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Stayed by your feet, the burden I sustain  
 Which my lame feet find all too strong for me;  
 Wingless upon your pinions forth I fly;  
 Heavenward your spirit stirreth me to strain;  
 E'en as you will, I blush and blanch again,  
 Freeze in the sun, burn 'neath a frosty sky."

This is ardent, like Shakespeare's to his friend:—

"Who will believe my verse in time to come,  
 If it were fill'd with your most high deserts?  
 Though yet heaven knows it is but as a tomb  
 Which hides your life, and shows not half your parts.  
 If I could write the beauty of your eyes,  
 And in fresh numbers number all your graces,  
 The age to come would say, this poet lies,  
 Such heavenly touches ne'er touch'd earthly faces."

Signor Guasti, in his Italian, puts true and counterfeit side by side. Some one ought to make a book of the translations from the real and the spurious, where Michael Angelo might be seen beside his counterfeiter, contrasted, and reinstated in his own right of poet. Enough here for now to show the fraud which has been put upon us, and that it is almost beyond patience.

L. G. WARE.

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### THE SERPENT IN GENESIS.\*

The first three chapters of Genesis seem incapable of satisfactory explanation, except on the supposition that they contain an elementary, symbolical lesson for the childhood of the race. It is hardly to be supposed that the author of the book of Genesis, whether composer or compiler, knew any more about astronomy and geology than the most intelligent of his contemporaries. But suppose he did; suppose he had by direct revelation a perfect knowledge of both those sciences, with nothing but that primitive, simple, concrete, poetic, Hebrew language to put it into,—what could he do

\*[ This article, though written from a point of view somewhat different from that of most of the contributors to this *Review*, is commended to its readers for the vigor, ability, and earnestness with which the writer grapples with the topics that he sets himself to discuss.—*Ed. Unitarian Review.*]

with his knowledge? And then, again, suppose the Hebrew language had been adequate to express all scientific thought, and all modifications and shades of thought, and the writer had actually done it,—what good would that do to a people who could hardly understand a word of it? And yet this people, ignorant, unlettered, half-brutish, must be taken just as they were, just as a child is taken in the nursery, and trained to know and to worship Jehovah and him alone. How was this to be done? There was no use in telling them God is a spirit; they could make nothing of that. Spirit was not thinkable to them,—is it to us? They had no word for spirit except one that denoted their own breath, animal life, and the air of heaven, not yet specifically appropriated to the immaterial. It was impossible to tell them affirmatively what God is, and useless to try to tell them negatively. It were fruitless to say, He is not this, and he is not that; he does not live here, and he does not live there; he does not dwell on Sinai, nor Horeb, nor Sion, nor Gerizim, nor in temples made with hands. Children that they were, their next thought would be, Well, where does he live, and what is he? They may not have painting or statue to supplement their incapacity for abstract conceptions. They may “not have any graven image, nor the likeness of anything in the heaven above, nor in the earth beneath, nor in the water under the earth,” for if they do, their thought will rest in that, and they will be simply idol-worshippers, like their pagan neighbors. The only thing that could be done was, to speak of God in terms that came within the range of their experience; to speak of him as having hands and feet and eyes and ears; as talking and walking and consulting; as being pleased and being angry; in short, to speak of him as having the characteristics of an exalted human being. That is just what the writer did; and so we have as the leading *dramatis persona* in that narrative a sort of gigantic, all-powerful, sovereign Holy Man. This is the highest conception of God which the earliest generations of the Israelites were capable of entertaining.

The whole narrative seems to be constructed on the same

principle, all the while giving them what they could understand, to shadow forth and symbolize what they could not understand till after generations of experience, culture, and progress.

So, too, some sort of a cosmogony must be given them, or they will borrow one from their pagan neighbors, the Phenicians and the Canaanites, and they will get it into their heads, if they have not already, that Baal made the universe.

Thus they will become full-fledged idolaters. Accordingly, a cosmogony sufficient for its purpose is given, which they can understand.

On the one hand, their credulity is not unduly taxed by the statement that the universe was *spoken* into being by a single Deity. On the other, their understanding is not nonplussed by astronomical and geological details beyond their comprehension, nor by an account of the time, beyond their computation, requisite to get this globe into a habitable condition. They are simply told, after human analogy, that the universe was made by days' works, and that it took Jehovah six days to do it. It is implied that he was weary when he had done; and it is actually said that he rested on the seventh day. Then they are told, in the fourth commandment, that if they would be like the Creator and be good, they, too, must rest on the seventh day.

The first man was called by the generic name of Red-earth,—a name more applicable to a race than to an individual. The first woman was called by the generic name of Motherhood, descriptive of all her daughters through all time, as well as herself. Herein is an intimation that symbolism and not literalism prevails in the narrative. Again, it is said that woman was made out of one of man's ribs. It is asking too much of common sense at the present day to accept this as a literal fact. Why it is said, we are not informed, but that it had a tendency to subserve a good purpose is obvious. We all know that among primitive and barbarous races, woman is regarded as belonging to an inferior order of being; as hardly having any rights which

her lord and master is bound to respect; treated as a drudge and beast of burden; an instrument of pleasure and of profit; an article of purchase and of sale; thought by some races to have no soul; female infants regarded as hardly worth the raising, and multitudes of them actually destroyed.

Now if the writer wished to teach those debased Israelites just out of degrading bondage that a woman is as good as a man; that she belongs to the same order of being; that she is "bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh"; that he that loveth his wife loveth himself, and that she is entitled to man's consideration, tenderness, love, and protection, he would seem to have done it remarkably well, if we consider the character and capacity of the pupils for whom the lesson was intended.

Then, again, they must be taught what disobedience to Jehovah means, what a serious thing it is, and what terrible consequences come of it. To give them a theological treatise on the nature of sin would be as useless as to give them the binomial theorem. To talk to them about the inmost thoughts and recesses of the heart would be equally useless. They didn't, probably, know that they had any heart, in our moral sense of the word. They must have a very elementary lesson, and that confined to overt action. How could the teaching adapted to their needs and capacities be better conveyed than by the parable of the Garden of Eden with all its fulness and blessedness; the simple prohibition of a single kind of fruit; the violation of this prohibition, and the consequent expulsion from the Garden, with a life-long train of sorrows, toils, and troubles, followed by death,—all represented as penalties of transgression? The dramatic character of the narrative, and the filling in of details, give such verisimilitude to the whole story, that it is hardly matter of wonder that mankind, in the past, have taken it as literal verity.

Then, again, the Israelites must be put on their guard against temptation. They must be taught how insidious and plausible and subtle are the shapes it often assumes.

The Serpent was taken to symbolize this idea. The appropriateness of the symbol is not apparent to us, because it corresponds with nothing in our experience. May it not be that they learned something during their four hundred and thirty years' residence in Egypt or during their forty years' experience in the wilderness, which gave to this symbol a significance to them which is not apparent to us? The narrative says: "The Serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made." St. Paul speaks of the "Serpent beguiling Eve through his subtilty." No other New Testament writer alludes to the subject. Neither the narrative nor St. Paul intimates that there was any diabolical agency in the matter.

Here arise the two queries which this article was chiefly intended to consider. Is there any devil disclosed in the Old Testament? Are the devils of the New Testament real entities and agencies, or did they originate in Oriental personifications of evil, and in the brains of Jewish rabbis and apocryphal writers?

As to the first query, we learn from authorities in the Hebrew language, that there is a word of somewhat frequent recurrence in the Old Testament, which denotes an *open opponent or adversary*, but implies *nothing subtle, deceptive, or seductive*. It is almost always used as a common noun, and is applied to various personages, without reference to moral character. It is applied to an angel of the Lord who confronted Balaam when he was going where he should not go. (Numbers xxii., 22.) It is applied by the Philistines to David, when he had fled to their camp through fear of Saul, and they were unwilling to trust him as an ally, "lest in the battle he be an adversary" to them. (I. Samuel xxix., 4.)

It is applied to two personal enemies of Solomon, whom, it is said, "the Lord stirred up as adversaries" against him, after he had yielded to the polytheistic proclivities of his pagan wives. (I. Kings xi., 14, 23.)

It is applied by David to two of his courtiers who were heartily loyal to him, because they gave him, as he thought, very mistaken advice. (II. Samuel xix., 22.)

In one of the imprecatory Psalms, David says: "Set thou a wicked man over him, and let Satan (an adversary) stand at his right hand." (Psalm cix., 6.) These examples might be indefinitely multiplied were it necessary.

In only three books of the Old Testament does this same word occur as a proper noun denoting a specific personage; viz., in Chronicles, Job, and Zechariah. In I. Chronicles **xxi.**, 1, it is said, "Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel." This personage does not figure again in either of the books of Chronicles, which Dean Stanley and others prove to have been among the very last-written of the Old Testament canon.

In II. Samuel **xxiv.**, 1, written hundreds of years earlier, it is said, "The Lord moved David to number Israel." At the worst, nothing is charged upon Satan in Chronicles but what is attributed to the Almighty in Samuel. In Zechariah **iii.**, 1, 2, it is said: "He shewed me Joshua, the high-priest, standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan!" A marginal note in a scholarly edition of the Bible substitutes "an adversary" for "Satan" in both these verses. Zechariah has no more to say about this personage. In the book of Job, the conception of Satan is that of an officer of the court of heaven; or, as some one has said, "a sort of prosecuting attorney," with an aspect of uncharitableness quite in keeping with his office, but *open and frank in speech, proposing to do, and actually doing, nothing without warrant from the Almighty.*

The word Satan occurs once in the New Testament, in precisely the Old Testament sense. Christ had just told his apostles, for the first time, that "he must go up to Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be *killed*, and be raised again the third day." Peter was astonished. His affectionate heart could not bear the idea. With characteristic impulsiveness, drawing Christ towards himself (*προσλαβόμενος*, in the middle voice, is the word) he exclaimed "Ἰλέως σοι" "God forbid, this shall not be unto thee." According to Mark **viii.**, 33, Christ first looked

around on his disciples, and then said deliberately to Peter, according to Matthew, "Take thyself out of my way, adversary; thou art an obstacle to me; thou thinkest not God's thought, but man's thought"; not a devil's thought. In other words, "Peter, your ardent, well-meaning affection makes you a *presumptuous opponent* of the Divine plan, which requires my death,"—and that was all. Apparently but a few minutes before—at least, the one incident follows right after the other in Matthew xvi., 17 to 23 inclusive,—Christ had said to this same Peter, "Blessed art *thou*, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. Thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

It is not to be supposed that Christ would talk to Peter in this way, represent him as the recipient of a special revelation from the Father, and make him, in some sense, the corner-stone of his Church, one minute, and the next, turn around, call him a devil, and identify him with the enemies of his Church, and all for an unwitting offence. It is safe to say he did no such thing; and herein we have Christ's conception of the Old Testament import of the word Satan, which is identical with the significance which we have claimed for it.

So far, we think, it appears that that word in the Hebrew canon which *usually* figures in the English version as "adversary," and, in a few instances, as "Satan," denotes *an open, out-spoken opponent*, and *implies nothing subtle, deceptive, or seductive*. There only remains in the Old Testament the curse pronounced on the serpent in the third chapter of Genesis. This is supposed to disclose a devil of the most subtle kind, and one which does not figure again in Holy Writ for four thousand years.

Have not the Jewish Talmudists who first broached this idea, and the Christian theologians who have so long followed them, strangely failed to appreciate the mission of Moses in the world, the material he had to deal with, and the means necessary to accomplish his object? As we read



the Pentateuch, Moses was sent to teach monotheism to a single one of the thousand and one, more or less, races then on the earth, all steeped in polytheism and fetichism, and that race to which he was sent, more debased, if possible, than any of the others of which we have knowledge, by four hundred and thirty years' bondage to pagan task-masters,— a bondage as much more debasing than our modern Southern or Cuban slavery as all the thoughts, feelings, and usages of paganism are more debasing than the thoughts, feelings, and usages of Christianity, even when that Christianity is very unchristian; a people so imbruted that notwithstanding all the wonders wrought for their deliverance in Egypt, at the Red Sea, in the wilderness, on Sinai's top, notwithstanding their previous pledge, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do," Moses could not get down from the mountain, the smoke could hardly disappear from the summit, and the thunders hardly die away in the distance, before they were making and worshipping an Egyptian calf. To permeate such a people as that with the idea of one God, pure and simple, of Jehovah, lone and sole, and to give this idea fixedness in their minds, the lesson must be driven home in the most unqualified shape. If there are any other superhuman beings, good or bad, they must be ignored for several generations. Jehovah must have no antagonists, no rivals, no competitors, hardly servants, even, of superhuman power. They must understand that Jehovah "sits on no precarious throne, nor borrows leave to be." Accordingly, Moses almost never employs a go-between. Moses says the Almighty "talked with him in the mount face to face, as a man talketh with his friend."

He represents Jehovah as speaking without a medium to Adam, Eve, the Serpent, Cain, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and we know not how many more. He represents Jehovah as himself repeatedly hardening Pharaoh's heart to persistent disobedience of his own commands. He represents the Almighty as commanding Abraham to offer a human sacrifice to himself, although the uplifted arm is stayed at the last moment. Succeeding teachers of the same system repre-

sent the Almighty as instigating David to number Israel, and then punishing him for it (II. Samuel xxiv.); represent him as sending a lying spirit into the prophets of Ahab to allure Ahab on to retributive destruction (I. Kings xxii., 22); represent him as sending an evil spirit to terrify Saul; and it is said three times, in three successive verses, that that evil spirit was from God. (I. Samuel xvi., 14, 15, 16.)

Still later, the prophet Amos says, "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" (Amos iii., 6.) More than this, the grandest of all the Hebrew prophets, and the one who had so much of the gospel in him that he is called the evangelical prophet, put the whole contents of the Mosaic theology, apart from law and ritual, into a single verse, and did it sublimely. According to him, "Thus saith the Lord, I form the light and create darkness; *I* make peace and create evil; *I*, the Eternal, do all these things." (Isaiah xlv., 1, 7.) In other words, there is no superhuman being but me, good or bad, to do any of these things, good or bad. That is what Moses taught; that is what the old prophets reiterated down to the captivity, and that is what had to be taught to exorcise polytheism and fetichism from the Hebrew mind. Even then, during all the centuries that preceded the captivity, this tuition was only a partial success. The national mind was never thoroughly permeated with monotheism, and never thoroughly purged of polytheism till after that epoch.

After the Old Testament canon was closed; after all special inspiration had ceased, by the admission of Jewish rabbis and Christian theologians; after all the old prophets were under-ground, and no new ones were raised up to take their places, uninspired but pretentious rabbis substituted interpretation for inspiration. According to Reuss, they had a cabalistic, dogmatic, gratuitous, unscrupulous system of exegesis that went to the text, not to find what was in it, but to foist into it their own preconceived theories and fantasies.\* These exegetes, at this late day, professed to

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\*Reuss' *History of the Christian Theology in the Apostolic Age.* Vol. I. pp. 70, 71, 358, 361.

find *three superhuman beings* in the third chapter of Genesis, and two of them in one verse,—Jehovah, the Messiah, and a devil. In finding a promise of the Messiah in the fifteenth verse, they find the promise to have been made, not to Adam, not to Eve, not by way of mercy to mankind, but by way of adding a sting to the curse pronounced on the Serpent. In other words, they represent the promise of human redemption from sin and perdition as dictated by vengeance and not by mercy; and in finding a devil embodied in a Serpent, they make Moses to have taught the very quintessence of fetichism.

It is fortunate that the nation, for thirteen hundred years, did not so understand the narrative; for their polytheistic proclivities, so often evinced, warrant the belief that, if they had once conceived that a devil was ever embodied in a Serpent, they would have suspected the permanence or the renewal of this embodiment. As sacrifice is always dictated by fear, in superstitious minds, they would have been likely to offer more sacrifices to the Serpent than to Jehovah, in spite of Moses; and Aaron might have helped them, as he did help them to the golden calf. Neither Jew nor Christian pretends that that part of the curse contained in the fourteenth verse applies to anything but the Serpent. The idea that the devil was to “go on his belly, and eat dust all the days of his life” was too absurd even for a rabbi. The transition, without intimation, in the fifteenth verse, from an outside Serpent to an inside devil is one which no unsophisticated mind would be likely to discover. Our English version reads, “The seed of the woman shall *bruise* thy head, and thou shalt *bruise* his heel.” In place of the verb “bruise,” the Septuagint uses a word the primary and fundamental meaning of which is, “Keep an eye on,”—“Keep a lookout for.” It follows that the seventy understood this clause to mean, “The offspring of woman shall keep a lookout for thy head, and thou shalt keep a lookout for his heel,” and the whole verse as denoting the perpetual enmity that was to exist between mankind and serpent-kind, and the way in which each would guard against, and aim

blows at, the other, and nothing more. We are told by high authority that Gesenius, the father of modern Hebrew lexicography, translates this passage in the same way. Obviously, it is the only ingenuous, common-sense interpretation of the curse pronounced on the Serpent.

It is not easy to see why any one's Christian faith need be disturbed by this version of that curse. Many are the passages in the Hebrew prophets that refer to a Messiah, and cannot refer to anybody else; a few so specific and accurate that they seem like an autobiography of Jesus. If Christ did say to the Jews, "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me," it is to be remembered that there are forty-seven chapters in Genesis after the third chapter, and there are four books in the Pentateuch after the first book; and it has never been proved that Moses did not write most, if not all, of them. That promise, so often made to Abraham, and reiterated to Isaac and to Jacob, that in their seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed, may fairly be construed as including, though vaguely, the promise of a Messiah, because in no other way could all the nations of the earth be blessed through their descendants. Even if it could be proved that Moses did not write a word of the Pentateuch, so long as the Jews believed that he wrote all, and quoted the five books by the formula "Moses says," and so long as Christ reasoned with them on their own basis, and from their own data, he would do the same. Christ's words, then, remain true, even with this new version of the fifteenth verse of the third chapter of Genesis.

Neither is it easy to see why Christian theologians should continue to pin their faith upon the interpretation of that very class of Jewish teachers whom Christ, when on earth, charged with making the word of God of none effect by their traditions; the very class whom he pronounced "blind leaders of the blind"; the very class to whom he uttered that oft-repeated "Woe unto you"; a class swift to find promises of a Messiah to come, and swift to reject him when he did come,—exegetes to be distrusted, one would think. To one brought up to believe in a personal devil, the flimsi-

ness of the basis for such belief in the Hebrew Scriptures is surprising.

The foregoing considerations seem to warrant the assertion that there is not to be found in the Old Testament the first lineament of a New Testament devil. Yet when Christ came, he found an elaborate system of belief in a hierarchy of devils. It must, then, have originated during that period when both orthodox Jews and orthodox Christian theologians concede that God had ceased to make any special communications to mankind. This belief, then, must have been of human origin. This origin, according to Reuss, Dean Stanley, Max Müller, and others, it is not difficult to trace. During the Babylonish captivity, which included, at least, two generations, the Israelites must have got some knowledge of the dualistic religion of their conquerors. Although the moral discipline to which they were subjected, the loss of their temple, the exile of their race, and the humiliation of the captivity, so purified their monotheism, and so increased their loyalty to Jehovah that they could not accept, nor believe in, the Persian Ahriman, yet the Hebrew mind became familiar with the idea of an evil entity antagonistic to all goodness. A germ seems to have been implanted which found subsequent development in rabbinical teaching. The rabbis appear to have taken the Satan of the Old Testament, attached to him certain features and characteristics in common with the Persian Ahriman, and thus to have developed the Satan of the New Testament.

Says Reuss, Vol. I., p. 75, "This idea [of Satan], which appeared in [Hebrew] Scripture only as a poetic fiction, though it might have its roots in the beliefs of the people, was, in its turn, the commencement of a very important chapter in Jewish theology. It combined with a notion of a principle of evil as recognized in dualism; and this combination, always kept subordinate to the monotheistic theory, finally produced the idea of the devil, which soon became one of those most popularly received among the Jews, and thus, in spite of its metaphysical origin, sank to the level of a vulgar superstition."

Then, again, after the Hebrew canon was translated into Greek, about 300 B.C., thus giving Jewish ideas currency among Hellenistic people, a large number of apocryphal writers sprang up who greatly contributed to this diabolical development. The apocryphal book of Wisdom is believed by Dean Stanley to have been written by an Alexandrian sage, in the second century before Christ. In this book, Chap. ii., verse 24, it is put in writing for the first time, that "through envy of the devil came death into the world." It was a favorite way with these apocryphal writers to assume the name of some Old Testament saint or hero, make him do the talking, and put into his mouth whatever the writer wished to have said. One of these writers assumed the name of Enoch, the seventh from Adam, of whom the Old Testament record is, "He walked with God, and was not, for God took him," which is generally understood to mean that he was removed from earth without physical death,—a very convenient medium for an apocryphal writer to send into any world, make to see anything, and make to say anything; for nobody could dispute him. Accordingly, Enoch is taken by a celestial escort through Paradise, and made to witness the fall of certain angels. That fall, according to Dean Stanley, has not a shadow of resemblance to the fall in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, but does resemble the fall in Byron's "Heaven and Earth." It consisted in preferring to take human wives and live on earth, rather than retain "their first estate." In Genesis vi., 2, it is said "that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose." The orthodox interpretation of this verse is, that the pious descendants of Seth intermarried with the impious descendants of Cain. The author of the book of Enoch conceived that the sons of God meant angels. The whole theory of "fallen angels" rests on no other basis than this absurd exegesis, and the poetic conceptions of John Milton, as will farther appear. This book of Enoch was written by a genius. Dean Stanley calls it the *Diviná Comedia* of its period. It seems to have created a sensation when first

written, and is quoted by the early Fathers. It then disappeared for centuries, and was supposed to be irrecoverably lost. In 1773, an English traveller named Bruce found an Ethiopic version of it in Abyssinia. He took it to England, and in 1821 an English version was made by an English bishop (Chambers' Encyclopedia). It then appeared that the second Epistle of Peter and the Epistle of Jude had quoted almost *verbatim* from this book, about the "angels that kept not their first estate, but are reserved in chains, under darkness, to the judgment of the great day." It has also been found that the Epistle of Jude makes another apocryphal book called the Assumption of Moses, its authority when it says (verse 9), "Michael, the archangel, when he disputed with the devil about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee." (Thayer's *Theology*, p. 404.) In Deuteronomy xxxiv., 6, it is said the Lord buried Moses and no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day. The author of the Assumption of Moses seems to have thought this too summary a disposal of the body of the first leader and prophet of Israel. So he sends an archangel to superintend the funeral ceremonies. While Michael is thus engaged, a devil puts in an appearance, and tells him that Moses is not entitled to honorable burial, because he once murdered an Egyptian. A dispute arises, and Michael falls back on his dignity.

These quotations are made without introduction or explanation, as if the readers for whom the epistles were intended were familiar with the books and the stories. It is supposed that these quotations were made, not by way of indorsing the canonicity of the books, or the truthfulness of the stories, but by way of illustrating the doctrine or duty under consideration in the epistles; just as a modern religious writer may allude to a scene or character in Shakespeare, to "point a moral or adorn a tale."

With respect to the doctrine of fallen angels, Dean Stanley (in *Jewish Church*, Vol. III., p. 184, Note) says, "The only passages [of Scripture] which would appear to indicate the

fall of angels are II. Peter ii., 4, and Jude 6,"—both quoted from the book of Enoch, as we have shown.

Reuss (Vol. II., p. 422) writes of "the very common inconsistency of speaking of the devil as a fallen angel. It is, indeed, strange blindness not to perceive that this hackneyed formula, so far from explaining the origin of evil, only renders any explanation of it impossible." Rev. Alfred Barry, of the English Church, Principal of Cheltenham College (in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, article, "Satan"), "conjectures" that Satan is a fallen angel, but virtually concedes that there is no solid foundation for this conjecture, between Bible covers. He admits that Satan cannot be one of the fallen angels spoken of by Peter and Jude, because the latter are represented as "confined in chains, under darkness," whereas the former is represented as having the largest liberty, "going about as a roaring lion."

We have, then, the origin of a *belief* in devils accounted for in a way which furnishes no proof of their reality.

When Christ came, he found this belief universal among the Jews, except the small sect of the Sadducees. He seems never to have combated that belief. Did he share in it? The evangelists seem to take for granted that he did, and have recorded a few passages which, at first view, would seem to affirm this idea. Yet we cannot think that he did, and that for several reasons. His failure to combat the belief does not prove that he shared in it. He found little but erroneous beliefs in morals, in religion, in Church, and in State, yet he spent very little time in combating intellectual error. It would be presumptuous to dogmatize as to his reasons for this forbearance, but it is certain that his ministry was to last only three years or less, and although the ability of Divine power to correct human beliefs may be unlimited in itself, the capacity of inveterate human beliefs and prejudices for being corrected is extremely limited. From the nature of the human mind, this can only be done, permanently and usefully, apart from miraculous illumination, by a process of reflection, education, and growth,—the work of time. Even willing learners were "slow of



heart to believe" what he told them, and not till after his resurrection did they begin to comprehend much that he had said. For a period indefinitely longer did they expect Christ to establish an earthly sovereignty, although he had so often told them that his "kingdom was not of this world."

Besides, some one has said that Christ did not come so much to change the beliefs of men as to change the men themselves; not so much to teach new doctrines as to inspire a new life; and that Christianity is a life and not a theology. Certain it is that his method was, not to attack human beliefs and prejudices directly, and thus provoke intellectual combativeness, except when contending with malignant opponents, but to put in the grain of mustard-seed and leave it to grow, to put in the leaven and leave the centuries and decades of centuries to leaven the whole lump.

Again, a careful perusal of the evangelists shows that Christ had comparatively little to say about devils except when combating malignant Scribes and Pharisees. When they charge him with having a devil, and when they accuse him of casting out devils by Beelzebub, he meets them on their own ground, and confutes them in their own phraseology. But when he is asked by his disciples to explain a parable, and when he is giving his inmost thought in the privacy of retirement, he tells them that "from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness,—all these evil things come from within." (Mark vii., 17, 21, 22.) After the Pharisees had charged him with casting out devils through the prince of the devils, and Christ had warned them against the most aggravated of all sins, that which "hath never forgiveness," he tells them that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," that "the evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is evil." (Matthew xii., 34, 35.) Herein Christ seems to account for all human wickedness, the unpardonable sin included, without the agency of any devil.

In the next place, if there was *anything* new and peculiar in the teaching of Christ, it was the Fatherhood of God. "Our Father who art in heaven" was never said by anybody before him, so far as we know. How he could use that language and teach that doctrine while, at the same time, he believed and knew that that Father had created, and let loose, demons whose "being's end and aim" seems temptation, deception, seduction, perdition, among children already fearfully exposed to sin by their own natures and environments, is a question hardly admitting of a satisfactory answer.

Finally, Christ once said to his apostles, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" In this instance, he certainly applied that epithet to the human wickedness of a human being, and to nothing else. If once, why not always, when he used the word devil, or Satan, of his own choice, and not because dictated by his opponents?

The foregoing considerations would seem to show that whenever Christ used language apparently implying the existence of devils, he did so in conformity with the theological phraseology of the times, and not by way of expressing his own belief.

The apostles and New Testament writers speak of these malignant beings in so many connections, so many applications, and with such seeming earnestness, that their belief cannot be doubted. They believed in devils before they believed in Christ. Yet we think every one of them has accounted, directly or indirectly, for all human wickedness, without the agency of devils. St. Paul uses a more diversified and elevated phraseology with respect to them than any other New Testament writer, because of his higher Jewish culture. But when he is least rhetorical and most logical, when he is expressing, not what he learned from Gamaliel, but what he learned from Christ, he ascribes all human depravity to "the carnal mind, which is enmity against God; not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

In his own religious experience, he complains of "a law in his members warring against the law of his mind, and

bringing him into captivity to the law of sin and death,"—all that the devil is ever charged with doing, and leaving nothing for him to do. St. James says, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." In the same short epistle, he says, "Every man is *tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed*. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." Herein, too, we have all that the devil is ever charged with doing, and yet it all gets done without him. Is he not a superfluity which theology can spare?

It is worthy of remark that Satan and the Serpent were never identified till after Jewish rabbis began their theological speculations and their cabalistic interpretations. The Apocalypse is the only canonical book in which Satan is called "that old Serpent." This book, except the first three chapters and a part of the last, is confessedly symbolical; but what is symbolized, hardly any two interpreters agree. The only point on which they approach unanimity is, that all the diabolical phraseology denotes the persecuting secular power. The writer must needs use descriptive terms which the Christian Church would understand and the Roman government would not. This book, therefore, fails to furnish any reliable basis for argument on either side of the question at issue.

It is no more strange that the apostles, New Testament writers, and the Church after them, should be allowed to cherish an erroneous belief with respect to the existence and agency of evil spirits than that they should be allowed to do the same thing in respect to the speedy second coming of Christ. That they did expect to see Christ coming in the clouds of heaven with hosts of angels and the sound of a trumpet, and to see the dead raised and be themselves caught up to meet the Lord in the air, is patent from many a page in the Epistles and the Apocalypse. It is true that when the Thessalonians became unduly excited on the subject, Paul wrote them that "that time would not come, except there come a falling away first," and Antichrist be revealed. (II. Thessalonians ii.) But it is also true that

John wrote, some thirty years later, to *all* the churches, "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many Antichrists; *whereby we know it is the last time.*" (I. John ii., 18.)

The existence of an archfiend, if there be one, so far from solving the great problem of moral evil, only complicates and aggravates it. If man could not sin without an extraneous tempter, much less, one would think, could an angel "greater in power and might." The fall of an angel without a tempter is more inexplicable than the fall of man without a tempter. To suppose a tempter back of the angel is to suppose a series of tempters, and this involves a tempter before the first tempter. Temptation must be incident to probation, and possibly it matters not from what source the requisite degree of it comes.

But when we consider the fearful odds under which human probation begins, apart from diabolical agency; the hold which the material world gets upon the senses before reason and conscience are much developed; inherited evil propensities; neglected or misdirected education; the force of wicked example; the thousand and one pernicious influences pouring in upon the soul from all quarters; the feebleness of the intellect to take in and appreciate the motives to right action,—who can contemplate without dismay the terrible climax of a host of supernatural, malignant, unseen, and unsuspected beings, allowed free access to the human soul, and bent on its perdition? What ingenuous mind, unperverted and unblunted by life-long dogmatic teaching, can believe all this, and yet say with all the sincerity and earnestness of child-like devotion, "Our Father who art in heaven"?

LEWIS J. DUDLEY.