enforced his exhortation by an announcement as remarkable as it is instructive. 'Yet Michael the Archangel, when

*contending with the Devil*'—he disputed about the body of Moses—'durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.' The Penman of the Apocalypse, too, when recording 'the visions of the Almighty' with which he had been singularly favoured, mentions one very striking event revealed, by 'the Spirit of prophecy,' to his wondering eye. 'There was war in heaven: *Michael and his angels fought against the Dragon, and the Dragon fought and his angels*: and prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven.'

These passages are adduced, not as subjects for exposition or dissertation, but merely as corroborating our affirmation: in other words, as testimonies, neither forced nor obscure, to the reality of what is alike undiscernible by observation and undiscoverable by reason—an antagonism, in relation to matters involving the interests of humanity, between mighty and adverse, though unseen, Powers. As to Moses, we are told, that, on completing his appointed term of service, he was commanded to ascend one of the peaks of Nebo, whence he should obtain a prospect of the Promised Land, but which, because of his trespass 'at the waters of Meribah-Kadesh,' he should not be permitted to enter. There, at a distance from the thousands of Israel, without friend or attendant, died the venerable saint; 'his eye not dim, nor his natural force abated.' The Lord 'buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over

against Beth-Peor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.'

What led to the contention, between the celestial and infernal Princes, concerning the body of the deceased, is not stated. The *ground* of the controversy, therefore, like its time, its manner, and every other particular, must remain a secret. With all humility, however, we submit whether the dispute might not have had some reference to idolatry: the desire of Michael being to prevent, while that of Satan was to furnish, its occasions or temptations. That such was the merciful design of Jehovah in the miraculous sepulture and concealment of the body, will hardly be doubted by those who reflect on the strange proneness, manifested throughout their history by the tribes of Jacob, to multiply objects of worship. Might not a similar reason have influenced the Archangel to interpose his endeavours to disappoint some artifice, some device of cunning and wickedness, by which the Fiend had hoped to draw Israel into a superstitious and criminal veneration of the relics of the dead? But, whatever there may be in this suggestion, which is offered with diffidence as a conjecture, we call attention, at present, simply to the fact: Michael and the Devil did *contend*—did *dispute*.

On the passage quoted from the Apocalypse, we make no comment by way of exegesis. What was its primary application; what is its exact significance;

what are the import and bearing of the vision, in the narration of which it occurs : these are points, respecting which it were foreign to our purpose to inquire. That they are of no trivial moment, or that the determination of them must be deeply interesting to the Biblical student, is not denied. No doubt, the language cited, which is figurative, must be interpreted consistently with the system of hieroglyphics, the peculiar scheme of sacred signs and symbols, on which the prophetic portion of the Book is constructed. But, however explained or understood, it will be generally allowed, we apprehend, to favour the opinion advanced. The scene so graphically described by the Apostle, may be of no unfrequent repetition. Were the veil that shrouds the invisible withdrawn, and the great dramas in which high Intelligences take the leading parts, disclosed to our sight as they were to his, often might our eyes witness, on a scale of wide diversity, what he was supernaturally enabled to behold. As in the instance immediately in view, so thousands of thousands of times, even in the course of a single generation, much more during the prolonged interval between the Fall and the Judgment, may holy Principalities engage in earnest contest with the Potentates or legions of the pit : the former, in congruity with their pure and benevolent natures, zealous to promote the dominion of righteousness, love, and peace ; the latter, in accordance with their extreme sinfulness and malignity, bent on uphold-

ing the throne of iniquity, and perpetuating the reign of irreligion and discord.

Solemn yet stirring is the thought, that our world should be the theatre of contentions, of the kind, and for the objects, specified. True, sense perceives them not; for how can 'flesh and blood' discern the immaterial? Yet, though unnoticed and unnoticeable, they may, notwithstanding, be as real as those in which the ear is stunned by the 'confused noise of the warrior,' and the eye pained by the sight of 'garments rolled in blood.' What grandeur, surpassing that of the most renowned encounter of man with man, or host with host, pertains to them! How dignified the Disputants, holding the chief ranks, and possessing the noblest powers, among created beings! How sacred the principles involved, and the ends pursued: how important the interests depending, and the issues resulting! Child of the dust! thou art redeemed from insignificance. Despite thy native littleness, and thy comparative inferiority, thou art an object of special consequence. To thee is turned, with opposite feelings and designs, the riveted attention of the First-born of creation. On thy account—whether thy present state shall be one of condemnation or acceptance, and thy final portion be happiness or misery—Cherubim and Wickednesses wage war.

These observations, admitting their substantial accuracy, invest, with a character of awful and peculiar solemnity, the spiritual world, considered, especially, in

its connections with, its bearings and influences upon, the weal or the woe of the dwellers on this Globe. They present views of that world calculated, in no ordinary degree, at once to alarm and encourage, to fill with trembling and inspire hope. What other aspect or discovery of it is fitted to awaken, with intenser force, or to a higher pitch, the mingled emotions of solicitude and pleasure? Strangely constituted indeed, or sadly benumbed by the deadening power of depravity, must their minds be, in whom the entertainment of them excites no lively concern; whom the contemplation of Devils scheming ruin, and of Angels administering aid, to the feeble and imperilled children of men, does not both impress with dread, and thrill with joy. Ought not, also, the apprehension and the gladness to be augmented by the consideration, that, throughout the immense empire of Jehovah, this Earth may alone be the scene, and that only during the period of its tenancy by the offspring of Adam, of such lofty and mysterious contendings?

Respecting the moral condition of other worlds, Revelation is silent. Supposing them to be the abodes of rational existence, we know not the character of their respective populations. For aught we can tell, the whole may wear, or part may have lost, the crown of original righteousness. As to those, if any, in a lapsed state, whether Justice has stamped all with the seal of reprobation, or Mercy has interposed for the



recovery of some: these are questions which the wisest are incompetent to answer. It is not for us, therefore, positively to assert, that in none of them do Angelic and Diabolical Agencies ever conflict. From the representations of Scripture, however, or the partial and obscure glimpses which certain of its 'dark sayings' afford, we think it not improbable, that the solitary spot, beyond the confines of Tophet, which Satan and his associates have license to visit, is this terrestrial dwelling. It is a revolted province, the seat of disobedience and apostasy, the residence of a race created 'upright,' but involved, through the inventions of cunning, in guilt and woe. Very peculiar, nevertheless, perhaps altogether *singular*, are the circumstances in which this sinful world is placed: provision being made, through a Dispensation of grace, not only for the pardon, but the restoration to forfeited favour and pristine honour, of its rebellious inhabitants.

Here, then, as it seems to us, is, apart from their penal realm, the exclusive sphere of the craft and violence of Evil Ones. Consequently, here only may they encounter, singly or in companies, the direct and energetic opposition of co-ordinate Principalities from the dwellings of innocence. Sublime spectacle! The Magnates of creation, the Dignities of the mental kingdom, the Aristocracies of glory and of perdition, Intellects of loftiest grades and matchless capacities—some void of principle and burning with hate, others

glowing flames of purity and love—in actual dispute! With zeal fired by just conceptions of the prize at stake, both put forth their might, those to defeat, these to effectuate, the designs of the Remedial Economy. The former battle for the spoils of conquest, and the tenure of sovereignty; the latter, to secure ‘deliverance to the captives,’ and freedom to the oppressed. Of what transcendent importance, too, the decision of the contest; affecting, not the corporeal but the spiritual, not the interests of time but the destinies of eternity! Nor, surely, can it be to us matter of indifference, that our world is perhaps the only locality, and humanity the sole occasion, of strife between creatures of pre-eminent rank, and for alternatives of such magnitude as everlasting life or everlasting death.

But, not to wander too far from our subject, it is, we repeat, matter of thankfulness, that, while compassed by hostile, we are also surrounded by friendly influences. Let us rejoice, that if formidable foes are ready to assail, there are vigilant auxiliaries on the alert to succour. ‘The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them.’ Above all, let us seek by earnest supplication, and realize by confiding trust, the gracious protection of One, whose guardianship is of infinitely more avail than the assistance of creatures. His pleasure permits the temptation, but His power restrains the violence, of Devils. At His frown, they tremble: at His rebuke,

they flee. Equally subject to His control, while heartily obedient to His will, in tending the objects of redeeming love, are the ranks of the Unfallen. To Him, when apprehensive of the onsets, or exposed to the buffetings, of Satan or his messengers, let us 'lift up our prayer.' Lord of Angels, give these Holy Ones charge over us. Bid them defend us from the Cruel, who are stronger than we. On Thee is the dependence, from Thee is the expectation, of Thy servants. Glorify thy mercy, faithfulness, and power, in delivering our feet from the toils, and fortifying our minds against the wiles, of the Destroyer. 'Keep us through Thine own Name: keep us from the Evil.' Hast not Thou said, 'My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength shall be made perfect in weakness?' Precious and encouraging promise! O fulfil it in the experience of Thy humble petitioners. Then, moved with gratitude, our hearts and tongues will ascribe 'to the Only Wise God our Saviour, glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.'

## CHAPTER IX.

## Mesmerism.

THE doctrine advocated in these pages, has, we have seen, been much contested. Varied, too, as well as unfair, have been the tactics of its impugners. While some have assailed it with the weapons of a spurious Criticism, or tried to subvert it by the subtleties of an unsound Exegesis; others, equally disingenuous, have attempted, by devices of more modern invention, to explode it. So far, especially, as regards the endurance of physical suffering, or the grievous affliction of the outward man by invisible instrumentality, they have done their utmost to disprove it, or, at least, to invalidate its credibility. For this purpose, they have laboured hard, and even with such a show of reason as has had the desired effect on not a few, to press Science into their service. By its aid, they flatter themselves, they have succeeded in setting aside the received exposition of those numerous passages of Holy Writ, in which this tenet, to them so obnoxious and chimerical, is commonly understood to be clearly taught.

In perusing the inspired narratives, we consider the

Evangelists to intimate, most distinctly and emphatically, as well as with great frequency of statement, and variety of connection, the doctrine asserted. But, what we take to be, according to the natural interpretation of the expressions, instances of real Demoniacal influence, are represented as cases of ordinary disease; sometimes, indeed, in a form peculiarly striking or painful, yet, generally, such as have been, in all ages and all communities, of no unusual occurrence. The idea of Infernal Agency, either in the infliction or the aggravation of them, is utterly repudiated: it is scouted as a delusion, a vulgar error, which the light of superior knowledge dispels like the phantom of a dream. That they were attributable to the same, or similar, causes as other bodily disorders then were, or now are, is stoutly maintained. To the production of such effects, those causes are believed or declared to have been quite adequate. Why, then, it is asked, unless in accommodation to a popular theory, speak of aught occult and unascertainable? Why, if not in accordance with a favourite, but strange and inadmissible hypothesis, contend for the interference of any foreign, malignant Power?

Such interference, therefore, is deemed altogether imaginary, as there appears to be no occasion, no necessity, for it. That which it is adduced to explain, seems not to require the supposition of an Agency so mysterious, so hidden alike from the observation of

sense, and the cognizance of reason: it may, we are told, be satisfactorily accounted for otherwise. But, not only is it pronounced unnecessary: the notion of it is opposed, also, on the score of its presumed *tendency* and *results*. Against it charges the gravest have been preferred. To it, as if partaking of the essence of the rankest heterodoxy, consequences the most pernicious have been ascribed. Of the style in which it is characterized by one of no mean talent or repute, the following is a specimen; while his condemnatory verdict is not stronger than that of others, who would be thought judges. 'It gives occasion to numberless superstitions; particularly, to those shameless impostures, the possessions and exorcisms of the Romish Church, with all the mummery of fanatic agitations: It affects the very foundation of Christianity, and discredits the evidence. It sets Revelation at variance with reason and experience, and fixes an indelible reproach on those who professed to be commissioned by God to publish it to the world.'

Remarks like these we hold to be very reprehensible; as unguarded and unwarrantable as they are severe. They proceed upon an obvious misconception: they plainly confound things that differ—truth with error, or sound doctrine with its abuse. Coming from the pen of Pantheist, Sceptic, or Infidel, they had excited no surprise; but that a professed believer in the Divinity of the Bible, and a subscriber to the inspiration of the

Evangelists, should have been their author, does astonish. Yet, such was the Writer whose words we quote; and such is the strain in which he reprobated what he esteemed a hurtful dogma,—not a verity of Scripture, but a vanity of the imagination. Among the defenders of loose or erroneous opinions on Religion, the sentiment has a wide prevalence: nor, among persons entertaining more correct views, are there wanting those who sympathize in it, though caution restrains, or timidity deters them, from a public committal of themselves by any explicit avowal. Doubt or question it who may, this witness is not to be gainsayed: in bearing it, ‘we speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen.’

Waiving this point, however, let us, for the sake of argument, allow the facts to have been as represented. Granting that possessions were not real, but imaginary; that those called demoniacs were merely insane; that the palsied, the epileptic, the infirm, the dumb, only suffered from causes to which flesh is liable; that Evil Spirits had no power, and no license, either to madden mind, or enervate body; that they never had occupancy of the human frame, and, consequently, could not have been dislodged, as from a temporary dwelling: these positions conceded, how is the reserve, the constant and entire silence, of our Lord on the subject to be explained? Will it be said, that it was purposely to avoid offending prejudice or provoking hostility, by

attacking an article of general credence? Very different was His procedure in reference to other truths, at least equally unacceptable to Jewish ears. Of His Divine commission, His Messiahship, His equality with the Father, He spoke with the utmost plainness; while, with similar explicitness, He foretold both the vicarious nature and violent manner of His death, His resurrection, ascension, exaltation to glory, and final appearance as universal Judge. Might we not have expected, on the question in dispute, a no less 'certain sound?' Surely, if the prevalent belief was erroneous, it became 'a Teacher come from God' to correct gross error, and respecting this, as well as other matters of religious faith, to impart sound knowledge.

But the case, as thus stated, is not put in all its strength. When poor demoniacs were brought to the Saviour for healing, mark what sometimes occurred. Before exerting His miraculous energy, He held, in audible accents, a short conversation with the invisible beings, by whom they were supposed to be inhabited and tormented. To them, not to the agonized or frantic sufferers, He addressed His commands; while, in the hearing of many, the former, in articulate speech, answered His queries, made confessions, and preferred requests. How evidently fitted was such conduct to countenance and propagate the alleged delusion! Could it have failed to confirm the spectators in the persuasion of a *real* possession, and an *actual*



ejectment? On the admission of both, it is easily harmonized, whereas, on their denial, it is utterly irreconcilable, with perfect integrity. To us it looks deceptious in the extreme—wears the aspect of the deepest knavery. That the blessed Jesus, whose sayings and doings we revere as those of taintless veracity and uprightness, should have acted a part so remote from openness and candour; a part, more in keeping with the craftiness of imposture than the simplicity of wisdom, abhorred be the blasphemy!

Besides, in regard to the class of patients referred to, if they had been diseased only in the ordinary sense of the term: in other words, had their maladies not proceeded, directly though mysteriously, from the permitted presence and influence of Devils, may we not fairly conclude, that our Lord, in performing the cure, would have expressed Himself in a way calculated to undeceive His hearers? The miracle afforded an excellent opportunity for disabusing the public mind of the cherished belief of Diabolical Agency in such cases. That, had the belief been groundless, and the Agency not a reality but a fancy, the opportunity would have been suitably improved, can hardly be doubted. Yet where, in the Sacred Story, is the shadow of proof, that there ever fell, on any occasion, from the lips of the Saviour, a remark condemnatory of an opinion, which was known to be commonly entertained, and of which the avowal often met His ear? His language was, in-

variably, that which we should conceive Him to have used, such as was quite intelligible and most appropriate, allowing the fact to have corresponded with the narration: whereas, on the opposite hypothesis, its propriety or significance is far from manifest. But, apart from His colloquies with the unseen, did not He Himself, in repeated instances, and in unmistakable terms, connect, by the direct relationship of instrumentality and effect, with their inhabitation and malice, the physical distress, or mental derangement, which He relieved? Shall His language be construed into a mere concession to Jewish prejudice, a prudent deferring to a popular superstition or fancy? What fouler slander could the tongue of calumny frame? The Holy and Just One stoop to such temporizing expediency, policy worthy of a Loyola! Away with the impious thought. 'Desperately wicked' must be the heart that entertains it.

Further, it deserves special notice, that Demoniacal possession is mentioned, in the Evangelical Writings, as a calamity quite *distinct* from ordinary ailments, whether bodily or mental. Thus Matthew states, that in the beginning of our Lord's ministry, 'they brought unto Him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those who were *possessed with Devils*, and those who were lunatic, and those that had the palsy, and he healed them.' In the promise, too, of the impartation of supernatural power, with which, after the delivery of His royal commission, Jesus

encouraged His chosen ambassadors, the same distinction is observable. 'In my Name shall they *cast out Devils*; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.'

What the Saviour promised He duly fulfilled. The first Preachers of Christianity, by the power of the Spirit, were not only qualified to work an amazing number and variety of miracles: they also exercised, over fallen Superiors, an authority which the boldest dared not resist. Of this, many examples are given in the history of the Apostles. Thus, to the Spirit that possessed the damsel at Corinth, Paul said, 'I command thee, in the Name of Jesus Christ, to come out of her; and he *came out* the same hour.' At Ephesus, such virtue attended the application to the sick of cloths from his body, that not only 'the diseases departed from them,' but '*the Evil Spirits went out* of them.' Exorcists, in the hope of success, and thinking, by such feats, to acquire reputation or gain, imitated his mode of proceeding. What folly! Their orders proved as ineffectual as they were impertinent or peremptory. Such presumption only excited the indignation and contempt of the Spirit, whom they impotently tried to dislodge. To their adjuration, he replied, 'Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?' Thankful might those impostors be that they escaped with their

lives, though 'naked and wounded;' for what was their strength to that of their enraged antagonist?

But, not only is the expulsion of Fiends represented as a miracle, or a kind of miracles, quite distinct from others: it is also exhibited as one of the *greatest* or most striking. That it was considered a more wonderful work than even the instantaneous removal of the most inveterate or disabling maladies, may be inferred from the prominence given to it, or the emphasis apparently laid on it, in the Record. Accordingly, the Seventy, when relating the astonishing success with which they had been honoured, during the few previous days of ministerial labour, dwelt particularly on this fact: 'The Devils are subject unto us through Thy Name.' Their Master further cheered them with the animating assurance, that they should be enabled to tread, not merely 'on serpents and scorpions,' but 'over all the power of the Enemy.' He then tendered to them the solemn admonition, which, while embodying instruction the most salutary and needed, was directly calculated to confirm them in the vulgar belief of Diabolical Agency: 'Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not, that the Spirits are subject unto you.'

Now, suppose that no such Infernals exist; or, granting their existence, suppose them to want the capacity, however eagerly they might desire, to wreak their malice on human beings; or, suppose it irreconcilable with equity, inconsistent with the perfections of

a benignant and holy Ruler, reproachful to the character and government of a Being who 'is good, and doeth good,' to suffer their hurting, in either part of his nature, a member of the species: could the Faithful and True Witness, in replying to the bearers of intelligence so gratifying, have uttered the language ascribed to Him? Would a man of strict veracity, in similar circumstances, and knowing that the reporters, under the potency of a 'strong delusion, believed a lie,' have spoken in such a manner? We trow not. Compassion for their ignorance would have prevented his letting them remain blindfolded. Integrity would have prompted Him to correct a misapprehension so injurious, and to suggest the just view of a subject, regarding which it was of no little importance to be correctly informed.

Not otherwise, we may be assured, would the heavenly Instructor have acted, unless what the disciples, in the fulness of their joy, so confidently affirmed, had been known to be in exact accordance with fact. On our hypothesis, His address was most proper; in entire unison with the grace and uprightness that shone, with such beautiful transparency, in all his words and actions. 'Through His Name'—by His invincible energy, exerted through the medium, or by the instrumentality, of His accredited Messengers—Devils were driven out of men and women, whose bodies they had been mysteriously allowed, for a season, to make their holds. Deny this doctrine, and who shall explain

language, or vindicate conduct, that lend it, seemingly at least, direct countenance and support?

The difficulty, we are told, is one of our own creation. It originates in a complete misconception of the case. Long and extensively has this misunderstanding prevailed. Not only has it been coeval with Christianity: it is traceable to a much higher antiquity. For more than a hundred generations, sons have 'received it by tradition from their fathers.' It has been the creed of the generality of the teachers, as well as of the body of the members, of the Church from the earliest date; of those most renowned for talent and learning, not to say piety, as well as of the common people. But what signifies this? Can the duration, or the universality, of the belief be held to be a proof of its soundness? On the contrary, another specimen is thus furnished of human weakness and credulity; an additional instance of the superstitious leanings and tendencies of the mind; lamentable evidence of the blinding and enslaving power of prejudice. Admitting that there are such beings as Demons, their possession of mortals, of their bodies or their souls, is assumed to be a mistake. Hence it follows, that the doctrine of their ejection must be equally mythical; a tale fit to be palmed on unthinking ignorance, or suited to gull the lovers of the marvellous.

What, then, is the explanation offered—the theory proposed? The patients were sufferers in the ordinary

sense: that is, they were the victims of diseases induced, not by Satanic Agency, but by causes known to exist, and operating, in all times and places, similar effects. Exceedingly fierce and ungovernable, occasionally, might certain of them be. To tame them by milder treatment, or to subdue and manage them by harsher measures, might be found impossible. The expedients of kindness, and the prescriptions of skill, might be tried in vain, and even strength be mastered by a might apparently superhuman. But DEMONIACS, in the proper acceptation of the term, they were not: the appellation, so used, was grossly misapplied. In their most phrenzied states, in their wildest paroxysms of rage, and most ungovernable and dangerous outbreaks, when their excitement and violence rendered them a terror to neighbours, they were no more actuated by Devils than others: not more then under the perturbing impulses, more distracted or agonized, invigorated or prostrated, by the malign potency of Evil Inmates, than they themselves were in their hours of comparative soberness and quietude. Consequently, the cure of the patients consisted, not in deliverance from the cruelty of invisible Tormentors, whose horrid influence in the case, if not also their being, was fabulous; but in the removal of the disorders by which they were severally afflicted, and which had their origin in totally different causes.

## CHAPTER X.

## Mesmerism—continued.

THE abettors of the opinion, expressed in the close of the preceding Chapter, and which, with the design of rebutting it, we endeavoured to state fairly, embrace two classes. Those of the first agree with us in considering the cure as a proof, the direct result, of supernatural power. Those of the second, besides rejecting the idea of Demon-expulsion, discard, as a notion equally untenable, the interference of *miraculous* energy. That the Saviour performed wonders of healing, they acknowledge. Maladies, which had baffled the art of the physician, He readily removed; restoring, with a quickness that alike astonished and delighted, the sick and the infirm to health and vigour. We inquire, how? By Divine power, or an immediate act of Omnipotence? No: the extraordinary success, we are told, is to be otherwise accounted for. It was the consequence of an intimate acquaintance with the more secret operations of matter and mind, joined with a singular sagacity in the choice, and a dexterous promptitude in the employment, of the most efficacious



means of recovery. Nor, it is confidently maintained, would the persuasion of His ability to grant their request, which the fame of it had excited in the applicants, be without its utility or influence.

Such impieties we are loath to indite. Yet, much as they are fitted to grieve or revolt, not small is the number of their favourers. Among these are many, who, with the wiliness of the serpent, rather slyly insinuate than plainly announce them. Others, however, of more hardihood, or less restrained by prudential considerations, avow them in all their offensiveness; and what they unblushingly assert, they labour, by the plausibilities of sophistry, or the show of argumentation, to defend. Thus it is attempted, insidiously or openly, to subvert the doctrine of miracles. Cures deemed miraculous are alleged to have been but striking, perhaps unexampled, displays of skill. The Saviour is represented as an unrivalled Healer, the most wonderful of Physicians: not, indeed, possessed of Almightyness, but gifted with a knowledge superior to that of others, and doing works that eclipsed the greatest of theirs. In support of these startling views, appeal is made to the pretended marvels of Mesmerism. Its virtues have been boastfully paraded, as if of sovereign efficacy. By means of it cures are said to have been wrought, which, unless authenticated by unexceptionable testimony, might have been regarded as unworthy of credit. Of such cures, too, even the performers

declared their inability to give any explanation: to them the whole was mysterious—the connection between the process and the result, a secret. One thing, however, they could aver, nor would their deposition be gainsayed, that patients had experienced positive benefit under their treatment; ailments of long standing, as through the potency of a charm, having speedily disappeared.

Now, we are not questioning the truth of what is stated. The claims of Mesmerism are not inquired into: neither its title to rank as a Science, nor its practical utility or efficacy, is the subject of examination. But allowing, in substance, what is pleaded on its behalf, we deny the justness of the conclusion that is drawn. Where, we ask, is the parallelism, or even the analogy, between the vaunted cures of the Mesmerist or the Electro-Biologist, and those reported in the historical notices of our Lord's ministry? Instead of presenting any features of resemblance, they are marked, in every respect, by the strongest dissimilarity. Comparison is not to be named: they are entirely different, essentially distinct. In the one case, they were instantaneous and complete; in the other, gradual and partial. In the former, the sufferers were healed by a word or a touch; in the latter, by a course of operations, or a series of appliances. In the first, it mattered not though the patients were out of sight, or at a distance; whereas, in the second, their presence

was indispensable. In that, we see the evidences of a power *above* Nature, accompanied, occasionally, by outward signs, having no efficacy in themselves, but simply indicating the connection between cause and effect, or pointing out the source whence virtue flowed; in this, we observe nature, by inherent properties, and in conformity with fixed and ascertained laws, working results, but perceive not some occult steps in the process, or subtle links in the chain.

The two classes of cures, while differing thus widely in manner, differ not less in *nature* and degree. Compared with those narrated by the Evangelists, how paltry are the most remarkable of modern date! As inferior are they as were the tricks of the Magicians of Egypt to those mighty deeds of Moses, of which they were but puny imitations, and which extorted from the jugglers' own lips the confession, 'This is the finger of God.' Jesus spake, and suddenly fled disease and infirmity of every name, and of whatever virulence. 'What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? I will come and heal him. I will: be thou clean.' What followed? *Immediately* the blind received their sight, the lame walked, the deaf heard, the dumb spake, the lepers were cleansed, the dead were raised up. Surely, it was 'the voice of a God, and not of a man,' that spake with such unfailing effect: it was the energy of Omnipotence, and not superior skill, that gave so momentarily the glow of health or the comfort of relief: it was He, 'for

whom nothing is too hard,' and who 'callesth the things that are not as though they were,' that in an instant, and by a volition, invigorated the paralytic, enabled the cripple to forego his crutch, and endued with vitality the breathless clay.

Absolute appeared to be the power of Jesus over bodily plague or distemper in all its varieties and degrees. Not more suddenly, at the creative Fiat, did light shine, than 'perfect soundness,' at the LET BE of the Nazarene, displaced burning fever, or helpless decrepitude, or loathsome ulcer. Nay, simultaneously with its recall from Hades, the spirit rejoined its associate, and as speedily did the freshness of the rose succeed the cadaverous hue: the corpse became a LIVING MAN, who discharged, as aforetime, the functions which the icy hand of death had suspended. Equally unlimited was shown to be the control of the Saviour over the Inmates of 'the deep.' Devils, whom a mysterious Providence had permitted to take up a temporary lodgement in human beings, were rebuked for their cruelty, and remanded to their 'own place.' Forthwith, the poor infuriates of whom they made a prey, rending and phrenzying them at pleasure, were beheld in their 'right minds:' reason in healthy exercise, the heart beating with grateful emotion, the lips, as if 'touched with a live coal from off the altar,' proclaiming the praises of the merciful Deliver, whose interposition had freed them from the captivity of the Terrible.

What, we ask again, do the registers of Mesmerism record, not only equal in splendour, but similar, in respect either of mode or character, to these 'wonderful works' of the Saviour? Of its curative influence, indeed, very astonishing instances are related. Though almost exceeding belief, they are not disputed: presuming the authorities that vouch for them to be reliable, we concede their reality. The report of them, too, can be credited the more readily that cases, not less surprising, and of which imposture might have made a gain by palming them on vulgar stolidity as Divine interpositions, have been known. We refer not to the stories of either Popery or Paganism. Each has its accounts of miraculous recoveries, by means of which it seeks to maintain its unholy domination, and to deepen the blind veneration of its votaries. But, to such accounts we pay no attention, deeming them the mere fabrications of priestcraft, worthy of the cause in support of which they were concocted, and to be classed among the other 'lying wonders,' the many unbelievable legends and 'pious frauds,' incorporated, respectively, with the histories of those vile Systems of falsehood and blasphemy.

Our allusion is to cases of another and a more veritable kind. Against them lies no charge of improbability; for that they are possible in the ordinary course of things, is a point which scarcely admits of doubt or controversy. The subjects of nervous affections, or of

complaints that unstring and depress the frame, inducing general weakness and prostration, have, as by the force of a spell, been quickly and almost perfectly recruited. But rarely, indeed, and only in peculiar conditions, has this occurred. Yet, that such has, repeatedly, been the fact, witnesses, who could hardly have been deceived, and whose testimony is worthy of credit, have deponed. The *manner* may be an insoluble difficulty—the *process* we may not be in a position satisfactorily to explain. Convalescence, however, more or less complete, is undeniable: so that, with a slight variation of the terms, might each of the healed adopt the saying of the man whose eyes had been opened,—‘One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.’ The convalescence, too, is held to be the result, not of any superior invisible Agency, but of the combined influence of *natural* principles: it is purely the effect of the operation of physical laws, to which our compound constitution, or body in alliance with soul, is subject. These principles or laws, but very imperfectly understood, are found to act, in particular circumstances, with a potency that astounds ignorance; and whence, in its haste, it is apt to deduce erroneous conclusions.

Wonderful, often, is the power of imagination over persons of excitable temperaments, of delicate, irritable, or deranged organizations. They are afflicted by some chronic and debilitating malady. They call in the aid of a famed practitioner,—whether skilful physician or

dexterous empiric, is immaterial. They are inspired with strong faith in his ability, and high hope of benefit from his treatment. What then? Suddenly may imagination, working by faith and hope, give a shock, alike violent and salutary, to the outward man; correcting internal disorders, quickening the stagnancy of the vital fluid, and regulating the flow of the nervous currents. The muscular system regains its lost tone and elasticity; the spirits, erewhile sunk, are buoyant; and, anon, the valetudinarian enjoys firm health. Yet, the cure, suppose it to be ever so rapid or perfect, is not to be produced as a parallel to those which Jesus performed. To talk of *resemblance*, were to betray gross misapprehension, or a pitiable confusion of ideas. 'No man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him,' is the dictate of sober reason on a review of the deliverances granted by our Lord to the sick or the impotent. Not only 'never did man speak as He spake;' but never did man heal as He healed. Of His unnumbered works of mercy and of power, select whichsoever you please: then 'ask of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it?'

The justness of this remark will be manifest, if the *nature* of the diseases from which relief was obtained, is

considered. Compare the worst of those said to have been removed by therapeutic aid, with the generality of those which disappeared at the word of the Son of David: how wide the difference! In the one case, they were merely functional; in the other, either organic, or of such inveteracy as to require a tedious course of applications, or a repetition of painful operations. In the former, they were remediable by medical expertness or energy, assisted by the confidence and expectation of the patients; in the latter, they were incurable by all the contrivances and resources of the healing art, or curable only by slow and lengthened processes. Of the distempers enumerated in the Gospels, to subdue the virulence of some, or speedily to mitigate the malignancy of any, unavailing had proved all the prescriptions of skill, all the science of Surgery, all the virtues of Pharmacy. But, no sooner did Jesus say to the most obstinate of their host, Go, than it went: a proof that all were His servants, fulfilling His pleasure. He 'speaks the word,' and agonized sufferers, 'whatsoever disease they had,' are healed: 'the lame man leaps as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sings.' The simple utterance, 'Epphatha,' opens to the light of day the eye that had rolled in darkness. A touch of the garment dries up the bloody flux, which professional ability had long tried in vain to stanch. It is willed, and the possessed, whom no fetters could bind, and whose dwelling was in the tombs, is seen, calm and



peaceable as a lamb, at the Master's feet, raving madness exchanged for soundness of mind.

From these observations, then, it must be evident, that the cures of the Saviour immeasurably transcend those of the Mesmerist; the least wrought by the former, the most remarkable of which the latter can boast. In no point of view are they analogous. The first were, in the strict sense of the term, *miraculous*: that is, they were independent of the inherent properties and regular operations of Nature, departures from her established course, suspensions or counteractions of what are called her laws. To attempt to account for them, therefore, on any other hypothesis than that of *direct exertions* of Divine power, were to contradict alike the testimony of Inspiration, and the decision of reason. The second may sometimes be '*marvellous* in our eyes.' This, however, is owing solely to our ignorance. Knowledge would abate our wonder. A discovery of the recondite would furnish a key to the solution of every difficulty; explaining what seems perplexing as a puzzle, elucidating what is dark as an enigma. Acquainted with the steps leading to the result, we should cease to be astonished, and see that what fills with surprise, as a thing quite unexpected, and liker a deception of the senses than an indubitable reality, is no more than what might, in the circumstances, have been anticipated. In regard to the recoveries, however, narrated in the Biographies of our Lord, no such affirmation can be

made. They were, not merely *marvels*, but, as has been asserted, **MIRACLES**. To the effecting of a single one of them, especially in the manner described, no appliances of art, no operation of physical laws, was adequate. They are to be ascribed, not to amazing skill or dexterity, not to a deep insight into the secrets, and a felicitous use of the properties, of matter ; but, without the intervention of second causes or subordinate instrumentalities, to Supernatural Agency. Him they proclaim their immediate Author, in whom lodges all power, and to whom belong all issues.

Let it not be hence inferred, that we disparage the Science named, if such it may be called. We may smile at the pretensions, or quarrel with the reasoning, of those of its disciples, whose dogmatism is so arrogant, or whose argument is so lame, as to leave it doubtful whether the head or the heart is at fault. Such apologists prejudice the cause they wish to defend, and did not vanity blind their mental vision, they would see it to be for its interests, as well as their own wisdom, to be silent. There are those who represent Mesmerism as a 'doctrine of Devils,'—meaning, a doctrine of which they are Authors ; as, in whole, a system of either imposture or delusion. In these denunciations we cannot concur. Far from us is the desire or the attempt to bring it into disrepute : nor is a sentence penned with the intention to discountenance the study of it. Experiment and investigation, conducted with care and

judgment, by properly qualified examiners, may yet demonstrate the soundness of its fundamental principles. They may prove the theory—divested, perhaps, of much that is false in inference, or hasty in generalization, and stript of not a little that savours of the contemptible or the dishonest, the symbols and exponents of quackery or empiricism,—to be based in truth.

To Mesmerism or Electro-Biology, then, or, if the designation is preferred, ANTHROPOPATHY, we offer no opposition: so far as it may be founded in fact, or be worthy of a place among the Sciences, we 'bid it God speed,' and anticipate good from its careful cultivation. Nor, whether assenting or objecting to their deductions, relative to questions in Psychology or Physiology, have we any controversy with its teachers, so long as they observe, in their speculations or inquiries, the legitimate limits, and do not trench upon the Sacred. But this, it must be remembered, is forbidden ground. Like the Holy of holies, it is guarded, by interdicts and sanctions of weightiest import, from the foot of intrusion; and let the presumptuous and the profane beware, if they would not incur the dread anathema, how they approach even its confines. Our remarks are pointed, exclusively, against the argumentation of such as would reduce, to a level with those of the Mesmerist, the cures of the Saviour: thus exhibiting Him only in the character of an extraordinary Physician, perchance in the light of an unrivalled Magician, the Prince of Thaumaturgists.

Their logic we hold to be altogether vicious: their efforts as impotent as their aim is impious. They compare when they ought to contrast. The cures, which they would fain represent as parallels, belonged to totally different orders: their modes of accomplishment, so far from possessing any similarity, had nothing in common. Those of the one class can be accounted for on ascertained principles, though, from the imperfection of our knowledge, or our partial acquaintance with the influences brought into play, we may not be able to explain every particular in some: those of the other are, in any condition of the frame, impossible to the greatest amount of skill, or the concentrated virtues of medicine. Both are effects of the same cause, or traceable, equally, to Omnipotent Goodness; but the former mediately, or in the use of means, the latter directly, as in a creative act.

## CHAPTER XI.

## Mesmerism—continued.

ON the subject in hand, much that has found expression in both oral and written statement, bears the impress of folly. To what is this chiefly to be imputed? To mental or moral obliquity; to cerebral disturbance, or want of principle; to weakness of the reasoning faculty, or pride of understanding in some of its varied manifestations; to defect of discernment, or fondness for the novel or the heterodox? Such interrogatories we decline to answer. The *origin* of the evil is not our present concern. We merely submit, whether he who questioned its derivation in part from the former, would not proclaim himself a simpleton; and he who doubted of its being the offspring, in no small measure, of the latter, would not speak contrary to evidence. Our judgment, perhaps, is pronounced harsh or uncharitable. Conscious that it is formed without malice, and given without censoriousness, we sit easy under the charge. That, too, of those possessed of intelligence, and guided by candour, not many, who undertake the task of examination, will dissent from our verdict, is our firm

persuasion. But plainness of speech may be mistaken for detraction; and truth, though uttered in grief or love, offends morbid sensitiveness. Misconstruction we cannot help: imputation of motives we do not heed knowing it to be the infirmity or instinct of the mean and the base, who, 'learning their lessons of human nature at home,' conclude that 'as in water face answereth to face,' so the hearts of others are counterparts of their own.

What more easy than to substantiate our allegation by a superabundance of proof? Were we challenged to produce it, our appeal would be, not only to what we have heard, but to what we have read; not even to the effusions of frothy vulgarity, the tirades, equally vapid and venomous, of obscure or unlettered scribes, but to the Works, in wide circulation and much admired, of some of the principal Celebrities of the day. Assuming the prophet's mantle, and usurping the prophet's chair, these sages speak authoritatively, under the illusion that they possess the prophet's gifts, and are favoured with the prophet's inspiration. No doubt wisdom dwells with them, and their utterances are her suggestions. Disciples, enthusiastic and multiplying, 'approve their sayings.' Elated by the number of followers, and flattered by the adulation of servility, grateful to the complacency of vanity as the sweetest odour to the sense, each, like the Sorcerer who 'bewitched the people of Samaria,' fancies himself to be 'some Great

One.' But the wisdom, of which they are so conceited, and the praises of which they would trumpet to the world's end, 'cometh not from above:' neither may it be wholly 'of the earth;' though we presume not to say whether, or how far, it is attributable to the afflatus of a Personage, whose entity or agency they may deny. It is not only godless, but ungodly; not only Unchristian, but Antichristian. Even she whom they 'ignorantly worship,' their idolized Philosophy, disowns it as discordant with her spirit, and repugnant to her principles.

The wisdom referred to, whencesoever proceeding, or whatsoever phase assuming, is deeply to be deplored. Breathing hatred, and full of objections, to the Religion of the Bible, it is agreeable to the taste, and suited to the purposes, of the sceptical mind, that is desirous of arguments by which to excuse or vindicate its infidelity. It is especially dangerous to the thoughtless and undiscerning, who, unable to discriminate the plausible from the real, the false from the true, are apt to be misled by the confidence of its tone, or the insidiousness of its manner. Those do them a service—though, insensible to their obligations, they may repay kindness with calumny—who caution them against the seductions of this 'charmer, charming ever so wisely.' Be her fascinations and enchantments what they may: whether she wear the grimace of simpering condescension, or the lofty mien of supereminent enlightenment; whether

she discourse in verse or prose, in parable or epigram; in the mystic or the plain; whether she appear in elegant attire, or in robes gorgeous and antique,—a barbaric garb of German texture and Anglican dye: however this Syren accosts you, the counsel of friendly solicitude to you is, beware, as you value the favour of the Almighty, or regard your own immortal welfare, O beware of being either allured by the music of her voice, or captivated by the spell of her attractions. Despise the advice, and you follow, like the fool to the stocks, or the ox to the slaughter, a Guide that will lead you in a way, flowery it may be, though as often planted with snares; a way, unhappily, too much frequented, thronged by the victims of infatuation and the subjects of judicial blindness; a way abounding in the pleasures of sense, and the incentives to vanity, but ‘going down to the chambers of death.’ Its travellers, if that Book, whose authorship we believe to be Divine, testifies truly, plunge, inevitably and without exception, into ‘the depths of hell.’

Of the many devices of the Wisdom against which we wish to guard, attention has been directed, in the preceding paragraphs, to one—its attempt, by the aid of Mesmerism, to discredit, in particular, the doctrine of demon-ejection, and, in general, that of miraculous cures. To this single point, our strictures are confined: of Mesmerism itself, no opinion is expressed. The remarks, cursory and superficial though they be, may



perhaps suffice to show how futile is the attempt. If what has been averred is not seriously believed, where is integrity? The language must be that of gratuitous impiety; and to the offender is due the severest censure which words can convey. To perceive that he is, by pre-eminence, a 'child of the Devil,' no gift of 'discerning spirits' is necessary. If, on the other hand, the statements and conclusions, whose falsity has been exposed, are maintained in sincerity, or from conviction of their soundness, this must be ascribed to misapprehension. But *whence*, it may be asked, the misapprehension? Our diagnosis is, that it is traceable, partly, to weakness or defect of the *reasoning* powers, partly to monomania. Each, especially the latter, we believe to prevail to a far greater extent than is commonly supposed. We put it to the Physiologist, the Physician, the Mental Philosopher, the intelligent inquirer of whatever profession, whether proofs, irrefragable and abundant, of our position, are not furnished by certain strange things, melancholy facts, which our eyes have seen or our ears heard.

What mean we? Our allusion is to scenes of painful remembrance, once, and at no distant date, not unfrequent in the Land. An Orator, of commanding form and intellect, but whom the sober quietly suspected, and who soon gave undoubted proofs, of insanity, had begun to figure in another sphere. He is charged with a Divine commission, and qualified by the Spirit of pro-

phcey, to reveal mysteries that had been 'hid from ages and generations.' Born and reared on her soil, why not visit, in the exercise of his high functions, the Capital of Caledonia? Suddenly, he appears upon the stage. Mimicking the stern severity of the Baptist, but assuming a consequence to which the Son of Zacharias made no pretensions, this magniloquent One, with matchless voice, and in oracular tone, mouths 'great swelling words of vanity.' His accents thrill assembled thousands, who sit in staring wonderment, and listen in breathless silence. Some retire to mock, others to mourn; but hundreds many greedily gulp the compound of sense and nonsense, of good doctrine and blasphemy. Scenes of excitement ensue, over which Charity throws a veil. What! Even Minerva's Town turning a bedlam: the very members of her Areopagus—so sage, so sedate, so imperturbable, withal so abhorrent of the fanatical—losing their propriety! But our surprise ceases, on being assured, with all the solemnity of belief, that he who demands attention and credence to his announcements, is the Herald of Messiah, the Prophet of the Personal Reign, the Apostle of the commencing Millennium.

Nor is this all. The season of miraculous dispensation, it would seem, has returned. The Spirit again pours forth His gifts as at Pentecost. Among others is the gift of Tongues. In the midst of the congregation, time after time and year after year, rises up another and

another, uttering a number of strange sounds. All hearken in deepest reverence, and bless God. It is a 'tongue'—a new language, and the speakers are the subjects of inspiration. But none understand what is said, and there is no interpreter. That, we have been gravely told by persons of reputed ability as well as worth, matters not. To constitute what is uttered a 'tongue,' it is not necessary that it be the speech of any people or tribe on earth—that it be intelligible to a living individual. Can this be surpassed in absurdity? What a libel on the Holy Ghost! In primitive times, 'tongues' were given for purposes of usefulness—to enable Apostles and other Christian teachers to do, in a brief space, what otherwise should have required for its accomplishment a long period: in short, to promote, more rapidly and extensively, the propagation of the Gospel. In order to this, they must have been the languages familiar to those to whom the messages of salvation were addressed. But, was such an end, was *any* beneficial end, to be gained by the utterance of sounds without significance,—the articulating of vocables not understood by the hearer, and of which no mortal could learn the meaning? Give us a jury composed of millions, and, provided they be judicious and impartial, we could, in full anticipation of a verdict decidedly favourable, and nearly unanimous, appeal to them the case as it has been stated. A minority might incline to what we consider an extreme view; pro-

nouncing what appear to us the symptoms and effects of aberration, as the doings of imposture.

Passing over other instances since, in which persons, who evidently needed to be cared for, have made a noise in the religious world, and drawn multitudes after them, we just advert to some things that, in various quarters, have more recently created a sensation. They seem to be connected with, if they do not flow from, what may be called the *abuses* of Mesmerism. Our allusion is, in particular, to Clairvoyance, Spirit-Rapping, and Table-Turning. These we can regard in no other light than specimens of knavery,—deceptions, for which we have no terms of reprobation too strong. Let those who practise them for money, or endeavour to foist them on the public as doctrines worthy of acceptance, be treated with the contempt and derision due to unprincipled cheats. Occasionally has the exposure of their ‘sleight’ brought upon them merited scorn: so may they be always rewarded. Men would do well to ‘clap their hands at them, and hiss them out of their place.’ From the ‘cunning craftiness’ of such impostors less danger might be apprehended, were it not for the causes mentioned. But, while deploring, we cannot deny, their existence and operation. Indeed, of no inconsiderable a proportion of society, the intellectual condition is such as almost to ensure a measure of success to any visionary, who may bluster out the most incoherent rhapsodies, or any plausible

deceiver, who, however shallow-brained, borrows the airs, and apes the verbiage, of learning. Sad is it to think, that what is called Religious Society, instead of being an exception, bears similiar characteristics. Here we behold idiosyncrasies, varying, perhaps, with its component parts, yet identical in type with those observable beyond its pale: the same aptitude for imposition by the deep designs and dexterous arts of the broacher of startling novelties, or the teacher of heterodoxy in any of its forms. Of this, some of the facts specified are incontestable proofs; and, lamentable though they be, they are not worse than numerous others, of both ancient and modern date, that tend equally to confirm and illustrate our position.

Into these remarks, rather digressive and prolix, we have been led by the reference to Mesmerism, and to the wily attempts of some of its advocates, by a boastful display of its alleged curative virtues, to explode the doctrine defended in this Tractate. To us their reasoning appears illogical—their conclusion unwarranted—their creed Infidelity. Not to speak of the many, whose sentiments and principles accord with their own, and to whom their argumentation may be expected to be acceptable, if they do not also deem it satisfactory, or even commend it as demonstrative: there are others, and their number is unhappily large, whom these blind guides, or *ignes fatui*, are apt to mislead. It is asked, How shall we account for their

success, and that of the other errorists, who, ever and anon, force themselves into notice, and, by dint of raving or by subtle sophistry, gain converts to their wild notions or heretical tenets? We answer, the success, undoubtedly, is attributable to various causes; among which must be specified *ignorance*, or the want of correct apprehensions, of clear and definite views, of Scriptural Truth in its mutual relations and manifold bearings: an ignorance, often as criminal as it is lamentable. But, that no trifling share of it is ascribable to the other causes mentioned—weakness or defect of the *reasoning* faculty, and monomania in some of its phases or degrees—we are fully assured. This belief is grounded, not on abstract views or *a priori* deductions, but careful observation ranging over a course of more than thirty years, compared with the observations of persons of different professions, in whom, eminent as some of them were for discrimination and cautiousness, we had much confidence, and whose inferences and opinions nearly coincided with our own. Nor is the remark confined to either sex, or to any one class: it applies to both male and female, and, equally, to every circle; to the educated as well as the untaught, to individuals of all pursuits, to Writers of literary and scientific repute.

Believing the fact, then, to be as represented: not only discovering, among learned and unlearned, an almost incredible amount of ignorance of Evangelical

doctrine in its connected forms, but finding peculiarities of mind so decided, chiefly constitutional, partly induced or strengthened by habit or training : we do not wonder at the countenance shown to the extravagances of any voluble declaimer, or any Pantheistic or Neological Author ; especially if, like an Emmerson or a Carlyle, he can invest them with the charms of genius, and exhibit them either in the artistic beauties of the former, or in the foreign and grotesque costume of the latter. Nor need it surprise us, if the dogmas, whose absurdity and impiety we have endeavoured to expose, receive a measure of popular favour. Let the advocate of Mesmerism extol it as highly as he pleases ; let him prosecute the study of it with all diligence, and seek, in every fair way, to 'make proselytes :' we have no reason to find fault, nor do we object. But let him not dare, by means of Mesmerism, to try, openly or covertly, to undermine one of the bulwarks of our Faith. The attempt, we tell him, is that of an impostor or a fool. The language may grate upon his ears, and, not improbably, an effeminate charity, delighting in soft words, exclaims against it. Yet enough, we flatter ourselves, has been advanced to prove it. We dwell no longer on the subject ; but wish our statements to be canvassed by both friends and enemies, asking only for unbiassed witnesses, a competent jury, and an impartial tribunal.

The 'casting out of Devils,' it was observed, is spoken of both as a *distinct* kind, and as one of the *greatest*, of

miracles. We may here add, in conclusion, that Diabolical possession does not imply pre-eminence in guilt. From none of the cases upon record, can any such inference be fairly drawn. The possessed are depicted as *miserable*, rather than criminal; as objects of *pity*, rather than of blame. In relation to this subject, a misapprehension akin to that so prevalent with regard to physical evil, would seem to be entertained. Concerning the latter, every doubt was removed by our Lord, when, to those who informed Him of the Galileans, 'whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices,' He said, 'Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay.' In other words, dispensations in Providence peculiarly afflictive, are not the criteria by which to estimate the degrees of moral offence, on the part of those who are visited with them. Often, the wicked 'are not plagued like other men :' often, too, the righteous are allotted a more than common share of adversity.

With respect, also, to *ordinary* Demoniacal influence, the same sovereignty may characterize the Divine procedure. Think ye that Paul, whom 'a messenger of Satan was sent to buffet;' or Peter, whom 'Satan desired to have, that he might sift him as wheat;' or Joshua the High Priest, at whose 'right hand Satan stood to resist him;' or David, whom 'Satan tempted to number the people;' or Job, whom, besides subjecting him to a



series of other calamities, 'Satan smote with sore boils, from the sole of his foot unto his crown,' on purpose, if not to convict him of insincerity, to corrupt his integrity: think ye that any of these illustrious Personages must have been a singularly heinous transgressor, because the Adversary was permitted so violently to assault him? No, verily. Even according to their own testimony, so far as they were competent to judge, similar has been the experience of not a few of the distinguished saints in succeeding ages. Here is indeed a mystery; a matter very perplexing, and of which we presume not to give an account. Instead of disputing it, or trying to explain it away, let us candidly acknowledge it: and in reference to this, as to all the other parts of the Divine conduct, let the adoring language of our hearts and our lips be, 'Just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints!'

Now, between unusual trials in Providence, or ordinary Satanic temptations, and Demoniacal possessions, may we not mark, in one respect, a close analogy or correspondence? From no expression of the Evangelists can it be gathered, that the unhappy beings whose bodies were the lodgings of Fiends, had, previously to the occurrence of that terrible affliction, been chargeable with some enormity, or abandoned to any course of excesses. We are not authorized, therefore, to interpret their affliction in the light of a *judgment*. Being sinners, 'grievously tormented' as they were, they

suffered no heavier penalty than they deserved. But, it does not appear, that their infractions of the moral law had been of a deeper dye, or attended with greater aggravations, than those of all others. On the contrary, there might have been dwelling in Judea tens of thousands, whose iniquities, both in number and atrocity, far surpassed what could have been laid to the charge of any of these culprits. Consequently, it was not as an exemplary punishment, proportioned to their exceeding criminality,—not as Gehazi was smitten with leprosy for his covetousness, or Uzziah with the same disease for his presumption, or Annanias and Sapphira with instant death for ‘lying to the Holy Ghost,’—that they were thus given up to the power and malice of the Enemy. It was not because either ‘they had sinned, or their parents,’ beyond the ordinary measure of human guilt, that Evil Spirits obtained license to practise such cruelties upon them. ‘Even so, Father; for so it seemed meet in Thy sight.’

In connection with this topic, we may take notice of a foul injustice done, in modern times, to one New Testament character. We allude to an estimable female, who had been the subject of Diabolical possession, but to whom the Man of Mercy, perhaps at an early period of His ministry, graciously vouchsafed deliverance. Mary Magdalene was her name; the latter appellative, derived from Magdala, the district to which she belonged, being given, most probably, to distinguish her from

other Marys, who were fellow-disciples of our Lord. Out of her He had 'cast seven Devils,' who had got a license, for a longer or shorter period, to make her frame their stronghold, and, by their energy, to throw her into such furious paroxysms, or cause such painful injuries, as might have rendered her an object alike of dread and of compassion to the neighbourhood. Not only did miraculous power liberate her from this miserable enthrallment: saving grace also exerted its renovating agency in her soul. Hence she became a 'new creature,' a beautiful pattern of stedfast piety, an ornament equally of her sex and of our nature, one of the principal heroines in Sacred Story. Honour to the memory of this good woman. Lovely, after her conversion, was her life: blessed, we doubt not, was her death.

But, what was her history prior to her first interview with the Saviour? Had she wandered from the paths of virtue, and lived by the gains of prostitution? No such thing is even hinted in the Narrative. Why, then, in the absence of all proof, nay, contrary to every probability, assume it to be fact? That it is assumed, need not be denied. The single circumstance, to which we call attention, precludes dubiety on the point. It is the appropriation, to Institutions of a certain description, of the designation, Magdalen Asylums. If our explanation be rejected, on what hypothesis can any account for such an application of the term? The Institutions

themselves have our heartiest approval. The conception of them was excellent: their founders and patrons are public benefactors: while there are creatures of so base a sort as those to whose interests they are sacred, may benevolent piety not fail to provide such establishments. Call them Penitentiaries, or Reformatories, or Houses of Refuge: call them, if you will, Asylums, with some suitable and distinctive prefix. But we protest against the employment, in such a connection, of the name Magdalen. Why thus tarnish, unintentionally, the reputation of glorified saintship? Why give, to the monuments of compassionate goodness, a designation expressive of the ignorance or uncharitableness of their supporters? We deny it to be a doctrine of Scripture, that Demoniacal possession, any more than Demoniacal temptation, or even peculiar providential trial, infers extraordinary guilt. Nor does the Record contain a vestige of evidence, that Mary of Magdala had once led a dissolute life, and that retributive justice, in the way specified, punished her profligacy. For aught that appears, she may, anterior to the sad calamity that befel her, have been a female of as correct morality, as unblemished chastity, as the purest virgin in Judah's Land. Why, then, associate her name with the Institutions in question; and thus, by perpetuating a misapprehension, cast a reflection on her memory?



## Part Fourth.



Diabolical Agency—Conclusion.



# PART FOURTH.



## CHAPTER I.

### *Diabolical Agency—Opponents.*

OUR limits require brevity. Indeed, to what has been already stated we have not much to add, without entering upon new ground. This, independently of any feeling of aversion, want of time and space prevents us from doing. We, therefore, content ourselves with little more than a repetition of the views and reasonings advanced in the previous Parts of this Work. Of these, we earnestly invite the calm and critical examination.

The impugnors of the doctrine espoused, however differing in opinion from one another, may be comprehended under two general classes: those who doubt or deny, and those who profess to acknowledge, the Divine authority of Holy Scripture. The former, discarding Revelation, act consistently in repudiating any of its peculiar or distinctive articles. Equally vain and foolish should be the attempt to persuade them, by an appeal to its teachings, of the Being or Agency of



Fallen Angels. This were a misspending of labour, or arguing in a circle; since they treat as unworthy of credit, as a collection of dreams or fables, purporting to be a Record of the 'inspirations of the Almighty,' the Document whence is derived all our information on the subject.

The persons to whom reference is now made, we would urge to a reconsideration of the grounds of their disbelief. May they not have been superficial in their inquiries, or hasty in their conclusions? Have they prosecuted the investigation with minds unbiassed by prepossession; no prejudice perverting their judgment, no false principle distorting their vision? Have they been influenced by an unfeigned desire to ascertain the truth? In their search, have they exercised the humility, the candour, the patience, requisite to its discovery; especially, in a case involving consequences of such incomparable importance? These and similar questions, it is to be feared, must, in almost every instance, perhaps, so far as our experience goes, without one exception, be answered in the negative.

There may be those who allege, that they have studied the evidences, both external and internal, of the Divinity of the Bible, but that these have failed to convince them of the validity of its claims. Though scrutinized with care, and weighed with impartiality, they do not, in their apprehension, possess the necessary force or conclusiveness—do not lead them to regard it in the

light in which its disciples represent it. Excellent they deem it in a variety of respects: the soundness and value of many of its instructions they readily admit, while the unrivalled sublimity and pureness of its morality extort their admiration. But, after much anxious attention to the subject, and an accurate testing of the proofs ordinarily submitted, they cannot venerate it as a Book, which has God for its Author, or whose contents were dictated, to its several penmen, by the Spirit of wisdom.

Such persons we recommend to repeat the process, conducting it throughout in a serious, dispassionate mood. What you reckon unsatisfactory or incomplete, appears to others sufficient or demonstrative. Of these, not a few are noted for vigour and solidity of understanding: some, their equals in native or acquired ability, had been votaries of Deism, but, persuaded, by diligent inquiry, of the truth of the Gospel, stood forth in defence of 'the faith which once they destroyed.' That similar may be the issue in your case, is our fervent prayer. Surely, that which operated conviction in them, cannot be wholly destitute of force: though, considering the liableness to deception of the strongest minds, we do not regard that fact as, of itself, a *decisive* argument. Yet, yourselves being judges, does it not partake largely of the presumptive?

We would further bid you, in investigating the claims of Holy Scripture, be suspicious of the *sincerity* of

your motives and the rectitude of your intentions. Beware of the predominance of pride, which scorns subjection to authority, and generates, perhaps insensibly, dislike to a scheme of doctrine, transcending often the comprehension of reason, and to a code of holiness, unpalatable to the vitiated taste. Guard, too, against the pre-occupation of the mind by any dogma of the Schools, any vain conceit or plausible delusion, any fanciful opinion, novel in form though old in substance, the offspring of godless speculation or an unreined imagination. Attachment to such reveries, antagonistic as they are to the verities of the Word, will be sure so to disturb the operations of judgment, or so to confound the moral perceptions, as to hinder the due appreciation of evidence, or prevent the deducing of fair and legitimate inferences.

Observing these and similar directions and cautions, plain but equally needed and salutary, you may, on re-examination, be brought to the conclusion, that what you now disrespect as the composition of mortal wisdom, is indeed, in the highest sense of the term, a REVELATION. Receiving it as such, you will reverence its announcements as the 'true sayings of God.' Among these you will find, as one of the more prominent, that of the being and temptation of Apostate Intelligences. Such seems to be the proper, the only rational, course: for to reverse this order, and try to persuade of the reality of Diabolical Agency, those who dispute the

authenticity or inspiration of the Volume which alone teaches the mystery, we hold to be very absurd. The credentials of the Volume are not, at present, the topic of discussion. This, however, is a topic preliminary to the one in debate, and right views on which are of unspeakable moment. We, therefore, by all that is dear to you throughout the immortality of your being, recommend it to your honest and impartial investigation. The Father of lights purge your mental sight, assist your inquiries, and guide you to a sound decision!

Meanwhile, your representation of Demonology is controverted. That it is unphilosophical or irrational, we emphatically deny. What tenet of true Philosophy it contradicts, or what principle of right Reason it subverts, you are again called on to specify. If veracious in your assertion, you cannot, and if confident of ability to establish it, you will not, decline the challenge. Enough for us that it is Scriptural—clearly taught in the Oracles of Heaven, and embodied, as a cardinal article, with all parts of their system—though its congruity with that to which you so stoutly affirm its contrariety, were less apparent. Before you try to overturn our doctrine, and that you may not essay it in the rashness of inconsideration or the blindness of ignorance, let us just apprise you of the Herculean nature of the task. Reflect whether you possess the qualifications requisite for so difficult an achievement.

You will not, surely, maintain, that the creation of

incorporeal Beings is *impossible* to Omnipotence: or, their entity granted, that, while the great majority have retained their primeval innocence, a large number may have proved rebellious: or that, unconfined by locality, and moving in free spaces, both classes may have the power and the permission to visit various and distant realms. Why think it incredible, that they should occasionally bend their flight towards our world: the benevolent deputed on embassies of mercy, the malignant coming for purposes of evil? Will you aver, that the granting of such a license to the latter were incompatible either with the benignity of the Divine nature, or the rectitude of the Divine administration? We point to facts of a somewhat similar kind,—the temptation of man by man; facts attested, daily, by your own observation and experience. Say what explanation, on your principles, shall be given of these: or how is the admission of them reconcilable with the denial, *on the ground alleged*, of the others?

But, there are no such creatures as Fallen Angels. On what data do you build this conclusion? Are you endowed with omniscience; or have you been taught it by revelation? Their existence is allowed to be a possibility: what entitles you to deny its *reality*? Are you acquainted with every region of the Universe? Can you tell all the orders or gradations of intelligent being? If not, how know you but there are, somewhere, living and active Spirits, countless in number,

different in rank, 'great in wisdom and might,' of whom a proportion are Devils? Supposing such to exist, may it not be competent for them to put forth, against members of the human race, a baneful Agency? You reply in the negative: you talk of it as a dream or a delusion. But, on this point, what avails assertion, in whatever tone of assurance uttered, if unsupported by proof? Why thus substantiate an argument against yourselves; creating, if not a presumption of defect of understanding, a suspicion of want of moral integrity?

We embrace the opposite view; and our belief of the Existence and the Agency of Demons is based, not on speculative grounds, but exclusively on the authority of Scripture. To it alone is our appeal: deeming its testimony infallible, we abide by its decision. That you may be brought to regard it in the same light,—as a Divine communication, the Word, not of man but of God,—is our earnest desire. To this end, we adjure you to examine its credentials; or, if they have already come under your inspection, to renew the investigation. Let us caution you, at the same time, to guard studiously against any perverting influence, the bias of preconception or theory: for evidence the most complete, if canvassed with a prejudiced mind, may fail to convince. Remembering that you are as responsible for *its treatment*, as for the result arrived at, see that you deal fairly and impartially with it. Proceeding in this manner, the inquirer, we are persuaded, will find, in favour

of the heavenly origin of Holy Writ, a body of proof stronger and more multifarious than can be adduced for the authenticity of any other compositions. In that Sacred Record, too, he will find the doctrine of Devils, to which, in common with the rest of its announcements, he will be prepared, by the process recommended, to set the seal of his faith.

There is another class of disbelievers in Demonology. These belong, chiefly, to the Rational or Neological and Socinian Schools. Among them may be remarked, on questions in Theology, shades of opinion of great variety; some scarcely distinguishable from Deism, others verging towards Arminianism, or even bearing a resemblance to Low Calvinism. All of them profess to revere the writings of Prophets and Apostles, and all assume the Christian name; though most of them, we apprehend, would act more consistently did they disavow respect for the former, and repudiate the latter. Not a few we hold in high esteem, as amiable specimens of humanity: of many, we admire the excellent gifts, or admit the superior culture and scholarship. We must not, however, be prevented, by such considerations, from expressing our disapproval of their sentiments, or rebuking their presumptuous liberties with the Sacred Canon. Against their scheme of Interpretation we formerly recorded our protest, assigning our reasons for rejecting it. We do not now resume the subject any further than merely to repeat, that we

condemn it as breathing a spirit of arbitrary and licentious criticism, violating every established rule of exposition, and treating, with the very extreme of capricious irreverence, 'the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth.'

Of Biblical Exegesis, our own views differ widely from those referred to; and it may not be out of place, so far as they have a direct bearing on the point, briefly to state them.—In the 'things pertaining to godliness,' our Maker has *condescended to instruct us*, by a succession of inspired Messengers, to whom He was graciously pleased, 'at sundry times, and in various portions,' to communicate the knowledge of His will. The intimations thus conveyed, it is incumbent upon us to receive in a docile, humble, and grateful spirit. Nor is it less our bounden duty to preserve them incorrupt: free from all apocryphal admixtures, without modification or diminution, pure and entire as they are found in the 'lively Oracles.' There, He has 'shown us what is good;' has taught us, with equal plainness and fulness, whatever is of vital importance to be known, believed, or done; has pointed out, so clearly as almost to prevent the possibility of mistake, the way of pardon, holiness, and peace. Our business, therefore, is, to make ourselves acquainted with His disclosures of what relates to faith and practice, to the ruin and recovery of sinners of mankind. What ought to be inserted in His Testimony,—what it was proper to reveal or inculcate,



He alone was competent to judge. All that belongs to us, is, simply to ascertain what is 'the mind of the Lord.' In no case, on no subject, is the question allowable, Can this be true, or wise, or right? The only appropriate or legitimate inquiries are, How readest thou? What saith the Scripture?

The Bible is to be considered as the authentic Record of salvation. It is an accredited discovery of the character, the purposes, and the procedure of the Almighty, in reference to our fallen race. It is a communication to man from the Author of his being, stamped with the seal of Heaven. Not only is it a Divinely attested, it is also a plenary, revelation of truth and duty. The system of doctrine and precept, which it seemed meet to Infinite Wisdom to propound, the pages of the Sacred Document unfold. In religion and morals, it is to be regarded as the only sure guide: in all that concerns the spiritual state and immortal destinies of mankind, it is the infallible source of information. On these momentous themes, it professes to impart instruction alike complete and certain. Assuming the Bible, then, to contain the 'true sayings of God,' we have no warrant to use the least freedom with what it teaches. Not one iota of its contents may we alter or expunge: none of its statements may we interpret in conformity with preconceived opinion, or the suggestions of a purblind Philosophy. To corrupt it, whether by addition or subtraction, is impiety against which the

lip of truth has denounced the most tremendous anathema. 'I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this Book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this Book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the Book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this Book.'

What, then, shall be said of those who, instead of listening with that reverent submission, that surrender of the understanding due to the voice of Jehovah, to the announcements of Holy Writ, treat them with less ceremony than would be paid to a production of human genius? This is an interpolation, which should be rescinded: that, an antiquated notion, or the mere opinion of the Writer. Here is metaphor or myth, which must have a figurative construction: there, accommodation of the diction to Jewish bigotry, or the prevalent sentiments of the times. One passage requires mutilation; another, the help of gloss: one must be put to the torture of the rack; another, cast into the crucible, where, by a sort of refinement, its genuine sense is evaporated. What cannot be twisted or bent into agreement with taste or caprice, must be erased: what will not bear to be expurgated, must either be modified by some rare intermixture of modern discovery, or examined through the distorted optics of Rational or

Unitarian invention. That this is no caricature, but a plain unvarnished statement of facts, will be conceded, we presume, by all who are conversant with the history of heterodoxy. The Scriptures are thus interpreted by not a few, more in accordance with peculiar creeds or fancies, than by any fixed or approved laws of Exegesis; and the preachers of truth and righteousness are turned into teachers of falsehood and error.

Hence, by a scheme of Hermeneutics, uniting, in similar proportions, the ridiculous and the profane, those doctrines are exploded, which constitute the very basis of the Christian system; whence it derives its characteristic excellence, and saving efficacy; which render it at once worthy of God, and profitable to man: doctrines, the abstraction of which reduces it to a skeleton, without energy or vitality,—to a theory, pleasing, perhaps, to the eye of contemplation, but destitute of the properties of a Remedial Economy, and utterly useless for the purposes designed: altogether unsuitable, in short, to the circumstances of any class of beings known to us,—whether Angels, who are neither chargeable with guilt, nor defiled by pollution; or Devils, for whose recovery Mercy has made no provision; or sinners of our race, who, needing equally pardon and grace, are acquainted, in the Gospel, with both an expiatory Sacrifice, and a purifying Agency. The Divinity of the Son, the Personality of the Spirit, justification in virtue of the atonement of the former,

and sanctification by the influence of the latter: these, with various cognates, we regard as among the leading verities of the Record, if it is to be explained consistently with the acknowledged idioms of the Original languages, and the customary import of the terms employed. Yet, with a hardihood that is proof against shame, or a simplicity that may well excite pity, certain Expositors, affecting to be deeply learned, and reluctant to hide their light 'under a bushel,' assert that our beliefs are quite erroneous. No such tenets, it appears, are propounded in those Scriptures which we, in our blundering stupidity, had supposed to enunciate them with unmistakable explicitness. Some would seem to be gifted with extraordinary perspicacity. But we forbear putting modesty to the blush, by expressing our astonishment at the discernment, or our obligations for the corrections, of our erudite instructors.

It cannot surprise us to find Demonology, in like manner, and by the same process, discarded. But, to the modes by which it is attempted to be disproved, we strongly object. The question is, Does, or does not, the Bible teach it? If the former can be shown, our present opponents are bound, on their own principles, to embrace it: if the latter can be satisfactorily established, then, but only then, may they discredit it as an 'idle tale.' Brethren, for the determination of this point, we bid you 'inquire at the Word of the Lord.' Beware, however, that you do not, under the in-

auspicious influence of aught misnamed Philosophy, or Science, or Rationalism, misinterpret or pervert its voice. What it reveals, you virtually acknowledge the obligation to believe. That this may be ascertained beyond doubt, consult its deliverances, as you would examine the contents of any other Book purporting to inform regarding some matter of importance. Adopt, in the one case, the same rules of Exposition which you observe in the other; taking heed not to wrest, from a feeling of aversion, or the desire of accommodation, the statements of Inspiration.

Not that we would forbid sober attempts to amend the *rendering* of the Originals into our vernacular tongue. Studious of accuracy, indeed, and eminently qualified were the Translators of the received version, while its excellence is indisputably great; yet, it cannot be denied, that, in numerous passages, a more exact reading might be given. But, though exception cannot fairly be taken to emendations of this nature, neither can sanction be accorded to the least tampering with the burden of the message, or the genuineness of the text. No imaginary improvements on the meaning can be tolerated. Nothing must be abbreviated, and nothing superadded; nothing expunged, and nothing interpolated. Not a paragraph, not a sentence, must be subjected to force or straining—construed by arbitrary rule, or in harmony with theory or hypothesis. By no refinements of subtilty, no devices of fancy, no mis-

application of learning, but by rigorous analysis, or plain and legitimate Exegesis, the sense, or what the Writer designed to convey, must be educed. The sentiments or principles, expressed or implied, how apparently incredible soever, however unpalatable to pride, or conflicting with prepossession or popular opinion, we are required to accept, without any qualifying circumstance or adulterating ingredient, in all their revealed simplicity and fulness. What the Prophets and Apostles indited, by Divine direction, is to be received exactly as it dropt from their pens: not an obnoxious clause elided, not a qualifying note incorporated or appended: no intermeddling with either text or doctrine, but the one retained in the integrity of its letter, and the other elicited by fair Exegesis: attention being paid both to peculiarities of idiom, and to the analogy of faith; and 'the mind of the Spirit' ascertained, in every instance, by the application of fixed and approved principles of construction.

## CHAPTER II.

## Opponents—continued.

THE preceding Chapter closed with a few hints, cursory yet appropriate, relative to the right treatment of the Record, in the attempt to eliminate its import. Let it, then, be consulted with care, and expounded in the spirit and manner indicated, and Demonology, we are sure, will be allowed to hold a prominence among its discoveries. It is evidently part of 'the faith once delivered to the saints.' It is a tenet, too, for which it is incumbent upon us 'earnestly to contend,' the more especially that it is ignored or disclaimed, not only by those who deny, but by some who professedly admit, the Divinity of the Bible. Such being the case, it may, independently of its intrinsic importance, be justly reckoned a portion of 'the present truth.' The untenableness of the position occupied by the former, and the inapplicableness or fallacy of their cavils and objections, have, it is hoped, been sufficiently exposed. On the false principles adopted by the latter, we have animadverted in a style, which, to those unacquainted with them, may savour of injustice or bitter-

ness. That our strictures, however, do not exceed in severity, will, we presume, be granted by every intelligent and orthodox Christian, who has devoted some attention to the subject.

Indeed, by such a method of Interpretation, we should have little difficulty in extracting from Scripture, as by a species of alchemy, whatever meaning we pleased; in modifying or exploding every obnoxious doctrine, in obscuring or frittering away the sense of any offensive passage. With the aid of those useful auxiliaries, myth and parable, figure and personification, and with the convenient license to discard, as apocryphal or legendary, what jars with preconception, or revolts complacency; we should find it easy to mutilate the Word, till we had stript it, one after another, of all its distinctive peculiarities, and exhibited it as a nondescript relic of antiquity, curious, yet worthless as a form without substance,—venerable, yet dead as a body without a soul: showing it, withal, to be earthly in its origin, though claiming a heavenly descent. Shame on those who thus corrupt the Truth, and neutralize its efficacy. Would that they ceased, if not for their own sakes, out of compassion for others, to ‘pervert the right ways of the Lord!’ If, as they sometimes are, talented and accomplished, the more are they to be both censured and dreaded: censured, for the greater is their guilt, as they ought to know better; and dreaded, for their ability and learning fit them,



proportionally, to mislead the indiscriminating, and confirm the sceptically inclined.

Not to enlarge: the two points, for the establishment of which, chiefly, the preceding pages have been penned, are, the Being and the Agency of Demons. These points we conceive to be bodied forth in the Record, with all the distinctness which even the pencil of Inspiration could give them. If they are not there taught, the one by implication, the other in frequent and direct statement, we should deem the enunciation of them, in the language of mortals, an impossibility; for terms more unambiguous or precise than those employed, we cannot imagine. Why, then, is their natural construction, or their acceptation in the ordinary import, questioned or denied? Plainly, because the twofold proposition which they convey, is repulsive to a proud Philosophy, or distasteful to the 'carnal mind.' The proposition, nevertheless, in both its parts, is there written in characters so legible, that all may read it; so enduring, that it can never be obliterated; so intelligible, that no ingenuity can alter, no quibbling criticism mystify, its signification. That, therefore, Devils exist, and that they are active in the seduction and depravation of the humankind, are articles to which, on the ground of their Divine announcement, we demand the assent of all who pretend to frame their creed according to the testimony of Sacred Scripture. Those who repudiate them, because, while rejecting the authority of

Revelation, they cannot discover them by the light of Reason, had need, if they would not befool themselves, to produce stronger arguments for their disbelief, than any which their subtilty has yet suggested. Truly, their objections prove them to be lame logicians. It were amusing, were it not melancholy, to see men, who can often expatiate so beautifully on Literature or Science, whenever they touch on Theology, discoursing in Iambics. Ah! the understanding is controlled by the heart, while the heart is under the dominance of enmity, secret if not avowed, to the Truth. Hence the perpetual limp, or unhappy stumble, of the halt; occasionally, the unseemliness of a giant, strong in limb and capable of graceful movement, hobbling awkwardly on stilts.

Regarding the other topics embraced in the discussion, unanimity is not required, nor can it be reasonably expected. Here is a large margin for difference of opinion. Accordingly, in the views propounded, many, who admit the reality of Diabolical Agency, do not coincide. Some contend that we too much contract, others that we unduly widen, its sphere. The former attribute to it, as the originating cause, most of the crimes committed, and of the errors or delusions embraced, with no small amount of the woes endured, by mankind: the latter connect these exclusively, save perchance in very peculiar or extraordinary cases, with native depravity. The first consider them as, principally,

the doings of Satan or his delegates,—the baleful fruits of their promptings, or the sad consequences of their energy: the second see in them hardly aught beyond the workings and effects of human corruption. To us, as previously remarked, the truth seems to be intermediate between these extremes; though its precise point, which is of little practical moment, can be known only to the Omniscient.

Where ‘the Spirit does not speak expressly,’ and the subject is confessedly mysterious, we cannot be too cautious in our affirmations. Abhorring, on questions in relation to which the language of diffidence becomes us, the air and tone of confident dogmatism, we merely urge the duty of compliance with the Apostolic exhortation: ‘Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.’ May we, however, tender the admonition, to make Scripture, not Reason or Philosophy, the supreme standard, the sole arbiter, in this as in all other matters of religious belief. To its authority let us bow with profoundest deference, deeming its announcements, in every instance, certain and final as the utterances of Infallibility. At the same time, the distinction between the explicit *statement*, and the mere *inference*, ought to be carefully noted. Respecting the one, provided the terms be understood, or the import of the proposition be apprehended, there can be no dubiety or cavil: whereas, the other may embody, with substantial truth, more or less error. The first is the voice of God,

distinct and unequivocal: the second is the conclusion, drawn from the Word, by those who, however good or intelligent, are apt to be mistaken, or liable to be deceived.

Guided by the principle recommended, we accept as a DIVINE VERITY, the doctrine of Demoniacal Influence: an Influence, not restricted to a particular period, or to some ill-omened individuals, but lengthened in its continuance as the duration, and commensurate in its range with the increase, of the human family on earth. In other words, we believe it to be exerted, throughout all ages, in both the unregenerate and the renewed; though the *frequency*, or the *extent*, of its operation in either, being by us undeterminable, must be very much matter of conjecture. We conceive, also, that this Influence is not confined to *temptation*, or exercised only in instigating to *moral* evil. As, in the remote past, it was, in Palestine and the Land of Uz, so, in our opinion, it still is, instrumental in the production of *physical* suffering, partly, from bodily or mental disease, partly, from outward calamity. How far, indeed, or in what ways, we cannot tell: nor, in reference to any particular case, whether of personal affliction or infirmity, or of heavy disaster or crushing catastrophe, should we be hasty to assert the interference of Fiends. The assertion might be true; but to warrant us to make it, a positive revelation were necessary. Humility requires, therefore, that we suspend our judgment—refrain our speech, fearing to be ‘rash with our mouth.’

But, were the affirmation hazarded, though pronounced rash, it could not be accounted superstitious or irrational. The case supposed might resemble, in its leading features, one or other of those narrated by the Evangelists. On perusing the reports of these, the thought of Infernal Agency, but for the distinct and repeated mention of it, had, most probably, never occurred to us. None, perhaps, unless apprized of the fact, would have suspected its interference in any of the instances upon record. Not, certainly, in those of *corporeal* malady: as that of the Syrophenician woman's daughter, who was 'grievously vexed with a Devil;' or that of the invalided and decrepit Hebrewess, whom 'Satan had bound eighteen years;' or that of the afflicted youth, whom, occasionally, 'an unclean Spirit tare and bruised,' throwing him into convulsions, but whom Jesus healed by rebuking and dislodging the Demon. Nor, even in instances of possession, might the Agency in question, if not explicitly intimated, have been imagined: as in that of Mary Magdalene, or that of the man who called himself by the appropriate name of Legion, or that of the Pythian damsel at Philippi, or that of the Ephesian demoniac, whom Scæva's sons would not soon forget. The former might have been viewed simply as cases of ordinary disease, attributable *wholly*, like all disorders of similar type, to physical causes: the latter might have been regarded as varied forms or specimens, aggravated but not

singular, of madness. Dreamer or fanatic might the broacher of a different hypothesis have been reputed, had not inspired testimony assured us of the contrary.

Why, then, in modern examples, nearly corresponding in general character with those of ancient Story, is the idea of superhuman interposition to be rejected? Where is the Scriptural warrant for treating it *now* as a fancy or a delusion? We do not, in this or that given instance, assert its reality; but who is entitled to deny it? Should the denial be hazarded, we demand the authority. The Word is our umpire: its verdict we consider decisive. Where, within 'the Volume of the Book,' is it written, either in direct or indirect phrase, that the virulence of Satanic malignity in causing distress, whether by distemper, or calamity, or possession, was confined, in its operations and displays, to the period of miraculous dispensation? Of any such intimation, or any statement fairly susceptible of such a construction, we are ignorant. If the Scriptures nowhere affirm, neither do they, in express terms or by inference, discountenance it; while, in perfect consistency with its truth, their silence respecting it may be easily explained. That it is liable to abuse, or has been employed as a device of priestcraft for sanctioning exorcism, with other superstitious notions and practices, is no argument against it. Such an objection, indeed, has not the weight of a feather, and is far from creditable to the understandings of those who urge it. On

the same ground, most of the distinguishing or fundamental doctrines of the Gospel might be discarded; for which of them has not depraved ingenuity, for selfish or mercenary ends, similarly perverted?

But, on this point we do not further insist. That Devils have both ability and permission, in the ways specified, to augment human suffering *now* as really, though not perhaps to the same degree, as in Apostolic times, we consider a high probability: a probability, too, of which the Document seems to afford, if not positive proof, a presumption. This, however, is rather submitted as an *opinion*, than announced as a verity; and, strong as is our persuasion of its soundness, we have no controversy with those who may be slow to believe it. What we chiefly contend for, is, Diabolical Agency in its *moral* aspects and bearings, or as operating, with unceasing energy, in the promotion and encouragement of sin. Here, also, while holding somewhat tenaciously, and as the result of much reflection, the views expressed both as to the Extent and the Means of its activity, we decline to debate the question. Dissentients, whether demurring to our theory on the score of excess or defect, we leave to draw their own inferences from the general representations of the Word. We are careful not to 'go beyond our line,' anxious to be guided by the intimations of the Oracle, and content with the simple knowledge, the explicit and oft-repeated assurance, of the great yet mournful

fact. The fact is—That, to an indefinite degree, and in a multiplicity of modes appropriate to Spirits, Apostate Angels, with the license of Divine sovereignty, have been from the commencement, and will be to the completion, of the cycles of man's sojourn on earth, indefatigable in fostering the love, and confirming the purpose, and enforcing the practice, of wickedness; vexing with evil surmises, and polluting with impure suggestions, those whom redeeming grace has exempted from their thrall, and riveting more securely the 'chains of darkness' around those who are still in the bondage of corruption.

Such is one article of our Theological creed. Convince us of its erroneousness, and we renounce it. The attempt, however, must be made, not by dogmatic assertion, but by sober ratiocination. To unsupported statement, we give no heed: to fair argument, on the other hand, we are ready to listen; its validity we would admit, and by its conclusiveness be influenced. Again, then, we call upon the two classes of our opponents to produce their 'strong reasons.' Out of what they would have us believe is a well-stored armoury, let them fetch their selectest weapons, furbished and sharpened, like 'glittering swords,' whetted and prepared for immediate use, that we may test the vaunted excellence of their temper—prove the keenness of their edge, and their fitness for execution. Supposing ours to be a false position, they will do us a service, for



which the tribute of gratitude will be rendered, should they, though by rough handling, drive us from it. Not in love with error, we wish, if unwittingly perverted or deluded by its spell, to be undeceived. Having no partiality for the misconceptions of prejudice, no predilection for what sound instruction has antiquated, we would esteem it a favour, if, unhappily, we mistake a fancy for a reality, a tenet of superstition for a doctrine of Inspiration, to be rightly informed. Deeming ignorance not the ornament, but the reproach, of intellect,—not ‘the mother of devotion,’ but its extinguisher,—we desiderate knowledge, especially in all that relates to the religious or the spiritual. ‘Hath darkness blinded our eyes,’ so that we grope after Truth, without ever finding the object of our search; following illusions which, like deceitful lights, mislead, or, like meteoric gleams, only startle and bewilder? Among those, whom self-laudation styles ILLUMINATI, are there none to compassionate our case? Rather than chide or twit us with our alleged blindness, might they not deign to throw some corruscations on our path? Thus might one or another gain the reputation of being our Great Apollo, by whose radiance we were enabled, instead of stumbling as in the night, to walk surely as in the day: and neither shame nor fear should prevent the acknowledgment of our obligations.

## CHAPTER III.

## Opponents—continued.

IN arguing with the abettors of Infidelity, we cannot, on any controverted article of the Christian faith, appeal to Revelation. That they repudiate its authority, and avow disrespect for its averments, precludes every such appeal. Of what avail, therefore, to remind them, that Demonology forms part, a leading and prominent part, of its instructions? They confidently maintain its incredibility: denounce it as an obsolete notion, unphilosophical and irrational. Persuaded of the opposite, we join issue with them. Not satisfied with mere assertion, we reiterate our demand of proof. Between Diabolical Agency, and Philosophy or Reason, wherein lies the discrepance or incongruity? The two appear to be quite reconcilable—in perfect harmony: we, at least, fail to perceive any discordance or contrariety. If, as is affirmed, such incompatibility actually exists, glad shall we be to have it pointed out to us. *How* clashes the one with the other; or, with what principle or dictate of the latter is the former at variance? Surely, in asking information on this head, we shall not be charged

with impertinence. The request we conceive ourselves entitled to make; and, if it is not complied with, few will be at a loss to conjecture why. When the elucidation is furnished, and we have had opportunity to examine it, it will be time to pronounce upon its merits.

To those, again, who grant the Bible to be the Word of God, but pretend not to find in it the doctrine defended, we present a similar request. A statement, distinct and concise, of their scheme of Exposition is greatly desiderated. Having, by superior sagacity and labour, discovered the necessary Key, they might favour us with the use of it. We should thus be guided to the right exegesis of Holy Writ, and escape the condemnation and the woe of 'blind leaders of the blind.' May we, then, both for our own direction and the instruction of others, solicit the benefit of this modern discovery? How are we to know, when a passage is to be taken in the literal, and when in a figurative acceptance: when a Sacred Writer puts forth a myth or parable, and when he announces a doctrine, or relates a fact,—when he expresses his own opinion, and when he reveals the will of God: when personification is employed, and when a living Being, or moral Agent, is intended? We press the inquiry, how are these difficulties to be solved? Is the question to be decided, solely, by the judgment, however biassed or capricious, of the reader; or is there some fixed rule for determining it? Great, often,

should be our perplexity, not seldom, too, might we grievously err, had we no established method, no regular system of Hermeneutics, by which to ascertain, without dubiety, and in all instances, the import of what the Spirit teaches.

Our principles of Interpretation are patent to inspection, matters of general cognizance, intelligible to every tyro, and of ready application by learned or unlearned: can this be predicated of the principles of our opponents? Ours we are willing to subject to the strictest ordeal—to prove by the most rigorous tests of impartial and enlightened criticism: will they submit theirs to the same fair and searching scrutiny? If they are agreed as to the proper Exegetical laws, will they furnish us with a brief digest, a comprehensive but succinct compend, of them? What those adopted by them are, we can only guess or infer: to judge of their soundness, we would require, as we should like, to see them in all their completeness and particularity. Might not some chief Rabbi, some Doctor of high name in the Neological School, undertake this 'labour of love?' If we are wrong, will no one, by providing a sure directory, which might serve as a vademecum, set us right? Till then we must blunder on after our accustomed fashion, expounding Scripture in the good old way. By processes similar to those by which we would expiscate the meaning of other writings, bearing the same dates, and penned in the same languages, we shall continue to

extract from their various compositions, the sense of Prophets and Apostles: neither confounding the literal with the metaphorical, nor transmuting the metaphorical into the literal; never, by emendation or interpretation, twisting a sentence into subservience to creed or theory; not understanding what is evidently said of a *person*, to denote a thing, a principle, an abstraction; preserving, with scrupulous care, the text pure and entire, and explaining, agreeably to approved rules of construction, the several terms and phrases.

Meanwhile, neither class of opponents, it is presumed, will demur or take offence. Allowing the case to be as they represent it, it is gratifying to think, that nothing is proposed or requested impossible to men of such penetrating genius, so excelling their fellows in perspicacity, each gifted with the wisdom of seven Solomons. Who so qualified to answer 'hard questions,' solve perplexing problems, or bring up Truth from the lowest depths? Profoundly versed in all the criticism of Neology, in all the learning of Pantheism, in all the science of the many LOGIES and ISMS that have lately come into vogue, and are being cultivated with zeal by the choicer order of spirits, these Lights of the age will, doubtless, find the task which we assign to them of easy performance. May we hope that, though irksome to persons of rare erudition and intuitive quickness of discernment, they will, out of compassion for those of humbler attainments, and who may be slow of appre-

hension, take the trouble to acquaint us with the successive *steps* by which they come to their conclusions. We would, too, did it not look like presumption, hint the propriety, for our conviction or edification, of their *reasoning* instead of theorizing, and *proving* instead of affirming. The latter may be more convenient, and, certainly, has advantages; but the former, for ordinary minds at least, is far the more profitable. Will they pardon our forwardness, if we further beg them to consider, whether what they idolize as Philosophy, be not a counterfeit of that which is alone worthy of the name; and what they style Science, be not a base substitute, a something 'falsely so called.'

Our remarks, if not fitted to flatter, are not *intended* to wound. We have spoken freely; yet it has been, not from a wish to say aught harsh or unpleasant, but from a deep impression of the grossness of the heterodoxy combated. To us it appears, in its tendency and consequences, highly dangerous. The procedure of its advocates, too,—equally those of the different Infidel Schools, and those who claim the appellation of Rationalists or Unitarians,—we deem utterly unworthy of men of sincerity or candour. We appeal to the better judgment of the more reflecting and unprejudiced of both classes, whether the course pursued be not most unfair; a method of defence alike absurd and impious. It may impose upon the weakness of folly, or suit the vitiated taste of ungodliness; but by all who respect

either the rational or the sacred, it will be viewed with reprobation. Argumentation, we fear, is wasted on those who vindicate, in the manner indicated, the error exposed: those, in other words, who impugn Demonology on the grounds stated, assailing it with the weapons of a false logic or a perverted criticism. The sharpness of rebuke may only irritate; and under the rankling of choler, they may mutter scorn, or in the pride of fancied enlightenment, affect pity. Be it so: 'faithful are the wounds of a friend,' though resented as the inflictions of an enemy. Every one has not imbibed the spirit, breathed in the following beautiful saying:—'Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil which shall not break my head; for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamity.'

Though unwilling to overtax patience, we would again remonstrate with Disbelievers in Demonology. Will they inform us, without ambiguity or reservation, of the grounds on which they rest their disbelief? That it is not a doctrine of Scripture, has been contended; but too pitiable are the quibbles, too shallow the sophistries, adduced in support of this position, to shake the faith of the sober-minded or intelligent. By many it is held up to ridicule. But, bad is the cause that needs such a weapon: incompetent or disingenuous is the controvertist who resorts to it. It excites a suspicion of his sincerity—is, virtually, a confession of

weakness. To a serious subject, it is altogether unsuited. What if that which you now meet with a direct negative, should hereafter be found to be a dread reality? How your mockery will be turned into mourning! Diabolical Agency you cannot disprove; but denial supplies the lack of argument, and raillery is substituted for reasoning. The doctrine offends pride of understanding. Its discovery, baffling the researches of 'carnal wisdom,' and established, not by ratiocination, but by testimony, is contested. Taught in a Volume, which, though bearing the seal and signature of Divinity, is viewed, like the Shaster or the Koran, as the fabrication of man, containing a compilation of delusions or impostures, it is pronounced fabulous; and we who espouse it, are twitted with credulity or superstition, on a par with believers in ghosts or necromancy.

The charge is retorted. Fine philosophers, or able logicians, some of our opponents may be on various themes, or questions that provoke not the antipathies of self-sufficient reason; but that they are the one or the other, could not be inferred from their puerilities and babblings on the point in dispute. The imbecility of childhood or ignorance may be gulled by the confidence of dogmatism; but are men, accustomed to inquire and examine, to be thus duped, or so easily satisfied? The Deistical impugner of the tenet we maintain, must, if he would have the reputation of acting rationally, state distinctly the *grounds* of his negation; not merely ob-



ject or deny, but produce *evidence* for his scepticism. Here is a sphere for the genius of Transcendentalism: scope for the ingenuity of that abnormal type of humanity, the PHILOSOPHIC PANTHEIST. Might not some gifted specimen, neither oppressed with humility, nor restrained by diffidence, make the essay? Are none such to be found in *that* City, wherein, as in 'the great and wide sea, are things creeping innumerable, both small and great?' Yes: 'there is Leviathan,' after which, like many after the Beast, the tiny tribes have been wondering, and which, like a Megatherium of overawing strength and aspect, has been a scare and a terror to the faint-hearted. Will, too, the Neologist or Socinian show his warrant for wresting, by what is misnamed criticism, 'the Lively Oracles?' Where is the authority for subjecting them to a process of mangling or adulteration, which could not be extended to an ancient Classic, without exposing the offender to scorn or indignation? How censurable thus to violate, while professing to respect, the Scriptures of Inspiration! Equally daring is the impiety, and egregious the inconsistency, of those guilty of such presumption: nor, we repeat, can any vocables form a scourge with which to lash them according to their deserts. An easy way this to get rid of Demonology, or any other unacceptable doctrine!

More grateful, no doubt, to our opponents, as well as more pleasant to us, had been a different style of

address. Perhaps, a juster estimate of their greatness, and our littleness, would have moderated our tone. In that case, we might have deemed it expedient to discourse of them, and to them, with 'baited breath and whispering humbleness.' Will they, of their clemency, 'forgive us this wrong?' Considerateness may ascribe to bluntness or rusticity, what, in one of superior culture or refinement, might have been imputed to malignity, and been resented as an insult to their Mightinesses. Who expects a plain Country Minister to be schooled into the proprieties of polite speech, or to possess the courtly accomplishments of a Metropolitan? Not always do 'years teach wisdom.' If, in the popular Idols of the day we see little to admire; that proves our want of discernment. If, to join the worshippers in 'the house of Rimmon,' we have scruples of conscience; that is owing to our narrow-mindedness.

But, at whose feet are we asked to sit, and from whose lips to imbibe instruction? Is it he of the 'Vestiges': a congeries of fantasies, displaying, with much of the acquisitive, little of the *reasoning*,—an affectation of the philosophic, with an abnegation equally of the Christian and the rational? Is it he of the 'Constitution of Man:' a work containing many excellent principles and sagacious remarks, but inculcating a Theology as diverse from that of the Bible, as the material from the spiritual, or night from day; and interspersed with caricatures, pitiable though undesigned, of the orthodox? Is it

one Waldo; who, endowed with the 'gift divine,' is qualified to correct misconceptions derived from Prophets and Apostles of the Hebrew line, and whose writings are suited to displace Scriptures so long held in veneration? Is it a certain Thomas—the unsparing reprover of SHAMS: himself viewed by some of the shrewd as a very embodiment of what, in tone so loud, and diction so elegant, he denounces? We must, nevertheless, decline to acknowledge them as our teachers—beg to be excused, though under a charge of bigotry or perverseness, not receiving their dogmas. These, with a host of other Notables, whose religious or irreligious sentiments may be as diverse as their names, will agree in saying without hesitation, and in derision of believers in an exploded Hebrew fiction, No Devil. This, though much to be deplored, would be less matter of lamentation, but for the myriad-phased and swelling multitudes, who, with child-like simplicity, a faith implicit and unquestioning as that of the most uninquiring son of 'Mother Church,' homologate the denial. 'O my soul, come not thou into their secret: unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united.' Why 'court death' by 'giving heed to their fables,' or learning their ways?

Our creed is the opposite. Of the Being of Satan and his numerous confederates, and of their Activity in tempting to evil and causing suffering, we are as firmly persuaded as we are of our own existence and agency,

or of those of our Maker. They who ignore or dispute the alleged facts, had as well consider whether this may not be one of the artifices of the Enemy to keep them, and through their co-operation others, in the fetters of spiritual enthrallment. Especially would we obtest them not to turn into ridicule, or make topics of profane scoffing, what we hold to be verities of such awful import. Otherwise He, whose testimony they discredit, —the God of truth, whose veracity they impugn, may, in righteous retribution, abandon them to ‘strong delusion, to believe a lie.’ Hereafter, when it will be impossible to retrieve the fatal consequences of their error, they may discover how sadly they are mistaken. What Scriptural argument fails to effect, sorrowful experience will accomplish: the woes of futurity will convince them whether we or they are right; whether Demoniacal influence is a dream, a vanity, a bugbear,—or a terrific reality, of which Mercy warned them, but of which, as they mocked the warning, Justice shall give them sensible and agonizing proof. We recall to their remembrance, and beg them seriously to ponder, the following announcement of a Hebrew Seer, many of whose predictions, seemingly most improbable at the time, have been actually verified to the letter, and not ‘one jot or tittle’ of whose utterances, we are persuaded, will be falsified by the event. ‘Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the King it is prepared: He hath made it deep and large; the pile thereof is fire and much wood;

the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.' That they may have no more painful proof of its existence than is supplied by such an averment, or of the entity and malice of its accursed inmates than is at present afforded, is our fervent prayer on behalf of those, who 'laugh to scorn' the faithful monitors, and disbelieve the inspired assurances, of it and of them. The Lord, of His infinite mercy, answer our prayer, by granting to each 'the Spirit of wisdom' to enlighten, convince, and save!

## CHAPTER IV.

*Believers in Demonology.*

HITHERTO, our remarks have been directed chiefly to those from whom, on the points in debate, we entirely differ. Their views, in our apprehension, are utterly unsound, in flat contradiction to the testimony of Inspiration. Most of the reasonings, too, by which they are sought to be established, we hold to be manifestly illogical; plausible sophistries or shallow quibbles, sometimes wrestings of the sense or perversions of the letter, pompously styled criticism, unworthy of men making the slightest pretensions to candour or enlightenment. That they should be espoused by the feeble-minded, whom weakness incapacitates for judging rightly, or by impersonations of bronze, whose favourite vocation is the advocacy of error, and who, without compunction or shame, lend themselves to the spouting of all manner of blasphemy, cannot surprise. But that they should obtain the sanction of names, respectable for talent and scholarship, and, in not a few cases, affecting reverence for Holy Writ, is matter equally of wonder and regret: of wonder, at the blinding power of prepossession or theory; of regret, not merely on

account of the sceptical themselves, but for the sake of unreflecting or 'unstable souls,' who, imposed upon by the boldness of their dogmatism, or their ostentation of learning, may unwarily adopt their heterodoxy.

Our present discourse is to those with whom, on the subject canvassed, we are of one mind. Respecting the main facts, the Personality and Agency of Demons, there is perfect harmony of sentiment. In regard, indeed, to a variety of questions connected with these, such an affirmation cannot be made: here no inconsiderable disagreement prevails. For instance, touching the Head of this evil confederacy, some maintain him to have been, in his primeval state, 'the highest of all God's creatures; the top and crown of the whole creation; the brightest part of the heaven of heavens; the Prince of angels, to whom all did obeisance; the grand minister of Providence, to whom were committed power, principality, and dominion over the whole, in all its kingdoms; as, in the unrivalled lustre and combination of his excellencies, a type of Christ.' Somewhat similar is the portrait drawn of him by the imaginative genius of Milton. In the following couplet, the Archfiend, whom Ithuriel and Zephon had surprised in the bowers of Eden, is introduced as thus addressing, with contemptuous scorn, as his inferiors and juniors, those two bright celestials:

'Know ye not me? ye knew me once no mate  
For you; there sitting where ye durst not soar.'

To nearly the same purport, much has been written. There may be those who give an easy credence to such representations. In their accuracy we cannot acquiesce. To us they appear rather the painting of fancy, than the delineation of a Divine pencil. What they enunciate we regard simply as matter of opinion, or inference, or 'doubtful disputation.' They are mere assertions, or effusions of the Muse, unsupported by the only proper and decisive authority. The Record contains no such averment. It nowhere teaches, either in express terms or by fair construction, that Satan, previously to his fall, was *pre-eminent* in rank or capacity: in other words, that he had precedence, in dignity or endowment, of all the angelic hosts. Such language is manifestly rash; as gratuitous as the vulgar saying, that Man stands at the bottom in the scale of rational existence—the connecting link between the animal and the spiritual departments. For neither belief is there the shadow of a warrant. Not in favour of the latter: for, while the Oracle gives no utterance on the subject, all analogy is against it. Who that contemplates the multitude and comparative magnitudes of the worlds with which Astronomy peoples the regions of immensity, can entertain the idea, that humanity is either highest or lowest, or even guess what may be its relative position, among the millions of orders which compose the kingdom of *corporeal* intelligence? To the former belief, the same remark applies. For aught we can tell, the Prince of



Devils may have been, originally, the Prince of the celestial hierarchy; the brightest of the Morning Stars, the noblest of the Sons of God. What the Poet indited may, possibly, have been the actual fact:

‘High in the midst of all the throng,  
Satan, a tall Archangel, sat.’

This, however, is only conjecture. It is not the announcement of the ‘Sure Word of Prophecy:’ it has no place among the verities of Revelation. It cannot, therefore, be an article of intelligent faith.

What we learn from Scripture, concerning the personal and pristine greatness of Satan, seems to be substantially this: That he was a Being of transcendent power and wisdom, as well as holiness, occupying a very elevated station in the universe, second, perhaps, in gradation and faculty, to no created intellect. That such an One, of dignity so exalted, of understanding so large, of moral excellence so superlative, should have contracted guilt, or swerved from his integrity, may be thought strange. But the wonder will cease, if we reflect, that loftiness of nature, and superiority of worth, are no securities against sin, no preservatives from disobedience. Nay, may not supereminence in rank and attribute be *peculiarly* exposed to danger; beset with temptations to evil, especially to the swellings of ambition and self-gloriation, corresponding both in number and force? Among human beings, the exemplification

of this is by no means rare. How often have extremes been found meeting in an individual; priority in mental ability, associated with priority in depravity; the vastness of the former the measure of the latter! In the present case, however, the fact, staggering or mysterious as it may appear, is incontrovertible. 'The gold became dim; the most fine gold was changed.' Lust conceived in the bosom of purity: pride entered one of the sublimest seats of virtue. He whom the favour of his Maker had 'crowned with glory and honour,' forgetful alike of his obligations and his dependence, would be a God. The Angel of light became an Angel of darkness. The Peer of Gabriel and Michael, who reigned with them in bliss, agonizes in perdition. Disowning the supremacy, he braved the frown, of the Almighty Sovereign, and, in righteous judgment, was banished at once from His presence and the fellowship of the loyal. Turned apostate, he instigated to conspiracy, and was joined in revolt by legions of equal or humbler rank, who, his confederates in rebellion, are his "companions in tribulation;" and who, subordinated to his rule, co-operate as his auxiliaries, or act as his instruments, in spreading disaffection and entailing woe.

To our description of Satan, some, perhaps, object; alleging that it invests him with powers and prerogatives, which seem to trench on the Divine. This we hold to be a misapprehension. He is represented as a *dependent* Being, though a Being of elevated rank, and

endowed with corresponding capacity. What is his grade in the scale of creation, what the measure of his ability, or what the degree of the license given to him, we presume not to say. From what is revealed, however, it may be inferred, that they are very great. That aught, whether natural property or achievement, incompetent to a creature, has been attributed to him, we do not admit. Those who dissent from our views or statements are asked, not to assert, but to *prove*, their inaccuracy. Will they tell us the limit of created might; or what is, and what is not, within its compass? We maintain as well as they, that between the latter and Omnipotence the distance is absolutely infinite: but let it be remembered, that Satan belongs to a very lofty, perhaps the supreme, order of Existences. Omnipresence, or ubiquity, is the attribute of Jehovah: but Devils are Spirits, and, though confined to one place at a time, may speedily visit, in succession, many spots or persons far remote. Unfettered by matter, they may possess powers of locomotion, or of translation hither and thither, with a celerity of which those 'burdened with a weight of clay' can have no conception. We would simply remind of a distinction already hinted at, and which, though often overlooked, merits attention, especially when themes high and mysterious as that of which we discourse, are the subject of remark. The distinction referred to, is that between the *supernatural* and the *superhuman*,—between the *miraculous*

and the *marvellous*. Many things, impossible to mortals, may be practicable to superior Intelligences, holy or fallen; and what we might hastily pronounce miraculous, or the direct effect of Divine exertion, might not appear wonderful in their eyes.

In relation, again, to Diabolical Agency, there is, among those who credit its reality, the same concord, with, perhaps, still greater diversity. They who admit the fact, as Divinely attested, are much divided in opinion regarding both its *modes* and its *extent*. In general, it will be allowed that the modes are very various, and the extent fearful. Such is, without controversy, the information of the Word. It, therefore, concerns all to know, whether, and in what way, this malignant influence may be successfully resisted. There does not appear to be a member of the race exempted from liability to the approaches, probably from the actual assaults, of the Tempter. He may accost by stratagem or by violence; work now upon fear, now upon hope; at one time, ply with blandishments, as in Paradise, at another, harass with 'fiery darts;' flatter into a delusive peace, or drive to distraction. His astuteness and experience, too, qualify him to decide, promptly and wisely, on the likeliest methods of seduction,—the practice of deceit, or the use of force; to adapt his attacks to peculiarities of frame or condition; and to avail himself of circumstances in the lot, whence he derives no little advantage. How, then, may the

Adversary be effectually opposed, his designs frustrated, and his efforts counteracted? The question is not one of mere curiosity or profitless speculation, but of awful and permanent interest, affecting the spiritual well-being here and hereafter. To furnish an answer, will be our endeavour in the sequel.

The theme, it will be perceived, is large. It affords wide scope for discussion and exhortation. To dwell on its more prominent or leading topics, while giving us pleasure, might not be unattended with benefit. Our limits, however, which have already been exceeded, forbid our expatiating upon it at much length. A very few brief and cursory hints are all that we can, at present, attempt to offer. Among the many counsels that might be suggested, the following, it is hoped, will approve themselves to the serious inquirer, as peculiarly apposite and weighty. Are we desirous to cope with our unseen Enemies? Would we not be vanquished and enslaved by their superior sagacity and might?

First, Let us be *well instructed in the Word*. This we consider of primary importance. All information, either necessary or desirable, in relation both to danger and duty, it supplies. While acquainting us with the Being and Agency, it also apprizes us of the craft and violence, of Evil Spirits. Ignorance of the devices of their malice it renders inexcusable, by affording a disclosure of them, general indeed, yet, for every practical purpose,

quite sufficient. It puts us on our guard, by admonishing of their wiles; offers direction as to the *mode*, and the *means*, of successfully resisting their opposition; encourages and animates to withstand, by inspiring the hope of seasonable succour, and guaranteeing the certainty of final conquest.

It deserves special notice, that it was by Scriptural quotation that our Lord, in the wilderness, defeated the designs of the Adversary. In that mysterious encounter, each assault of the Tempter was repelled, on the part of his invincible Antagonist, by a direct reference to the testimony of Inspiration—‘IT IS WRITTEN.’ Would we also come off victorious in the conflict with Spiritual Wickednesses? Here is the select, the appointed, the only weapon, with which we can expect to foil them. Blessed be God, to whose goodness we owe the possession of so apt a provision, so exquisite a contrivance, of His wisdom. Be it our care to avail ourselves of what has been thus Divinely prepared and bestowed; in the persuasion, that this heavenly armour is our best defence. Whereas, unfurnished with it, we have no protection from the buffetings of Satan, who will thus be sure to ‘get the advantage of us.’

The Word is appropriately called, ‘the Sword of the Spirit.’ As such, it has an *intrinsic* and an incomparable excellence. An instrument, not ‘of man’s device,’ but of Infinite Skill, it indicates, as might be presumed, a perfection both of adaptation and efficacy. Not only is

it 'sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow,' and operating as 'a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart:' it is also, in other ways, or for other purposes, equally serviceable. What the Poet represents the spear of Ithuriel as executing, it is admirably suited to accomplish. Did the touch of the one discover, under the appearance of an Angel of glory, the form of the Prince of fiends? Not less wonderfully effective is the other in unveiling the snares of death, though disguised or concealed with all the art of the Deceiver. In the strife to be waged with the Powers of darkness, it is indispensable. Whoever, therefore, would be crowned with success, or rather, not shamefully worsted, requires to be armed with the Word. Rightly wielded, it will prove, as in the case of the Saviour, of unfailing utility in baffling the efforts of our invisible foes.

To be conversant, however, with the letter of Scripture is not enough. It works not like a charm; partakes not of the nature or the influence of a magical incantation. Wearing it as an amulet, has no virtue to repel Evil Agencies: nor is there, in the repetition of its sayings, any mystic potency to exorcise or disenchant. What could it advantage us, though, in imitation of those ancients who 'made broad their phylacteries and enlarged the borders of their garments,' we decorated our persons, or, after the fashion of some

moderns, covered the walls of our dwellings or sanctuaries, with copious and appropriate selections? Let the terms and phrases of Holy Writ be as familiar as household words to the ear, or as objects of daily vision to the eye; let the rehearsal of its verities or petitions be as frequent as the utterance of Ave by Papist, or of Allah by Moslem: still, from exercises so unconnected with the intellect and the heart, the expectation of moral or spiritual good were as vain, as disappointing, as that of the blinded devotee of idolatry or superstition from his mechanical routine of Matins and Vespers, or other irrational observances.

The Word, to be of real benefit, must '*dwell in us richly in all wisdom.*' Not only is it requisite that its instructions be stored in the memory: equally necessary is it, that the judgment and the affections be brought into contact with them. It is '*the entrance of the Word that giveth light.*' It is '*the engrafted Word that is able to save.*' It is '*in obeying the Truth, through the Spirit, that the soul is purified.*' The Record, therefore, that it may be efficacious in illuminating the mind, or directing and guarding the conduct, must be embraced with intelligence and faith: its doctrines and precepts, its admonitions and promises, behove to be distinctly apprehended, cordially believed, and practically applied. Otherwise, they can have no transforming or regulating influence; and as to any salutary result, it will be nearly the same as though



they were neither remembered nor known, or had never been 'given by inspiration of God.'

Would we, then, derive substantial advantage from the Word? Are we sincerely desirous it should answer, in reference to us, the ends contemplated by its Gracious Author, and for which it is actually profitable in the case of all, who, endued with 'spiritual discernment,' make a legitimate and judicious use of it? Be it our study, while carefully treasuring up its informations, to perceive their import, appreciate their excellence, and experience their power. That such may be our attainment, let us implore 'an unction from the Holy One,' by whose teaching we shall be guided to the genuine sense of those Oracles, which 'holy men of old spake' under His suggestion. To Him who is the 'Interpreter, one among a thousand,' let it be our prayer, that, while we 'search the Scriptures,' He may 'open our understandings to understand' them. 'Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law.'

Thus, enlightened in the knowledge of God's will, and 'hiding His Word in our hearts,' we shall prove its mighty sanctifying efficacy. 'Receiving the love of the Truth,' and 'holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience,' we shall have 'the witness in ourselves,' and, in a corresponding degree, 'adorn the doctrine which is according to godliness.' But, from an intimate acquaintance with the instructions of the

Record, will flow another happy consequence. It will thus be our privilege to be furnished with the proper means of defence against Spiritual Opponents, however wily their tactics, or furious their assaults. As from a well-filled quiver, we shall be enabled to bring forth the shafts adapted to particular occasions, or fittest for putting them to flight. Let it be our endeavour, therefore, to be 'skilful in the Word of righteousness,' that so we may be prepared, like 'the Captain of our salvation,' promptly to apply, to every varied temptation, the suitable corrective, 'It is written.'

Again, To victory over Satan, *constancy in our Christian profession* is necessary. This is matter of express and repeated inculcation: 'whom resist, stedfast in the faith.' To the same effect another Apostle enjoins, 'Stand fast in the faith.' The Colossians, too, were reminded, that if they would at last be 'presented holy, and unblamable, and unreprouable,' they must 'continue in the faith, grounded and settled.' We are likewise exhorted, to 'hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering.' These are only a specimen of Scriptures, embodying similar injunctions. In all of them, the term 'faith,' evidently denotes, not the principle, but the subject of faith; or the system of instruction contained in 'the Volume of the Book.'

This scheme of doctrine and precept we believe to be of Divine original; an emanation from the Fountain of wisdom. We have embraced it in the persuasion, that

it has 'God for its Author, truth without any mixture of error for its substance, and salvation for its end.' Our veneration for it, therefore, should be unabating as well as profound; increasing as our acquaintance with its excellence improves. Deeming it a bequest of inestimable worth, a treasure more precious than 'thousands of gold and silver,' let us show, by a cordial and practical deference, our high appreciation of it. Let us cherish towards it the warmth of devout affection; cling to it with the tenaciousness of inviolable attachment; keep it intact, uncorrupted by 'the doctrines and commandments of men.' Let it be held as the standard of belief, and observed as the rule of righteousness; regarded as both the source of our sweetest comforts, and the foundation of our most cheering hopes.

To infringe this stedfastness may often be the endeavour, as it would be the delight, of the Adversary. He may try to allure or deter from the ways of godliness; flattering by false promises, or harassing by hatreds and strifes. He may insinuate suspicions of the truth of Christianity, as if its evidence were doubtful; or foster prejudices against some of its doctrines, as irreconcilable with Infinite wisdom and goodness; or excite distaste to particular precepts, as restricting liberty, or abridging enjoyment. To detach us from it entirely is his main object, his chief desire; as, by the completeness of this severance, would be secured the certainty of our

ruin. Failing wholly to alienate our affections from it, he seeks, by the craftiness of sophistry, to weaken the firmness and constancy of our adherence; well knowing, that in such degree as he succeeds, he will, in the same proportion, aggravate our guilt, and eventually enhance our condemnation.

What, then, is the conduct which becomes us? Duty requires, that we withstand, resolutely and vigorously, every attempt of the Enemy, to divorce us from our holy faith. Our safety, too, depends upon our not being 'moved away from the hope of the Gospel.' We are commanded to be 'stedfast and immovable:' it is the command alike of authority and of kindness, so that obedience is not more our obligation than our interest. Plainly, too, is the fatal issue of an opposite course intimated: 'It had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.' Awful warning!—'If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him:' his doom will be 'perdition.' We are also told distinctly, 'He that *endureth unto the end*, the same shall be saved: while it is further written for our admonition, 'We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence *stedfast unto the end*.' Good cause, then, have we to 'fear, lest a promise being left of entering into His rest, any of us should seem to come short of it.'

Perseverance in grace, indeed, is the privilege of believers. It is, however, connected uniformly with the use of means. Hence the exhortation, tendered with affectionate earnestness, and repeated in varied phrase, to 'cleave unto the Lord with purpose of heart.' From the state of favour into which sovereign mercy has brought them, they can never fall. 'None is able to pluck them out of the Father's hand. Who shall separate them from the love of Christ?' Occasionally, they may sink into criminal insensibility: for a season, may sadly backslide, or grievously err. But this condition, so guilty and so unhappy, is not permanent. In no instance can they apostatize, so as that it will be 'impossible to renew them again unto repentance.' The 'incorruptible seed' implanted in the heart, though checked in its growth, still remains, and shall be revived: the principle of spiritual life, though apparently extinguished, yet abides, and must operate. At length the Spirit, whose office it is to 'convince of sin,' works penitence, and recovers to the sense and the practice of duty. The promise is fulfilled, 'I have seen his ways, and will heal him.'

Saints are 'kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation.' The word of the oath, and the blood of the covenant, infallibly secure this consummation. They are enjoined, nevertheless, to 'take heed lest there be in them an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.' Such departures they ought

most anxiously to avoid. Though not total but partial, not final but temporary, they both, in all cases, imply guilt, and involve in distress; verifying the declaration of the Prophet, 'Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backsliding shall reprove thee.' They also afford to the Enemy a cause of unhallowed glorying. To deprive him of the occasion of triumph, and to save ourselves much unhappiness, let us seek that our 'hearts may be established with grace,' and our 'steps ordered in God's Word.' As much is the example to be abhorred, as the end is to be dreaded, of those who, 'receiving the Word with gladness, endure but for a time, because they have no root in themselves.' Be it our concern, instead of 'leaving,' to retain, our 'first love;' instead of faltering or stumbling, to proceed with steadiness, in the paths of evangelical obedience: 'holding fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope,' and 'walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless;' remembering that only to the 'faithful unto death' is promised the 'crown of life.'

## CHAPTER V.

## Beliebers in Demonology—continued.

IN the conflict with Satanic temptation, 'familiar acquaintance with the 'Lively Oracles,' and steadfastness in the belief of their doctrines and obedience to their precepts, have been specified as select means of resistance or of conquest. In the neglect of these, ignorant of the former, or inattentive to the latter, what can we expect but failure or defeat? Duty and interest, therefore, combine in enforcing the practical adoption of them. Be it our study, in compliance with their dictates, to be 'mighty in the Scriptures,' and, with a more perfect knowledge of their teaching, to unite a consistent and undeviating conformity to their requirements.

Next in order may be mentioned SOBRIETY. The term, which is of very comprehensive import, is taken in its widest acceptation. In regard to *matters of faith*, sobriety is necessary. In some there is a tendency to speculation, which, unless held under restraint, is apt to lead to extravagances of opinion. To this cause might be traced, partly at least, not a few of the loose or heretical notions, prevalent during the past as well as at

present. Powerful are the attractions of novelty, especially to persons of ardent temperament or lively fancy, whose judgments may be immature, or ill-informed on the subject of theology. Influenced by fondness for the singular, or the love of originality, many embrace tenets, plausible, perhaps, but unsound. By these their minds are perverted, and their principles corrupted: and seldom, alas! do we hear of their 'recovery out of the snare of the Devil,' into which, through ignorance, or inattention, or waywardness, they have unhappily been drawn. The great majority, 'vain in their imaginations,' continue attached to their delusions, neither desiring nor obtaining 'repentance to the acknowledgment of the Truth.'

Those, then, in whom it may operate with peculiar force, would act wisely in curbing the propensity alluded to, and keeping it within bounds. Indulged without check, it may acquire the mastery, and drive, ultimately, to lengths not anticipated. Let none suffer themselves to be dazzled or misled by the bewildering glare of those false lights, which ever and anon burst into notice: they are, it is to be feared, 'wandering stars, for which is reserved the blackness of darkness.' All we would beseech, and particularly the young, to beware of being enamoured with the conceits of a dreamy philosophy, or duped by the sophistries of the 'disputers of this world.' Give no heed to those, whoever they be, whatever the splendour of their names, or the popularity of their



writings, who would undermine your reverence for Revelation, or persuade you to doubt or deny its verities. Communing, through the medium of its effusions, with misguided genius, you may come to admire: admiring, you may be induced to sympathize with its views, and learn its ways: captivated by the bewitching spell of this or the other charmer, you may proceed unsuspectingly from bad to worse, till, following 'the instruction which causeth to err,' you be lured into the impieties of Neology, perchance decoyed into the inextricable mazes of Scepticism, or the cheerless regions of Infidelity.

As a preventive of such evils, an effectual security against the imbibing of noxious tenets, listen, with devout attention and implicit submission, to the 'sure Word of Prophecy.' Suffer no seducing spirit to estrange your regards from it. On points of doctrine, venerate its authority, but repudiate every other. Whatever dogmas are proposed to your acceptance, let them be examined by this Divine test. That you may know what, in any instance, or on any subject, you are to believe, consult carefully its pages, 'comparing spiritual things with spiritual.' Receive nothing as an article of faith, but what evidently has its sanction: reject aught, by whomsoever propounded, that clashes with its testimony. Esteem its announcements as all the utterances of Truth; and be it your desire, your prayer, your endeavour, that your creed be in exact conformity with its teaching. 'Stand ye in the ways,

and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.' So speaks the voice from the Throne: and, as you would not treasure up materials for future regret, or furnish the Enemy, who would have you pursue other courses, with ground of malignant rejoicing, what it 'commands, that observe and do.'

Equally necessary, for the same reasons, is sobriety in relation to *the things of earth*. Its riches, its honours, its distinctions, its pleasures, exert over the most an undue influence. They are estimated far beyond their value, and coveted with an eagerness proportionally excessive. They are objects of sense, ever present, adapted to the taste of the carnal mind, and yielding, after their sort, a measure of satisfaction grosser or more refined. They are, therefore, apt to engage the affections, and to occupy all the energies, as if they constituted the chief good, or possessed properties which do not belong to them. The loss of them occasions grief, and often extorts the bitter complaint, 'Ye have taken away my gods, and what have I more?' Though in themselves innocent or lawful, they are liable to be pursued with an avidity that secularizes the soul, and impresses it with the character of worldliness. When positively sinful, they have a fearfully deteriorating effect; blunting sensibility, stupifying conscience, confounding the moral perceptions, and surrounding with an atmosphere favourable only to the development of

evil. Not to speak of sensuality, ruinous, as a devouring vortex, to soul and body; how fatal often, alike to virtue and substance, is the inordinate thirst for gain! Of what multitudes have the histories been practical commentaries on the words of the Apostle: 'They that *will* be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition!'

It is, therefore, of much importance to cultivate moderation both in the desire and the pursuit of earthly objects and possessions. Not only are they unworthy to monopolize the attention, or hold the first place in the regards; not only are they sure to disappoint the hopes of those, who expect from them high or lasting enjoyment: they also tend, according to the degree of their ascendancy, to prevent anxiety, or banish consideration, respecting what is of infinitely greater concern. 'The love of the world,' in any of its forms, is incompatible with 'the love of the Father:' the reign of the former clearly indicates the absence of the latter. It is likewise unsuited to the dignity, and inconsistent with the duty and prospects, of the heirs of an 'incorruptible inheritance.' As, then, you would neither degrade your Christian calling, nor disregard your best interests, abhor being in 'bondage to weak and beggarly elements;' enslaved by 'the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, or the pride of life.' For this purpose, seek to feel 'the powers of the world to come.' Let its

glorious realities attract your believing contemplations. 'Set your affections on things above.' To them let your devoutest aspirations ascend; and by a respect to them let your conduct be habitually regulated. The more your thoughts are centered, and your hearts fixed, on the unseen and eternal, the less will you be influenced by the seen and temporal; the less disposed to 'love the world, or the things that are in the world.'

Thus, by avoiding the fatuity, you will escape the misery of those, who 'have their portion in this life;' who repair for consolation, not to the 'wells of salvation,' but to 'troubled and polluted springs;' who seek, in the gratifications of sense, that happiness for which the soul longs, and which the Gospel alone is fitted to impart; and who, after a wearisome round of experiments, are forced to confess with the Preacher, 'All is vanity and vexation of spirit.' Thus will sobriety prove a safeguard against the seductions of the Tempter, who would corrupt the soundness of your creed or practice, that by your 'erring from the faith,' or leaning upon broken reeds, you may miss your aim; spending life in a fruitless search after what, like an appearance mocks the eye, or like a shadow eludes the grasp, and at last, coming short of the immortal prize, 'pierce yourselves through with many sorrows.' He 'with whom you have to do,' addresses you in accents alike salutary and alarming; and however scoffers may deride the monition, be you awed and cautioned as if a voice ever sounded

in your ears: 'Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks; walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow.'

Farther, Important as sobriety is in the Christian warfare, VIGILANCE is not less indispensable. Vast, too, is the range of its superintendence; including the thoughts, the words, the actions, or the heart and the life, as well as enemies, whether corporeal or invisible. The *moral frame* has, for obvious reasons, the primary claim to regard. In the unrenewed, it is wholly evil: every faculty perverted, every attribute unholy. Even in the regenerate, it is but partially rectified: much sinfulness still adheres to it: there is 'the flesh lusting against the spirit—the law in the members warring against the law of the mind.' Since the fatal hour of Adam's apostasy, no partaker of humanity, save the Seed of the Woman, could say in truth, 'The Prince of this world hath nothing in me.' In the best he finds materials on which to operate; corruptions, latent but unmortified, which he tries to stimulate. These render his temptations so dangerous. They are thus less likely to fail, and, therefore, the more to be dreaded. Hence the necessity of strict attention to the interior movements, the workings and tendencies of the inner man. Hence the propriety, the universal applicableness, of the injunction, 'Keep thine *heart* with all diligence.'

Out of it proceeds whatsoever defiles. A polluted nature is the source, to which may be traced, in all instances, the streams of impurity in the life. Neglect not, then, the first stirrings of depravity within. Suppress, in its incipency, 'the vile affection,' the forbidden desire; lest, being cherished, it strengthen, and in an unguarded moment, through the potency of foreign influence, betray into foul offence. Crush the egg, or forthwith may come out a viper to sting. 'Lust, when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.'

The *speech*, also, requires similiar government. Accordingly, it was a wise resolution of the Psalmist, 'I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.' To the same effect was his petition, 'Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.' The tongue is aptly called our 'glory.' It is a noble organ, constituting one of the chief characteristics of man, and honourably distinguishing him from all the brutal tribes. Alas! how this excellent gift of creative goodness is misused or perverted! The badge of superiority is made an instrument of shame. Of the bulk of mankind, the ordinary discourse is full of froth and folly, of dissimulation and lying, of slander, profaneness, and evil-speaking, in all their conceivable varieties. What mournful illustrations does it afford of the truth of the inspired description! 'The tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things: an unruly

evil, full of deadly poison : a fire, a world of iniquity : it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature ; and it is set on fire of hell.' How serviceable in the cause of Satan is such an instrument ! Eminently is it adapted to promote ungodliness, and further the interests of the kingdom of darkness. May it not be supposed, therefore, that his craft will be displayed in exciting to the employment of it in the ways calculated to accomplish, most directly and to the utmost extent, ends so congenial to his malice ? Those, then, who would not 'give place to the Devil,' need scrupulously to avoid, in converse, what savours of the filthy or the false,—the 'foolish talking and jesting, which are not convenient.' With the Apostolical exhortations, so salutary and binding, compliance must be constantly yielded : 'Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth : Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt.' The law of truth and love ought, invariably, to regulate the utterance of the lips. 'A wholesome tongue is a tree of life.'

The sphere of vigilance, too, embraces the *conduct*. 'God looketh on the heart,' and according to its state is His estimate of the character. If the former is right, purged of depraved passions, and governed by gracious principle, the latter will, in its general aspects, be irreproachable. Man, however, 'looketh on the outward appearance ;' for, of what is within he can have no cognizance, except in so far as it is manifested by the

life. If this is free from disorders or irregularities, the verdict is favourable: whereas, if it is disfigured by spots and blemishes, a different judgment is formed. Christians profess, and, when acting consistently, exemplify godliness. Their Religion, itself the very essence of purity, inculcates excellence perfect as its nature. They are required to be 'blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke;' to 'shine as lights'—luminaries—'in the world, holding forth the Word of life;' to be 'holy, as He who hath called them is holy;' aiming at conformity to the Divine Pattern, assimilation to which is equally a duty, an honour, a happiness. If, however, they greatly fail in cultivating the morality and piety enjoined; if between the creed and the practice there is a marked discrepancy, the one being a palpable contradiction to the other; the consequences, in every respect, are sad. They thus, besides bringing guilt on their own souls, and grieving the hearts of the righteous, throw stumbling-blocks before the wicked, and occasion reproach to the faith, opening the mouths of its enemies to blasphemy. They also gladden the spirit of the Evil One; who must rejoice to see his professed opponents co-operating to execute his pleasure, and, like obedient tools, doing so efficiently his work.

It, therefore, becomes those who would not be accessory to such mischiefs—whether their own detriment, the scandal of Religion, or the gratification of the



Adversary—to ‘take heed to their ways.’ Such circumspection is obligatory: nor can it ever be neglected with safety. What frequent delinquencies, what disgraceful lapses, owing in many instances to inadvertence, would due attention to the deportment prevent! The more will this appear to be needful and proper, the more the strength of inward corruption, or the force of outward temptation, is considered. Think, also, of ‘the *depths* of Satan:’ with what dexterity he can suit his suggestions to the cases of individuals—to all diversities of temper or character, of mental or moral state, of physical condition or social relationship: how quickly he can detect, and adroitly assail, the more vulnerable points: how skilfully he can ply the ‘besetting sin,’ be it pride or vanity, avarice or ambition, love of distinction or thirst for notoriety, sensual appetite or taste for refined pleasure, the deceivableness of self-righteous complacency, or proneness to dejection and despondency. Marvellous indeed, far exceeding human conception, are the subtilty and variety, as well as energy, in his working. How appropriate, then, the admonition, as regards equally the outer and inner man, Watch! Inattention or carelessness here may, through the sudden surprises or violent assaults of the Enemy, bring into subjection to his power, and lead to acts or courses prejudicial to peace and purity, to reputation and usefulness. ‘Godly jealousy,’ embracing in its exercise both the nature and demeanour, will prove one

of the best means of preventing such injurious consequences. Vigilance, then, unrelaxing and habitual, we urge upon all who would avoid the stings of conscience and the bitterness of regret, or deprive those who watch for their halting, and would exult in their fall, of occasion to triumph over them. Not less their wisdom than their duty is compliance with the exhortation, 'Only let your conversation be as becometh the Gospel:' regulated by its precepts, animated by its spirit, and directed to its aims.

Of the four preceding particulars, the sum is thus concisely but forcibly stated by the Apostle Peter: 'Be sober, be vigilant; because your Adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour. Whom resist, stedfast in the faith.' The same is the injunction of the Apostle James, who enforces it by the assurance of ultimate victory: 'Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you.' Thus commanded and encouraged, let us offer a strenuous and constant opposition to Spiritual Wickednesses, in whatever ways, or by whatever allurements, they may seek to entice us into sin.' No parleying with them, no cessation of antagonism to them, is allowable. They are stronger than we, full of 'cunning craftiness,' and long experienced in the arts of deception; while, in their hostile efforts, they are aided by a traitorous party within, ready, ere we may be aware, to deliver us into their hands. Not one moment ought we to hearken to

these Tempters : that were a moment alike of guilt and of danger. By every consideration of duty and of interest, we are called upon to turn, at once and determinedly, a deaf ear to all their solicitations and proposals. 'Get thee behind me, Satan, thou savourest not the things that be of God,' should be our prompt and indignant reply, whensoever they accost us in the language either of terror or persuasion, of threat or promise.

It is requisite, too, in contending with the Adversary, that we employ only *lawful* means—those which the Word authorizes or prescribes. Never must we attempt to fight him with his own weapons : never have recourse to the 'hidden things of dishonesty,' to falsehood or fraud, to any of the multifarious contrivances of unrighteousness, by which he and his confederates, human as well as diabolical, endeavour to support and propagate the cause of error and impiety. Our resistance is to be firm, resolute, and unyielding ; yet, the resistance of persons, who are careful that the motives from which they act, and the expedients which they adopt, as well as the ends pursued, are agreeable to the Divine will. If it is asked, How, then, shall we oppose the stratagems, or repel the attacks, of Demoniacal Agency ? We answer, 'By pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the Word of Truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand

and on the left.' Thus resisted, the Adversary may be expected, temporarily at least, to 'flee' disappointed, and leave the saint, whom he hoped to inveigle or coerce, 'more than conqueror.'

Finally, To the various means specified, PRAYER must be superadded. Without this, they are not likely to be of much advantage: whereas, in connection with it, they are almost certain to prove efficacious. The separation of the former from the latter, will be our weakness; their union, our strength. The whole combined form a defensive armour so complete, and of quality so superlatively excellent, that the saint, accoutred in it, and skilled in the use of it, need not be greatly apprehensive of danger. However inferior in himself, he will thus be a match for his formidable Assailants. Though lacking their native sagacity and might, he will be enabled, nevertheless, to foil their deepest devices, and withstand their utmost force.

'Watch and pray,' said our Lord to His disciples at a critical juncture, 'that ye enter not into temptation.' The admonition was salutary and appropriate; and soon the event showed how good it had been for them to have remembered, and practically observed, those utterances of foreseeing and considerate kindness. The same precept, for similar reasons, is of universal and perpetual application. Let all regard it as addressed to themselves individually. Let compliance be the study, as it will be the safety, of each; and, especially in the

contest with unseen, yet real and powerful, Antagonists. What an instructive lesson, what an impressive warning, is administered by the culpable neglect, with its sad results, of the Eleven! How opposite the course pursued, with the happiest effects, by Nehemiah and his noble-hearted compatriots, on their return from exile! Hear how they acted when apprized of the hostile intentions of conspiring bands, who were mustering their forces to obstruct the rebuilding of Jerusalem: 'We made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night.' What a fine precedent; what an edifying example of the duty inculcated! Christian, 'go thou and do likewise.'

We are feeble creatures, utterly unequal to the conflict with Principalities and Powers. With not even one of our Spiritual Opponents could we hope to maintain a successful struggle. Before the might of Diabolical Agency, we should instantly be crushed like moths. But, 'with the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.' His arm is omnipotent; His understanding infinite. Aid he can readily impart, in measure suited to the extremest exigency. Invigorated by his supplies, the believer, though but 'dust and ashes,' steadily resists Potentates of superior nature, and eventually gains the victory over their energy and wiles. These gracious communications, however, must be the matter of earnest and importunate petition: otherwise he has no warrant to expect, no promise that he shall obtain

them. 'Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them.' Let him, therefore, 'ask, that he may receive;' and receive in proportion to his need. Then will it be his privilege to testify, 'In the day when I cried, Thou answeredst me: Thou strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.'

Great is the prevalency of prayer. When 'fervent and effectual,' or *inwrought* and energetic, the devout utterance, not simply of the lip, but of the heart—a heart 'full of faith and of the Holy Ghost,' earnestly desirous of the supplicated good—it 'availeth much.' Thrilling is the story of its successes in the sacred page. Would you know what it has achieved; the deliverances it has wrought, the judgments it has averted, the benefits it has secured; how it has opened and shut heaven, stayed the destroying Angel, curbed the merciless oppressor, chained passions furious as the raging billows or the driving tempest: read the inspired accounts. What prayer, as a mean of blessing, or a Divine institution, was aforesaid, the same it is still: the miraculous excepted, it yet possesses, and so long as a throne of grace stands, will retain, all the efficacy that ever belonged to it. Neither is there, nor during man's continuance upon earth, can there be, the least abatement of its imperative obligation, or its indispensable necessity. And O what a privilege, that creatures so impotent, and liable any instant to the assaults of

the Terrible Ones, are allowed to implore help of Him, who 'giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might increaseth strength!'

Persevere in the diligent use of other appointed means, especially those we have recommended; but, convinced of their inherent weakness and insufficiency, on no account omit prayer. In a certain emergency; 'when Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.' How significant was this symbolical action! How suggestive both of instruction and admonition to all generations! Hence learn *how* it becomes you to strive, if you would succeed in the encounter with Diabolical Adversaries. In the one case, the tribes may have fought with not less valour than in the other; yet were they repulsed. In like manner, forget to invoke the Divine interposition, and, though employing every prescribed or approved mean, you will as certainly sustain defeat. Persuaded, then, that 'the excellency of the power is of God,' and that from Him must come the needed aid, make request to Him 'without ceasing.' Conscious of your own feebleness, your inferiority to those with whom you contend, beseech Him to clothe you with vigour, and arm you with courage, and, through His gracious succour, your exertions, however seemingly inefficient, will be crowned with victory. Satan, thus resisted, will 'flee from you,' abashed and humiliated: and He, in whose implored strength you now van-

quish him, will, in due season, 'bruise him under your feet.'

In the Epistle to the Ephesians, a striking passage occurs, in which is stated, with singular force and beauty of expression, the substance of the preceding remarks. To a comprehensive scheme of doctrinal exposition, the Apostle subjoins a series of apposite practical exhortations. These he concludes with the following advices, which, as worthy of the deepest attention, we would press upon the serious consideration of all. Ponder them often: they are weighty and important. Store them in the memory; 'hide them in the heart;' exercise the understanding upon them, and digest them by meditation. The observance of them will be your wisdom, and ought to be your care. The neglect of them, while involving the guilt of 'refusing Him that speaketh from heaven,' will be your loss, and may be your ruin. Entreat that He, from whose inspiration they proceeded, may dispose you to regard them with the reverence due to supreme authority, and incline you to a cordial and habitual compliance with their spirit and import. The Lord Jesus, by His servant Paul, delivered them to the Churches: how it concerns His professed followers to hear, believe, and obey! The injunctions referred to are the following; and oh, that they obtained, universally, the consent of the mind and the conformity of the life!

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in



the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against Principalities, against Powers, against the Rulers of the darkness of this world, against Spiritual Wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the Wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God: praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.'

We close this Chapter with recalling to remembrance a fact previously adverted to. It is here introduced as a fact admirably calculated to subserve a twofold purpose: a ground of encouragement, and a motive to gratitude.

'Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth  
Unseen, both when we sleep and when we wake.'

Of these incorporeal Visitants, some are evil, others good. The former, prompted by malice, come with

wicked intentions: the latter, moved by philanthropy, and commissioned by their Gracious Lord, speed on errands of kindness. 'Are they not all ministering Spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?' What a solemn thought, that, though unperceived, they may be near; encompassing our path like 'a cloud of witnesses,' and viewing, with the anxiousness of interested spectators, our struggles with equally invisible and powerful Opponents! Delightful is the reflection, that those whom the others stumble or overthrow, they may be ready to uphold or raise up: that, without our direct cognizance, they may suggest admonition, or enforce resolution, or inspire with fortitude! In a thousand ways, unknown to us but competent to them, these benevolent Ones may impart aid in 'the hour of temptation,' or animate to 'endure hardness,' and to 'fight the good fight of faith.'

Jacob very appropriately named the place, where 'the Angels of God met him,' Mahanaim. Might not his example be often imitated by the saint, whose experience may have been somewhat similiar, though the favour was less sensibly manifested? The servant of the Prophet, when, at his Master's request, the Lord, by a miracle, 'opened his eyes,' beheld 'the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.' Were our vision supernaturally strengthened to discern the realities of the spiritual world, not seldom might a spectacle as gratifying be presented to our astonished

gaze. A guard more honourable than was ever witnessed in attendance upon royalty, might be seen encompassing many a despised or persecuted, perhaps despondent and disconsolate, believer. Messengers from glory might be found, in no rare instances, performing to the righteous, in times of need, services not unlike those which they are represented to have rendered to the Saviour, after both His temptation and His agony; or such as they did to Elijah when reposing 'under the juniper tree,' and to various others on occasions related in Old Testament narrative. May not the pious be much indebted to them, also, for seasonable assistance in the strife with 'the Prince of the power of the air;' interposing their friendly offices for the relief or deliverance of those, whom Demons would torment or destroy? Yes: deep beyond what it has 'entered into the heart of man to conceive,' may be our obligations, in these and other respects, to those 'ministering Spirits,' who fly at the bidding, and do the pleasure, of 'the Captain of salvation.' Thus, in the favours, many though unacknowledged, conferred on the saint here, may be laid a foundation for most pleasurable fellowships hereafter, when, in the light of heaven, it shall be discovered how much he owed to their kind attentions; gratitude strengthening holy attachment, and, to perpetuity, binding in cords of love the benefited and the benefactors.

## CHAPTER VI.

## Source of Disbelief—Modern Authorship.

DENIERS of the doctrine of Evil Spirits we again urge to re-examine the reasons of their scepticism. Believers in the doctrine, too, we would entreat to make it the subject of serious and frequent reflection. It is not to be held as an opinion, or a mere theoretical tenet: nor can it be properly regarded as a fact, to which, on the ground of indubitable evidence, credence is given, but which, as being unpleasant, may be little considered. It must be retained in the recollections. The thoughts ought to dwell much upon it, that thus the understanding may the more distinctly realize it, and the heart be the more deeply impressed with salutary fear. In common with all the truths of Revelation, it is not a topic of abstract speculation, but a *practical* question; a matter designed, and, when rightly apprehended, fitted to excite to circumspection, watchfulness, and prayer.

Terrible is the Agency of which we discourse. It is also the more to be dreaded, as it imparts both stimulus and potency to the workings of corruption within, and

the arts of seducers without; and, consequently, augments the efficiency and success of the operation of these combined evils. What increases the danger, is, that while acting with a frequency as inconceivable as it is lamentable, it seems to be exerted without our being directly sensible of the fact. Who can tell *when*, any more than *how*, an influence purely Diabolical is exercised over his mental powers or volitions? On what occasions, or to what extent, innate depravity may be quickened and reinforced by the suggestions of invisible Tempters: in other words, the *times*, as well as the measures, in which the 'plague' rankling in the heart, or deforming the life, is traceable, more immediately, to their vitiating inspiration, or secret promptings: these are points, which no strictness of scrutiny, no vigilance of inspection, can enable the most careful observer of what passes within to determine.

Manifold are the evils attributable, partly at least, to Infernal Agency. Among these is, doubtless, the corruption, or the denial, of 'the faith.' So that in specifying causes of errors in Religion, or of disbelief of its doctrines, we should be chargeable with a grievous omission, did we overlook what appears to be one of the principal. Yet, in whatever degree referable, ultimately, to the prime Liar, these various forms of heterodoxy or infidelity are derived, proximately, from human depravity; the ignorance, the pride, the prejudice, or other base passions of the 'carnal mind.' The heresies

concocted, through Satanic instigation or aid, by perverted ingenuity, misapplied learning toils to defend, and laborious industry to disseminate. Of prevailing errors, that to the refutation of which this Treatise is devoted—the rejection of the Scripture doctrine of Devils—is but one: the brood is multitudinous. May we be permitted, in bringing our disquisition to a close, to call attention to what we deem not the least of their originating causes, and a chief instrument of their diffusion. We refer to the quality, not the intellectual but the *moral* stamp, of a proportion, far from inconsiderable, of Modern Authorship. The spirit is vile, and the tendency pernicious: the tree bad, and the fruit corrupt.

If ever there was a period in the history of our Country, when both instruction and admonition, in relation, to the evils in question, were peculiarly needed; that period seems to be the present. Of the popular literature of the day, not a little is deeply tinged with an anti-evangelical spirit. Not only is this true, in regard to the large classes of Productions, that are of a decidedly Deistical, or semi-Deistical, character: Productions, either openly denying the Inspiration, or directly impugning the distinctive and fundamental verities, of Holy Scripture. It may also be affirmed of others, which profess to impart useful or entertaining knowledge, and whose authors disclaim all intention of opposing, or disparaging, any of the announcements of

Christianity. Often, they embody sentiments,—sometimes plainly enunciated, sometimes artfully insinuated,—which do not harmonize with the teachings of the Word. What, too, renders them the more dangerous, is, that the incongruity is not always apparent.

The peril, from this source, is the greater, and is continually on the increase, owing to the more familiar acquaintance that is being cultivated with works of German authorship. For these, there has been, of late, a growing demand. Indeed, the craving becomes, in some quarters, *morbid*: it is stimulated into a keenness, almost resembling a species of mania; while it spreads, at the same time, with the infectiousness of an epidemic. Hence a vastly augmented and augmenting importation of them. The consequence has been what might have been expected. The reading part of the British mind has been, to no small extent, indoctrinated into the opinions, and even, as it were, cast into the strange moulds, or trained to the peculiar modes of thought and expression, prevalent in Fatherland. This is a process of assimilation, or mental discipline and impression, which, especially during the last two or three decades, has been going on, silently yet perceptibly, and at a quickening rate.

That Land, no doubt, can boast of most distinguished scholars; men, whose names, in their respective spheres of sacred or profane lore, stand pre-eminent—among the ornaments at once of their Country and age. From

their various learning, and elaborate performances, important benefits have been reaped, in different departments, not excepting that of Biblical Criticism. To deny this, were equally ungrateful and uncandid. Their Treatises contain much that is both valuable and profound; the precious fruit of deep research, and unrivalled attainment. For aught superior, perhaps equal, in solid worth and usefulness, we shall look in vain to the publications, on dogmatic or exegetical Theology, of our best writers at home. We feel ourselves laid under obligations, which we willingly acknowledge, to their abilities, industry, and erudition. Nor, even when compelled to dissent entirely from their expositions or tenets, can we withhold our tribute of gratitude for the instruction which their prelections afford.

It is matter of deep regret, however, that advantages, so solid and manifold, should, not seldom, be marred by the accompaniment of countervailing evils. Readily do we admit the high order of excellence, stamped on not a few Continental Productions, which it has been our privilege to examine: nor is there a wish to dispute the merits of others, of which report speaks in favourable terms. At the same time, it is much to be deplored, that numbers, not wanting in talent or zest, are pervaded by a spirit of irreverence, of ungodly speculation, of disguised or unmasked infidelity; while the pages of others are disfigured and desecrated by licentious criticisms, or gross misinterpretations, of the Sacred



Text. Nor is the remark confined to such as advocate extreme views: it applies also, though with inferior force, to many which, upon the whole, are admirable.

The appearance, therefore, in an English garb, of the *kind* of Works alluded to, or their rising in popular favour, is not to be hailed as an *unmixed* good. They circulate, along with much that may be unexceptionable, more or less of an opposite quality. Each contains its own peculiar poison. So palatable, too, may it be to the vitiated taste, or so skilfully may it be concealed, that its deleterious properties may not be suspected, nor their injurious operation be immediately felt. To many their *novelty*, whether in substance or in form, may invest them with an attractiveness, which there is neither power nor inclination to resist. To the multitude, who have hardly a mind of their own,—who are indisposed, or unqualified, to examine and decide for themselves, and who, on points in regard to which an independent judgment ought to be formed, are guided more by authority, than by reason or evidence: to such, the approval of great names may be a sufficient recommendation.

Here, then, is a quarter, to a considerable degree *new*, from which danger is to be apprehended. ‘Evil men and seducers,’ who, unhappily, abound among us, ply the work of deception with unflagging energy and zeal. With the godless offspring of German conception, they make it their study to be intimately acquainted.

The ingenious, but unhallowed, emanations from the different Schools, engage their earnest musings, and become the themes of frequent converse. What suits their several purposes, in any of the strange medleys of doctrine, from the extremest Rationalism to less corrupt forms, these practised adepts in iniquity know well how to exhibit and enforce. Their desire and endeavour, which they seldom try to conceal, obviously are, to transplant, on Anglican soil, the baneful products of that prolific hotbed, that extensive nursery, of impieties and blasphemies: of Myth, and Neology, and Scepticism: of a Christianity, without Christ,—of a Bible, without God,—of a Revelation, without Inspiration.

Surely, if aught is fitted to excite trembling anxiety, as to the religious aspect of the future, it is the consideration mentioned. With the concern, and even the apprehension, entertained by some, who have sincerely at heart the interests of Truth, we cannot help sympathizing. High will be the satisfaction afforded, should the event disappoint our fears. But, in the efforts that are making, with such industry, to *Germanize* the soberer spirit and more Scriptural creed of Albion, there is much that, to our view, bodes ill. What an impressive call for the exercise of vigilant care, and a discriminating judgment! Never was there more urgent need for the 'godly jealousy,' that begets salutary caution, and *tries* before it *receives*. Otherwise, what now seem but tender exotics, comparatively rare in appear-

ance, and feeble in growth, may, by becoming indigenious, be too firmly rooted in the national mind, to be easily eradicated. They may strike their fibres wide and deep, with the stealthy activity of creeping undergrowths, pushing their tangled webs through an unresisting and kindly subsoil. Under circumstances favourable to their development, they may shoot up in rich luxuriance; overspreading the land as with a profusion of nightshade, and, in the sorrowful experience of thousands who might have been 'filled with fruits of righteousness,' bringing forth 'fruit unto death.'

We would not be understood as speaking disparagingly of German authors; for, as already hinted, not a few of them occupy, in their respective departments, a high intellectual position. We mean not to underrate the value of their performances; for many of them are choice elaborations of surpassing ability and learning. We wish not to discourage the study of their writings; for numbers contain so much that is either curious or instructive, that the attentive perusal of them can hardly fail to minister substantial profit. Those, therefore, who would promote the circulation, in our vernacular tongue, of a judicious selection from the more masterly and approved Tractates of Fatherland, we 'bid God speed.' This were to undertake a work of eminent usefulness. By the faithful prosecution of it, they might be the means, not only of exciting, or stimulating, a taste for what is fitted to edify or liberalize; but also of leading:

into new fields of pleasant expatiation, and of enriching, with most precious acquisitions, our stores of knowledge.

Incalculable is the amount of intellectual treasure, locked up in the mystic signs of a foreign language, and as inaccessible, save to the merest fraction of the community, as if no such collections, literary or theological, existed. Let the plan alluded to be pursued on a right principle; and who can tell the good that may thus be conferred on the British Commonwealth? Especially might that numerous section, who compose the rising hopes of the coming age, derive advantage from the patient toil, and sanctified talent, and vast erudition, so abundant among the natives of Central Europe. Even the Pulpit might be benefited not a little, through the aids afforded by the superior classes of Expository Dissertations. Of these, some are mines of mental wealth, singularly stored with the varied materials of deep thought, and sacred lore: while others, not fit to be recommended as a whole, might, by a salutary expurgation, be freed from what is noxious.

These admissions are made with all readiness, and from a conviction that candour demands them. We cannot, however, shut our eyes to the fact, that of the Productions of the German School, Translations of which are circulating through the Land, many are conceived and executed in a spirit of bitter hostility to the Gospel. Often, the antipathy of their authors is vented in direct vituperation: occasionally, it breathes

forth in less offensive phraseology. Sometimes, it is the more harmless from the *excess* and violence of its overflowings; the very *mode of expression* abating its effect, by putting upon the guard, or creating disgust. In other cases, it is more deceiving and dangerous, from the artful manner in which it is insinuated: concealed by a tissue of sophisms, or plausible arguments, plentifully interspersed with sounding pretensions to reason or fairness. Works of the kind now indicated, —penned with such an unholy design, impregnated with the element of ungodliness, and diversified alike in topic and complexion,—are, as well as others of a better stamp, being rendered, from the speech of the German or the Gaul, into that of the Saxon, and distributed, in increasing numbers, among all classes of our reading population.

Hireling scribes there are, ready, for the sake of lucre, to undertake the task of Translation; heedless as to the harm, which they may be the instruments of doing to the interests of Religion. Nor can it be denied, that there are persons, of professional reputation and influence, to whom the intrinsic quality of a particular Publication is matter of indifference, except as it may affect the largeness of an issue. Be its merits or demerits what they may, if the bringing out of an impression is likely to prove a good investment, or a gainful speculation, capital will be embarked in it as freely, as for the production of any other marketable commodity.

Whether the cause of Truth will be benefited or injured, enters not into their calculations. The whole affair is viewed by them as a pecuniary concern—a mere business transaction—a question, simply, of Profit or Loss. They act, not on the Christian, but the *mercantile*, principle: are guided, not by convictions of duty, but views of *emolument*. Gain is their object,—their impelling motive, and their end: while recommendatory notices, drawn up by anonymous eulogists, whom their munificence—perchance the niggardly offering of pitiful parsimony—has enlisted in the service, stud the columns, and circulate extensively through the medium, of Prints and Periodicals.

All this consists with our knowledge. But, there are other devices of the Publishing Trade, equally, if not more, reprehensible. Nor are they confined to the more unscrupulous, in whom it does not surprise us to find an *elasticity* of conscience: they are practised, seemingly without misgiving, by others, whose Christian standing and profession warrant the expectation, that a stricter regard would be paid to what we deem honourable or right. How many have to complain of them as a species of trickery, *positive* though not *illegal* frauds, by which they have been, as it were, swindled out of monies! But, to be thus mulct, irritating as it is, is the least: there are other considerations, far more serious than aught of a *pecuniary* nature. Works that ought never to have seen the light, and the perusal of which

is a waste of time, are foisted into notoriety: some, bearing the impress of weakness or vanity, are commended for their ability or excellence; some, of a doubtful, or even an objectionable, character, are announced in terms of warm eulogy,—their defects or blemishes, if not passed over in silence, but very slightly noticed.

Hence that undeserved, though it may be only ephemeral, celebrity, which various Productions, both of Continental and Transatlantic origin, have gained in this Country. Hence, also, the importation from afar of a host of errors, which, if not strictly *novel*, have appeared under new names and phases: thus attracting, especially in the circles of the unenlightened or the superficial, a degree of attention, which they might not otherwise have received, and to which neither they nor their abettors are entitled. This is an evil, which we cannot too deeply deplore; for, surely, those of *domestic* coinage, or in *actual* currency, are more than enow, without the admixture of others of foreign stamp or device. In a combination of influences, so multiplex, so deceptive, so unsuspected, who sees not just cause for alarm?

How desirable, then, that a due sense of danger prompted to the speedy and energetic application of such correctives, as wisdom might suggest, or the urgency of the case requires! Otherwise, there is ground to fear, that the goodly province of our Litera-

ture, already too copiously sprinkled, shall at length be saturated, with the unwholesome distillations of a Pseudo-Philosophy. Nor is the apprehension without reason, that the domain more appropriately belonging to Theology, will not escape being severely scathed. That spirit of disrespect for the sacred, of whose corrupting interference, elsewhere, so many sad memorials exist, may, unless firmly checked and resolutely counterworked, invade, with like pernicious effect, and sooner than most could anticipate, its fairest and holiest regions. The Rationalistic and Pantheistic stocks, which have thriven with such rapidity and vigour in German ground, may be found of no slow or feeble growth, if freely allowed to take hold of British soil. Mistaken is the policy, that, in the hope of their dying by *natural decay*, would overlook or neglect them. Criminal is the conduct, that forbears: unsparingly to lop, or, if possible, to uproot them. Suffered to remain untouched, the tender shoots, under the training of skilful cultivators, may, in process of time, be reared into spreading trees; and, extending their ramifications into every department, may cast their blighting shade over the whole compass, of Revealed Truth.

O ye who engage in this work of iniquity,—who spend your time and strength in preparing or diffusing ‘the instruction, which causeth to err,’—consider what you do. One might suppose, from your earnestness in his service, you seemed to hear ‘the sound of your



Master's feet behind you.' Truly, your conduct shows you to be partakers of his spirit, and hearty in his cause. Say whence your pleasure in perverting the sentiments of your fellows, weakening their belief in the verities of Scripture, and possessing their minds with strange and false doxies? Think what guilt you thus accumulate on your own heads, and what harm you inflict on the souls of others, whose ruin may be imputable to your blasphemies, and whose 'blood may be required at your hand.' Remember the awfulness of that Being, whose Name you dishonour, and whose Word is the object of your puny attack, or the subject of your impious mockery: how easily He could stop, in the very act, the tongue or pen of profaneness: how, by some terrible visitation, He might glorify His power and justice in the instantaneous destruction of the reviling infidel; giving at once the body to the worms, and the spirit to the Fiends. Beware lest you be 'consumed by the blow of His hand.' Tremble, too, lest sparing you in life, He abandon you to judicial blindness. 'Be not mockers, lest your bands be made strong.' Hear the command and the promise: they proceed from Him, whose majesty you insult, and whose authority you despise. May His grace incline you to obey the one, and fulfil in your experience the other! 'Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.'

## CHAPTER VII.

*Conclusion—Authority and Sufficiency of Scripture.*

WHERE any of the errors alluded to have been imbibed, what antidote would we prescribe? Where there is danger of infection from them, what would we recommend as a preservative? These are serious questions. Our answer, at present, is simply this, Inquire what is written. Consult 'the voices of the Prophets' and Apostles. Receive their testimony as 'faithful, and worthy of all acceptance,' whether in reference to Demonology or any other matter. Cherish feelings of the deepest veneration for Holy Scripture. Investigate, as you have ability or opportunity, and without prejudice, the grounds on which it claims your unreserved and implicit belief. Be persuaded of its Divine authority: a point, on which it is of the utmost importance to have just views and settled convictions.

If the Bible is not the Word of God, it is entitled only to that measure of respect, which the reader may judge its contents fitted to secure. It may contain much that is curious in antiquity, or interesting in history, lofty in sentiment, or fervent in devotion, grand

or pathetic in poetry, vigorous or persuasive in eloquence: it may abound with wholesome counsels, wise maxims, and valuable rules of conduct. But it stands on a level with the compositions of men noted for intelligence and sagacity, and is no more worthy than they of profound deference, or cordial acceptance. To give to its statements the entire credit, that unqualified surrender of the understanding, due to the announcements of unerring Wisdom, were to violate the dictates of reason and of duty. Nay, it requires little argument to prove, that, if God is not its Author, it is, of all impostures ever palmed upon the world, at once the most artful and audacious.

The penmen of the Bible laid claim, without ambiguity or disguise, to the gift of Inspiration. Their possession of this gift was the ground, on which they demanded, for the messages which they were respectively commissioned to deliver, the most reverential and obedient regard. If, then, they did not 'speak as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,' what follows? Either they themselves laboured under the strangest infatuation, or they were wilful deceivers. There seems to be no possibility of evading this alternative conclusion. But, that they were not the victims of mental delusion, is evident from the sobriety of judgment, the regulation of feeling, the soundness and vigour of intellect, which we discover throughout their Writings. On the supposition that they were designing men, prompted by

‘cunning craftiness,’ the charge of extreme impiety lies against them. They alleged, that they were under an immediate, supernatural influence; that they were filled and actuated by a Divine afflatus; that they enjoyed a peculiar intercourse with the Father of spirits, from whom they received special revelations, which they were enjoined to publish for the benefit of mankind. Yet, with the utmost solemnity they gave forth what they knew to be sayings of their own, for the utterances of the Oracle; the effusions of fancy, for ‘the inspirations of the Almighty.’ In that case, their names would deserve to be branded with infamy; and language supplies no terms too strong, in which to express our abhorrence of their presumption and blasphemy.

But, that they were not guilty of such arrogant pretension; that they did not impose upon the credulity of others, by assuming a character that belonged not to them, and exercising a commission with which they were not intrusted; that they did not deliver, as communications from heaven, what proceeded only from an earthly origin, and were sanctioned by no higher authority than their own: this we hold to be an incontrovertible point. Of such daring falsehood, what is there to excite the remotest suspicion? To warrant an impeachment of their veracity, not the slightest pretext can be found. The books ascribed to them bear clear, indubitable marks of their honesty. They appear,

from every view of their characters, to have been men of high and unswerving principle, as much distinguished from designing impostors on the one hand, as from deluded enthusiasts on the other. The more careful, too, the investigation of what they said and did, the deeper will the conviction of their integrity become. It does not, therefore, admit of dispute, that, in affirming that they 'had the mind of the Spirit,' they declared what they 'most surely believed.' This remark applies, with equal justness and force, to the Prophets of the Old Testament, and to the Apostles and Evangelists of the New.

Besides, what the sacred penmen wrote bears the strongest *internal* evidence, that it was not of their own suggestion. The conclusion is unavoidable, that it emanated from another, who both supplied the sentiments, and directed the form of expression: they were merely amanuenses, recording what the Spirit instructed them to indite. There is an elevation of thought, to which we find no parallel, no approximation, in the noblest conceptions of the finest geniuses. There is a code of precept, too pure and spiritual for depraved beings to have framed, differing widely from the maxims which corrupt nature approves, and far excelling, in kind as well as in degree, aught that the most famed of heathen moralists ever taught. There is a deeper insight into the constitution of the mind, and the workings of the heart; a more intimate acquaint-

tance with the properties of the inner man, those latent springs of action, whence the life receives its particular bent and direction, than the closest study of human nature can give, or the subtlest metaphysician ever attained. From a short selection of the Proverbs of Solomon, carefully pondered, may be acquired a knowledge of the intellectual and spiritual mechanism, not to be gained by a studious perusal of the choicest productions of Philosophy: while a few concise sentences from the twelfth Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, will place in a clearer light the science of duty, afford both a more accurate and a more enlarged acquaintance with this interesting subject, than all the elaborate disquisitions or lauded aphorisms of ancient and modern wisdom together. There are proofs of prescience, or a distinct vision of the future; disclosures of distant scenes and events, improbable in themselves, complex in their relations, and dependent upon manifold contingencies, but which Providence realizes at the time, and in the manner, foretold; prophetic revelations so clear, so minute, so certain, which defy the utmost penetration of creatures, and competent only to Him, whose exclusive prerogative it is to 'declare the end from the beginning.'

Whence, then, the pre-eminence of the Sacred Writers; their incomparable superiority, on these and kindred topics, to the greatest names of antiquity? By Jews, so little in repute for learning, the famed

sages of Greece and Rome were immensely surpassed. Of Religion and Ethics, the herdsman of Tekoa and the fishermen of Galilee discourse more sublimely than the *divine* Plato, or the philosophic Tully. They publish a system of Theology, at once consonant to the dictates of *enlightened* reason, and beyond the efforts of *unaided* reason to produce; and a scheme of duty, alike excellent in its principles and salutary in its tendency, comprehensive in its range and minute in its requirements. Among the Hébreus arose, in long succession, and through a series of centuries, Teachers who illustrated subjects on which the wisest of other nations were totally uninformed. How profound, how rational, the views of the former! How grovelling, how puerile, the notions of the latter! The statements of the first embody the definite ideas, the explicit intimations, the harmonious instructions of intelligence: the dissertations of the second, express the crude speculations, the vague conjectures, the incoherent dogmas of ignorance. On a Supreme Being,—His perfection, His law, His government; on man,—his origin, his condition, his destiny; on the soul,—the spirituality of its essence, and the immortality of its existence; on moral evil,—its introduction, its demerit, its consequences; on Divine worship,—its nature, its mode, its obligations; on human responsibility,—its certainty, its grounds, its extent; on a state of retribution, and a futurity of weal or of woe: on these themes,

so high and difficult, yet so important and interesting, there was light in the land of Judea, while in every other country darkness prevailed.

That the fact is such as has been stated, is undeniable. How is it to be accounted for? To this question, it is impossible to give a satisfactory answer, without referring immediately to the Great Fountain of illumination. But, admitting that the penmen of Scripture enjoyed extraordinary discoveries, and wrote under the guidance of infallible Wisdom, the mystery is explained. Granting that they had 'an unction from the Holy One;' that, in a way possible to Him, though incomprehensible to us, He conveyed to their minds just apprehensions of the Truth: the secret of their singular and unapproachable excellence, as spiritual instructors, is easily understood. That peculiar knowledge which they possessed, no acuteness of natural powers, no diligence of research, no advantages of education, no improvement of outward means, could have enabled them to acquire. This correct acquaintance with matters of faith and obedience, they obtained by 'inspiration of God.' On these subjects, which their own reason was incapable of investigating; for the elucidation of which, the greatest intellects have shown an utter incompetence; and in regard to which mankind must, without a Divine Revelation, have ever continued unenlightened, like the blind or benighted, groping in the dark,—'feeling after them, if haply they might find



them,' yet invariably failing in the attempt: on these subjects, they were favoured with the teaching of the Spirit. Having, in His adorable sovereignty, selected them as the bearers of His messages to the world, the vehicles of whatever portions of His will it pleased Him, 'at sundry times,' to announce; He came upon them in sudden illapses, and—whether in a dream, or a vision, or a voice—spoke to them in a way that convinced them of His presence. From Him, at these seasons of high converse and remarkable manifestation, they received their lessons. Hence the penmen of Scripture eclipsed and threw into the shade those, of whatever nation, or however renowned, who professed to treat of Religion and Morals. Thus it was that, while the Schools most celebrated for wisdom, whose Masters were listened to as Oracles, and their sayings preserved with reverence as undoubted and precious verities, emitted but a feeble twilight, tending rather, by its dim and dubious glimmer, to bewilder and mislead, than to direct the anxious inquirer; the 'holy Apostles and Prophets' illustrated the entire sphere of human belief and practice. By their sound and luminous doctrines, they shed over it a radiance, dissipating the obscurity that enveloped it, and unveiling objects of surpassing interest and value, which had otherwise remained in concealment: a radiance, that enables the weakest to apprehend, what it had baffled the sagacity of the most penetrating to ascertain or explore: a radiance, in which saying and

sanctifying Truth, unfolded so far as is proper or requisite,—necessary to just conceptions of the nature and attributes of the Almighty, of the state and character of man, of the scheme of pardoning mercy and redeeming grace, of the connection between the present and the future, and the bearings of the one on the condition and prospects of the other; Truth may be discerned in its beauties, examined in its relations, and contemplated in its harmonies: a radiance, serving as ‘a lamp to the feet, and a light to the path,’ by which we may walk without fear or mistake; and under whose guidance, as by the ‘pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night,’ the pious of all ages have, with assured confidence, pursued their way through a region of shadows and gloom, to those realms on which beams the Sun of Righteousness with perfect and everlasting effulgence.

Let these Inspired Instructors, then, whom God qualified and empowered to reveal His will, be our only teachers in Theology. To them let us hearken as to His own voice, speaking through those accredited human organs. Their writings let us deem the sole authorities in matters of faith; regarding them as the standard with which our creed should correspond, to which alone, in cases of doubt or disputation, appeal should be made, and by which all controverted questions should be decided. Views and principles, in exact agreement with it, are sound: the discordance of those

that differ from it, is both the proof and the measure of their erroneousness. What is contained in the Sacred Canon, however mysterious, let us receive as strictly true; assured that it is never contradictory to Reason, though it may often transcend her comprehension. Diligent study of the Scriptures, with a judicious use of expository helps, may serve to illustrate many obscurities; the solution of one difficulty facilitating the explication of others. Much that is dark may thus become plain; much that is 'hard to be understood,' be rendered intelligible. If, especially, the subjects of illuminating grace, we may expect, as the reward of persevering research, to receive constant increases of light: and 'what we know not now, we shall know hereafter.' The Spirit, too, is promised as 'the Spirit of wisdom and revelation.' Let us, therefore, implore the assistance of His teaching. Holy Spirit, 'take of the things of Christ, and show them to us: guide us into all truth:' fill our minds with its knowledge, our hearts with its love, and our lives with its beauties.

Would we ascertain the sense of Scripture, or receive, in their purity and entireness, its doctrines? Let the process adopted be fair, consistent with the approved rules of Sacred Criticism, and such as is fitted, in all instances, to determine the precise import of the statements. We shall thus be led, in general, to the right interpretation of what we read. The honest inquirer, too, the stricter his investigation and the fuller his dis-

covery, will be the more confirmed in the persuasion, that the Record contains a body of instructions, harmonious in its various parts, each bearing the impress of truth, the whole worthy of the Supreme Intelligence: a system which, in its principles, admirably suits the rational nature, and, in its provisions, completely meets the necessitous condition, of the guilty and depraved creature; displaying throughout, the perfection of wisdom, and applicable, in every particular, to the gracious purposes contemplated by its Blessed Author.

The docility of children is the disposition which becomes us, when we engage in the perusal of Holy Writ. We are to consider ourselves as learners, hearkening, with humility and submission of spirit, to a Divine Teacher. We are to remember that it is the Father of lights who speaks to us, through the medium of inspired servants: they were His mouth to mankind, declaring only what He bade them; and their announcements are to be revered as His utterances. Never may we presume to judge of the fitness or propriety of aught that is revealed: never impugn or discard a doctrine, because it involves mystery, or humiliates pride, or opposes the opinions of men who 'profess themselves to be wise:' never dare, in one iota, to vitiate the matter, or alter the contents, of the Communication. Accepting its substance as delivered to us, unmodified by addition or abbreviation, unperverted by gloss or comment, we are simply to endeavour, by the legitimate

methods, to expiscate the genuine meaning. The letter or text must remain inviolate: the signification is to be determined by the established laws of Exegesis. Any departure from these we condemn as arbitrary and unwarrantable. It proceeds from ignorance or misconception, if not direct antipathy to the sacred: and whither it may ultimately lead, into what devious paths, or to what fearful lengths, who can tell?

Of the justness of these remarks, a very moderate acquaintance with the history of heterodoxy may suffice to convince. From the source alluded to—corruption of the phraseology, or distortion and torture of the spirit, of Scripture—have sprung a large proportion of the heresies with which the Church has been flooded. How often, by false theories of Exposition, has a sense, altogether defective or foreign, been elicited! How sad, too, the manglings of a licentious Criticism, which, spurning the restraint of rule, repudiates all fixed principles or system, and interprets, not by fair construction, but in accommodation to predilection or conceit, the voices of the Oracle! Hence, to no inconsiderable extent, the origin, the progress, and the multiplication of errors in religion. Hence the denial of the Trinity—of the Godhead of the Saviour—of the Personality of the Spirit—of the necessity of an atonement—of the reality of the new birth—of human inability—of gracious influence, with the other cardinal truths of Revelation. Hence, also, the discredit, so prevalent, of

the doctrine of Diabolical Agency, especially as taught in the Word. There that Agency is represented as the primary cause of all evil, moral and physical, among men; as still, in a diversity of modes, by manifold instrumentalities, and to an incalculable degree, operative of sin and suffering; as mighty in its energy, ceaseless in its exertion, and as universal in its range as the inheritors of our fallen nature. The representation, however, not comporting with the whims of prejudice or the notions of 'carnal wisdom,' is considered fabulous. To give plausibility to this view, a device, revolting alike to reason and piety, is adopted. What ought to be taken literally, is explained on a fanciful hypothesis: and Inspired Instructors, by a kind of metamorphosis, are degraded into babblers, or, as they have been profanely denominated, *screamers*,—writers of fiction or romance, rather than teachers of truth and godliness.

On interpreters of the stamp mentioned, remonstrance, we fear, would be wasted. To address to them words of expostulation or admonition, were like discoursing music to the deaf adder. To feign reverence for Scripture, yet treat it in a manner so disrespectful; to mutilate the expression, or, by unsound Hermeneutics, pervert the import; to allow its penmen to have been inspired much in the same sense in which the poet, the orator, or the philosopher is said to be inspired, and then deal as freely with the compositions of the former as with those of the latter; nay, use liberties in the one

case, which none venture to take in the other: what shall we say of those who are chargeable with conduct so reckless, so audacious? Surely, they act a worse, at least a more inconsistent part, than if, with the Deist, they openly rejected the authority of the Bible. If, in your persuasion, it is the offspring of human intellect, be bold to avow the infidel sentiment: throw off the the mask, and appear in your real character. If, however, you hold it to be 'of God,' dare not, with profane hand, to disfigure what, on the admission, bears the 'image and superscription' of Divinity. This is the height of presumption, the climax of impiety; and, if repentance and pardon prevent not, a 'sorer punishment' than leprosy will certainly befall its perpetrators.

But, turning from heretical teachers, we address our speech to those who are in danger of being 'beguiled by their subtilty.' Such we are most desirous to put upon their guard. O ye simple ones, hearken to the voice of warning. You need to be admonished as well directed, and equally requisite and salutary is the caution: 'Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit.' Take heed that you be not seduced, by the sophisms of ingenious folly, into a disbelief, whether of Demoniacal Agency, or of any other article of the Christian Faith. Leave those scurrilous declaimers, who assail with abuse our holy religion, 'speaking evil of things which they know not,' to rave to the winds, or to pour forth their vile effusions

to the lovers of foulness and venom: be not you among their auditors. Abstain from the frequent perusal of Works of an infidel cast: often may the inconsequentness of the reasoning, or the falsity of the conclusion, be unperceived, while the dogmatic tone may pass for oracular, and confident assertion or bold interrogation for solid argument. Be suspicious of such companions; by avoiding much intercourse with them, you will consult your safety. 'Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burnt? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burnt?' The less, too, the better you pore over Writings that politely ignore Christianity; occasionally, perhaps, paying it a constrained compliment, but indicating a disrelish for its peculiar and distinctive verities. Some of them, no doubt, possess literary excellencies, charms of imagination or beauties of composition, while they furnish both instruction and entertainment: but it may be a question, whether the beneficial or hurtful influences preponderate; whether the mental good be not counterbalanced by spiritual evil.

This advice we tender with all the earnestness of affection and faithfulness. Disregard it, and bitter, afterwards, may be your regrets. Is there no hazard, no likelihood, of your conversion to the views of those who wish to make a prey of you? Ah! by degrees you may embrace their opinions. At length you may be found, like the fly in the web of the spider, entangled



inextricably in the meshes of Rationalism or Infidelity. Such has been the career of many a conceited simpleton, many a hopeful youth, many a once promising but unstable professor. But what of the closing scene? Not rare have been the instances in which incorrigible folly has 'mourned at the last, when its flesh and its body were consumed.' See that your case swells not the number of those, in which is exemplified the forewarning of the Royal Preacher. Otherwise, at the end of a course marked by criminal departure from the Truth, you may be heard, as our ears have heard and our eyes have seen the victim of such infatuation, giving utterance, in sorrowful accents, to the feelings and reflections of agonizing remorse. 'How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof? And have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me?' You may have observed the moth wheeling rapidly round the flame. After a few distant circlings, it rushes nearer the glowing centre, when its wings are scorched, and losing the power of flight, it expires in pain. What an emblem of the conduct and the doom of giddy, self-sufficient errorists! 'Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the chair of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law doth he meditate day and night.'

What an Apostle foretold is, at present, a notorious

fact. 'There shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies. Many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of Truth shall be evil spoken of.' Hence, in our day, the injunction of the Beloved Disciple is as necessary and as suitable as it was in primitive times: 'Believe not every spirit: but try the spirits whether they are of God.' The probation, so peremptorily inculcated in these words, is indispensably requisite, if we would not be 'carried about with divers and strange doctrines.' These their respective abettors attempt, with no little dexterity, to force upon the acceptance of all who desire freedom from the trammels of educational prejudices or antiquated superstitions. They are men of renown, and entitled, forsooth, to speak with authority. O how complacent, how assuming, how dictatorial! Despite, however, this arrogance of spirit and superciliousness of bearing, we crave leave to dissent from their views—to reject their dogmas. We tell them with all plainness, and their own writings are appealed to for proof, that they are not qualified to be instructors in Theology. Surely, silence becomes them till they study its rudimentary lessons, and master its first principles. But, having abjured modesty as a virtue, they must have license, it would seem, to use the tongue or the pen, though only to publish their own shame. Personal knowledge, too, enables us to add, that, in not a few cases, the haughtiness of mien, and loftiness of preten-

sion, are in ludicrous contrast with the intellectual proportions. The spectacle amuses, rather than offends. It forcibly reminds of the fable of the frog swelling into the dimensions of the ox. It is the unseemliness of a pigmy aping the giant; the swagger of shallowness affecting the profound, or of folly mimicking wisdom. Verily, there are men who can trade largely on small capital.

Say not our language is harsh or intemperate. What! Is our 'spirit not to be stirred within us,' at the sight of 'the boar out of the wood wasting, or the wild beast of the field devouring?' Are we not to grieve over the ravages, or express indignation at the viciousness, of the 'little foxes that spoil the vines?' To creatures of such nature, soft words were unsuited. They are 'void of understanding;' and the safety, the eternal weal, of millions requires, that their mischievous propensities be checked. We would 'speak the truth *in love*,' and we would '*in meekness* instruct those that oppose themselves.' But fidelity is preferable to smooth speech: we like it even when it may have the appearance of severity, or expose to the charge of bitterness, and be repaid with slander. Our feelings towards the men, whose blasphemies call forth our unqualified reprobation, have no alliance with ill-will; they partake more of sorrow than of anger. But we speak strongly when we think of the numbers, known to ourselves, whom their ungodly productions have been the means

of inoculating with deadly error. Of these poor infatuates, some are not, having, it is feared, 'gone down to the pit with a lie in their right hand:' others, who survive, having acquired a taste for the moral poison, persist, in spite of counsel or remonstrance, to imbibe its fatal virus, supplied so copiously by the Presses of multiform heterodoxy. Would that the Authors saw, as we have seen, the pernicious effects of their Works! Their hearts, unless incapable of relenting, would throb with painful emotion. If to perdition they are determined to go, why, O why not go alone? What if those whom they unhappily succeed in drawing after them, should be their upbraiders in the regions of woe?

Never to be compared are physical and spiritual harm; the destruction of the body, and the destruction of the soul. Wherefore, then, are execrations heaped on the miscreant who doses his victim with strychnia, while censure is dealt in spare measure to him, who, by the instilling of noxious principles or antisciptural tenets, ruins the immortal mind? The consequences, in the one case, are infinitely worse than in the other: why then, should the guilty agents be blamed, in the latter so severely, and in the former in mild and gentle phrase? We reverse this order, and administer to false teachers or lying prophets our sharpest reproofs. Our address to them, however, is not in wrath, but in pity. Oh, that we could, by some impressive representation, alarm their fears, and awaken them to a sense of dan-

ger! Let us remind them of utterances of awful significance, which, we believe, will, as certainly as the Speaker is 'holy and true,' be realized in the experience of all who deny or subvert the faith. May the living lay to heart these fearful threats; and our prayer to God is, that they may escape the execution of them. 'Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord.'

In fine, let us again urge upon all a devout and habitual attention to Holy Scripture. You will thus be kept from the paths, and fortified against the influence, of destroyers: whether evil men, who labour, with equal assiduity and perseverance, to 'corrupt the Word of God,' or undermine its authority, and to indoctrinate the minds of their fellows with noxious errors,—the pestilent heresies of Unitarian or Neological conception, of Scepticism, Secularism, or Pantheism, with their various and hateful cognates; or the grand Adversary,

whose craft is superhuman, whose wiles are manifold, and whose temptations his experience and sagacity enable him to adapt to peculiar cases, occasions, and individuals. What though, being a Spirit, he is invisible to the corporeal eye? Of him, indeed, we may say, in a qualified sense, what Job affirms of the Divine Intelligence, 'Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: on the left hand where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him.' Yet may not his presence be the less real, nor his power and stratagems the less to be apprehended.

Venerate the Bible. Regard it as the production of the Holy Ghost,—a Revelation from heaven. Receive its statements as the Oracles of Veracity: they are 'the true sayings of God.' Acquaint yourselves with the evidences of its Inspiration. Let your faith in its Divinity be intelligent, as well as sincere. Reject, as false and pernicious, any dogmas, by whomsoever propounded, or with whatever plausibility recommended, that clash with its teachings. Blind credulity, or pride of understanding, may accept them as the informations of superior enlightenment: they are, in reality, the offspring of ignorance or folly.

Make this blessed Word your chosen companion. Apply to it only for knowledge, in relation to 'the things pertaining to godliness.' For this purpose, consult it frequently: here are sound wisdom and

sublime morality. Rejoice in its fulness,—its sufficiency for all the ends of spiritual improvement and eternal felicity. This is one chief characteristic, one of its glorious attributes, whether viewed as a system of instruction, of holiness, or of consolation. Embrace it as *a whole*; avoiding, in your professed respect for it, ‘partiality’ as well as ‘hypocrisy.’ Its contents are ‘*all* profitable;’ useful for ‘doctrine, or reproof, or correction, and instruction in righteousness.’

Seek the ‘demonstration of the Spirit,’ that you may have a right discernment of the mysteries of Holy Writ. The revelation of them to *the mind*, or the internal illumination of the Holy Ghost, is as necessary as the revelation of them in the Book. Pray, then, for His enlightenment, to enable you so to see their beauty and excellence, to perceive their fitness and worth, as to incline you to love them. Thus will the Word ‘come to you in power, and in much assurance.’ No reasoning will be needed to convince you, that it is ‘of God;’ for you shall have a ‘witness in yourselves,’ more satisfactory than a thousand arguments. Take heed lest the Enemy, by insinuating doubts, should shake your belief of any of its verities. That, too, you may not be ‘carried about by every wind of doctrine,’ beware of ‘the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive.’ To your steadfastness, caution and prayer are requisite; for he who was ‘a lying spirit in the mouths of Ahab’s prophets,’

seems still to act as 'a lying spirit' in certain modern prophets,—the Apostles of Rationalism and many-phased Infidelity.

Christian parents, explain to your offspring, as you may be able, and as they can receive, the precious truths of Scripture. Endeavour, betimes, to furnish their understandings and memories with its wholesome lessons. Make them the subject of familiar discourse in their hearing, and of frequent examination as to acquaintance with them. What appropriate themes for pleasant and edifying conversation, in the domestic circle, do the narratives and biographies, the doctrines and precepts, of the Sacred Volume supply! Listen, then, ye fathers and mothers, to the injunction of Jehovah, by His servant Moses, to parents in Israel, and remember that it still remains in full force: its obligation is perpetual. 'These words that I command thee this day shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.'

Youth we exhort to give themselves to the regular and devotional reading of the Bible. Let it have the preference in your regards to every other book: from the study of its pages you will reap more solid benefit than from the perusal of the finest compositions of human genius. It will both preserve from the snares of temptation, and furnish an antidote to the cavils of



Infidelity. 'Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to Thy Word.' How suitable and important, then, the advice of Solomon! 'My son, incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes: keep them in the midst of thine heart; for they are life unto those that find them.' In the Bible you have a sure guide, a faithful guardian, and an edifying companion. 'When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee. For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the ways of life.'

On all we would inculcate supreme reverence and esteem for the Bible. Let it be enshrined in the affections: its verities received with cordial faith, and its precepts obeyed from love. Value it as the Record of salvation, the Charter of immortality. Follow its directions, as the map given to trace out your path through all the intricacies of this earthly pilgrimage. Take it as the chart and compass, by which to steer your course over life's troubled sea to the peaceful shores of the better Country. Look to it as the pole-star, by the careful observation of which you may know how to bend your way, and be conducted safely, amid darkness and storm, to the desired destination. From this infallible guide, allow no object or pursuit to divert attention; but, with an eye steadily fixed upon it, go for-

ward, till, reaching the goal, you obtain the end of your faith, and the consummation of your hope, the salvation of the soul: even that perfection of nature and of bliss, to which it points the views and aspirations of the regenerate, and which a gracious God will assuredly bestow on every believer in His Word, and every follower of His Son.

Would we, then, baffle the devices, and triumph over the power, of Satan? Would we resist the enticements of 'evil men and seducers,' who attempt to poison our minds with heresy or error? Let us, as one excellent mean, cultivate an intimate and growing acquaintance with the Bible; studying, at the same time, to imbibe more of its spirit, and to exhibit more of its purity. To this let us be incited by precious promises of Divine assistance. 'Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will He teach sinners in the way. The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach His way.' How encouraging the declaration! Be it the desire and endeavour of all to have experimental proof of its faithfulness. 'If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures: then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of His mouth come knowledge and understanding. He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous.'

May our minds be enlightened with correct, Scriptural views of the mysterious and tremendous Agency that has engaged our contemplations. May the persuasion of its might and subtilty excite such a salutary dread of it, as will keep us habitually on our guard, and bring us often, in the frame and the attitude of importunate petitioners, to the footstool of mercy. Impressed with its excellence and utility, may we be elad in that panoply which Divine Wisdom has so suitably provided: convinced of the importance of skilfulness in its exercise, may we train ourselves, by daily practice, to the use of it: never may the Adversary find us unarmed with 'the sword of the Spirit, the shield of faith, and the helmet of salvation.' Conscious, too, of utter impotency, and of the need of superior aid, let us humbly and fervently implore the interposition of Him, whose help alone can avail. Hope of Israel, and Saviour thereof in time of trouble! hear our suppliant cry. 'Be not far from us, for trouble is near.' Lion of the Tribe of Judah! curb the rage and violence of the Roaring Lion, who seeks to devour. O give courage to the fearful: 'strengthen the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees.' Through almighty grace, may we be enabled both 'to stand against the wiles of the Devil,' and to resist the assaults of his fury. 'The God of peace bruise Satan under our feet shortly!'

With the swiftness of time all are hastening to one of

two destinations—Heaven or Hell. Momentous alternative! The Happy Land, ringing jubilee, or the Pit of woe, resounding with blasphemy: the ‘voice of rejoicing and salvation,’ or the howl of ‘cursing and bitterness:’ the rapturous shout of hosanna, or the ceaseless wail of despair! Reader, which shall be your choice? As certainly as the lip of Truth has spoken it, shall this or that be your portion through endless ages. To you, as to every child of Adam, death shall be, if not the gate of life, the portal to ‘outer darkness.’ Yield yourself, with passive subjection, to Satanic influence, and what cares the base Deceiver whether you deny or credit his Existence, whether you dispute or admit his Agency? In either case, he is sure, eventually, of his prey. O then, as you would escape everlasting ruin, let resistance to his suggestions be your constant endeavour, and ultimate freedom from his thrall your earnest desire and prayer.

Thus, reader, will you be furnished with an exhaustless theme for exultation and praise. Standing on ‘the Mount Sion,’ where no tempter can intrude, no enemy approach,—where danger and fear are for ever unknown,—where the influxes of bliss, and the assurance of security, thrill every breast with ecstasy: there, in concert with adoring myriads, you will ‘sing the song of the Lamb.’ While others, whose tongues might have been uttering Hallelujahs, rave with agony and hate, in ‘chains of darkness,’ under the rule of the

dire Tormentor, whose guile had fatally deluded them; you will find your employment and your delight, as it will be your privilege, to offer to Him the ascriptions of grateful hearts. The purchase of His blood, and the trophies of His power, you will, in eternal anthems, extol the great Deliverer; whose arm was your defence in the evil day, whose sufficiency supplied the needed vigour, and whose grace brought to a successful issue the conflict with Apollyon. 'The warfare is accomplished:' the Terrible Ones are defeated. In the strength of Him who is 'mighty in battle,' HUMANITY has triumphed—is even 'more than conqueror.' How it becomes the redeemed, in joyful chorus, to perpetuate the strains, 'Thanks be unto God who hath given us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

'Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,—to the Only Wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.'

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