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“THE EVIL ONE”

*BIBLE TEACHING CONCERNING
THE DEVIL AND SATAN*

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1971

This pamphlet was first published as a contribution to the discussion raised by the alterations to the Lord's Prayer in the Revised Version of 1881, and which were thought by some to countenance the doctrine of a personal immortal devil. The present edition is a reprint of the fourth edition which was slightly abridged.

The controversy is as relevant today as when the Revised Version appeared, since the New English Bible 1961 reads "Save us from the evil one". The Revised Standard Version of America 1952, on the other hand, retains the wording of the Authorized Version; the Interlinear Greek-English New Testament (1958) has "Rescue us from evil", and J. B. Phillips, "Save us from evil".

"The Evil One"

THE importance of the subject of the "Evil One" is greater than most people may imagine. It is common to think it is of no importance at all to know what the truth of the matter may be. This will not be maintained by those who estimate matters by the Bible standard of importance. By this standard, it is made of prime importance to understand the mission of Christ among mankind; and one of the primary aspects of this mission lays hold of the subject of the devil. First as to his works (whatever we may find these to be), John says: "[For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil](#)" (1 John 3: 8). Then as to the devil himself, we are informed by Paul (Heb. 2 : 14) that the very object of Christ's assumption of the nature common to man, was that "[through death he might destroy..... the devil](#)". It is manifest, therefore, that it is no empty discussion that is raised when we enquire who the devil is that Christ came to destroy. We must know him, or we fail to comprehend one of the most vital aims of the work of Christ.

THE ALTERATION IN THE LORD'S PRAYER

We consider first, the alteration in the Lord's prayer in the Revised Version of the Bible. The petition there stands: "[Deliver us from the Evil One](#)". Is this translation justifiable? In plain cases it is unquestionable that the Reviser's acquaintance with the usages and idioms of the Greek tongue qualified them to render reliably into English the ideas expressed in the Greek: but suppose a case that is not plain, and on which their doctrinal predilections would incline the scale, it is evident their reliability in that case would be a little in question. This is just such a case. It is a case surrounded with uncertainty. They have shown this by the way they have presented the alteration. They have not given us the phrase "[The Evil One](#)" in plain unchallengeable Roman letters "[The Evil](#)" comes out boldly enough, in Roman type, but then there is a falter, and the word "[one](#)", which is the pith of the alteration, emerges modestly and uncertainly in *italics*.

The meaning of italic letters in such a connection, must, of course, be known to everyone: it is an intimation to the English reader what the word so printed is not in the original. If such English reader is tempted to ask, "Why introduce such words at all if they are not in the original?" the answer is that they are often needed to complete the expression of the sense of the original. The structure of the Greek and Hebrew languages is so different from English as to make a word-for-word translation impossible and it often happens that additional words are needed in English, to complete the expression of an idea which in the original is only hinted at. In the majority of cases the necessity for the additional words is so self-evident that the added words legitimately form part of the translation and need not be italicized: in some cases, however, there is room for doubt, and therefore the safe rule is adopted of italicizing in all cases where the words used in the translation have no corresponding terms in the original. By this means, the English reader is, to some extent, placed on a level with those who can read the text in the original.

But the case in question is one of extreme doubt. The highest authorities differ. There is as much weight of learning on the side of the old translation "[deliver us from evil](#)", as on the side of the new. Not only so, but the Revisers themselves who give us "[the evil one](#)" give the reader the liberty of choice between "[the evil one](#)" and the old translation "[evil](#)". Not only have they italicized the essential word in the altered translation, but they state in the margin that "[evil](#)" may be read instead of "[the Evil one](#)".

WHO IS THE DEVIL?

The question that must govern all grammatical criticism on the subject, is, "Who is the devil?" or, "Who is the evil one?"

There can be no doubt that the popular conception of the devil is largely due to Milton's work, Paradise Lost. But when we ask scriptural evidence in support of it, we are referred to various parts of the Bible which may be woven into a tolerably complete argument in its favour, if we are at liberty to wrench them from their place and

surroundings, and piece them together without the least reference to the significance imparted to them by their several contexts. If we judge them by their contexts, we find them to have no relevancy to the subject whatever. Indeed, nothing tends more effectually to dissipate the popular theory of the Evil One than the study of these portions of scripture. Let us glance at them in the order in which they come naturally to be adduced.

THE SERPENT IN EDEN

We are first referred to the garden of Eden. We read the account of the temptation and the fall. We ask where are we to find the popular devil in this transaction? We are directed to the tempter. We look at him. We find him a serpent—an animal. We say, "Here is the tempter, but where is the devil?" We are told the serpent was the devil in the shape of a serpent, or contained the devil who had taken possession of him. We ask for proof. There is none forthcoming except such as may be contained in an argument on the improbability of a serpent speaking unaided. The idea that the serpent was the popular devil in animal shape is perfectly gratuitous. It is unsupported by a single hint to this effect in the whole course of scripture. It is a pure piece of tradition. The only distinct allusion to the transaction in the scriptures discountenances the idea of "possession". It is in Paul's 2nd letter to the Corinthians, 11: 3, where, expressing his fears for the steadfastness of the believers under trial, he says, "[I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ](#)". In this, Paul recognizes the serpent pure and simple as the tempter, his power to be which he attributes to "[his subtlety](#)".

It is doubtless a natural feeling that recoils from the idea of a serpent performing the intelligent part of the tempter of Eve in the garden of Eden; but let reason act, and the feeling will disappear. The narrative gives us nothing but the serpent. To add the devil to the serpent is to go beyond the record. Our business is to add nothing to the testimony, but to aim to understand it. A speaking serpent has not been disclosed in the records of natural history; but this does not exclude the possibility of such a creature at such a time if circumstances called for it. It is a mere question of throat mechanism, and the necessary nerves of volition. It is not, of course, in human power to produce such a mechanism, but a fool only would place it beyond divine power. It is authentically recorded (and Peter commends the record to our confidence) that a dumb ass was enabled to speak in rebuke of the madness of Balaam (Num. 22: 28), and there is neither more nor less difficulty about the serpent. The parrot gives us the case of a speaking creature minus ideas. The Edenic serpent had both the ideas and the power to express them.

There is nothing in this impossible to be received in all the circumstances of the case. There was a need to put the obedience of Adam and Eve to the proof; and this required the plausible enticement of an external tempter. Left to themselves, obedience would have been a matter of course; but it is not obedience of this mild description that is well pleasing to God. Obedience under trial is what pleases God. To give Adam and Eve an opportunity for obedience of this sort, or to terminate and set aside the obedience they were rendering if it should prove of the flimsy order of a mere circumstantial compliance, the serpent provided the test. It was a divine arrangement with a divine object. The same principle was afterwards illustrated when "[God did tempt Abraham](#)" (Gen. 22: 1), that is, put him to the proof, by requiring at his hands a performance which seemed on the face of it inconsistent even with God's own purposes in the case. There is no contradiction in this to James' deprecation of any man saying "[I am tempted of God](#)" (James 1 : 13), for, in the case of James' discourse, it is a question of enticing to evil for evil's sake. God never does this to a just man; He tries him, and in this sense, tempts him, which is another thing. We may be quite sure if we are children of God that some time or other, we shall be similarly put to the proof. To him that overcometh (offering the stout front of a determined obedience to God to all suggestions or incitements in any direction forbidden), will the palm of victory be finally awarded.

This view of the case harmonizes with the fact that the serpent is classified with "[the beasts of the field which the Lord God had made](#)". It also harmonizes with the sentence passed upon the serpent: "[Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle . . . dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life](#)" (Gen. 3: 14), a sentence inexplicable upon the hypothesis either that the serpent was the devil in serpent shape, or that the serpent was a passive and irresponsible tool in the hands of external power. The suggestion that the supernatural adversary of God and man insinuated himself, with malevolent intent, into the happy environs of Eden, has only to be fairly looked at to be rejected as an anomaly—a pagan graft upon a simple and reasonable and divine narrative.

THE FALLEN ANGELS

Then we are referred to the case of the fallen angels, thus, and thus only, referred to in scripture;

"If God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment . . ." (2 Pet. 2 : 4).

"And the angels which 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" (Jude 6).

This does not even appear to countenance the Miltonic tradition. It does not tell of angels being expelled from heaven to engage in marauding expeditions against human interests and divine authority, wherever their caprice might lead them ; but of disobedient angels, not necessarily in heaven, being degraded from their position, and confined in the grave against a time of judgment. It speaks of them as in custody, "[under chains of darkness](#)"—a metaphor highly expressive of the bondage of death—in which they are held, and from which they will emerge, to be judged, at a time when the saints shall sit in judgment (1 Cor. 6: 3).

(A reasonable explanation connects the language of Jude and Peter with the account of the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram in Num. 16. The punctuation of the Greek text of recent Editors supports this view, by only separating verses 5 and 6 by a comma. "[The angels that sinned](#)" thus belongs to the wilderness experiences of Israel.)

LUCIFER, KING OF BABYLON

Next referred to Isaiah 14 : 12-15, we turn to that scripture, and read something that, read apart from the context, looks a little in the direction of the popular history of Satan: "[How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! Thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven: I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. . . . I will ascend above the heights of the clouds: I will be like the most High.](#)" Nothing appears more clearly in favour of the popular tradition than this language, till we ask of whom these things are said. To whom is this highly-wrought language addressed? Reasonable minds will ask this question. They will not be contented to sit down in front of the passage isolated from its context. They will not suffer themselves to be confined within the four corners of a quotation, so to speak, without the liberty of looking out of the windows to see where they are. They will ask to know the connections and surroundings of the matter. When they have ascertained these, they will simply ask for the next proof, discovering that in this there is none. The personage addressed in the language in question is declared (verse 4) to be "[the king of Babylon](#)"—a declaration confirmed by all the allusions in the chapter, such as that he "[ruled the nations in anger](#)" (verse 6): that he "[weakened the nations](#)" (verse 12) : that he was "[the man that made the earth to tremble](#)" (verse 16): and that at last, he should be dishonoured in death, in being refused the rites of burial (verse 20).

THE KING OF TYRE

Ezek. 28: 13-17, yields similar results. Quoted in isolation from the context, it seems to countenance the Miltonic view: "[Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God: every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, the topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold. . . . Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God: thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. . . . Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness.](#)" All that is necessary to be said of this, in confutation of the claim to put it forward as an account of the angle the origin and fall of the popular devil, is that it is part of an address to the Prince of Tyre, who is explicitly described as "[a man, and not God](#)" (see verse 2). Its applicability in this way is evident from the particulars of political and commercial greatness contained in the chapter. The precise meaning of the language of the verses set forth above, we need not here consider, in view of its incontestably pointing in a human and not in a diabolical direction.

THE WOMAN, THE DRAGON, AND THE MAN CHILD

Rev. 12: 7-10 is next put forward as furnishing a scriptural sanction to the Miltonic idea of the nature and origin of the Devil. Instead of furnishing a sanction, however, it withdraws the whole subject from the possibility of such a sanction by affording conclusive evidence of the unscripturality of the clerical theory of the devil. It does this by identifying the scriptural devil in an explicit and recognizable direction very different from that of the popular belief; it does this in a way that leaves no room for doubt. Still, on the face of it, nothing could look more like the Miltonic tradition, as the reader will perceive in the perusal of the following quotation:

"And 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. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent called the Devil and Satan which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."

Reading this as a piece of literal history, it is, of course, impossible to see in it anything else than what is pictured in popular tradition as to the origin and downfall of Satan, ages before the world began; but reading it as we are in the book itself directed to read, the scene changes altogether.

In the first place, we find it was not historic as related by John, but prophetic. It was part of a representation of events concerning which it was said to John, "I will show thee things which must be hereafter" (Rev. 4: 1), on which there arises the obvious reflection that if it was a representation of things future to John's day, it cannot be a history of something long before John's day. This is sufficient of itself to dispose of the passage as a proof of the popular "Devil and Satan".

When we come to look at the meaning of the recital, there is not an inch of standing ground left for the popular case. We may acquire the meaning from the Apocalypse itself. The Apocalypse is strewn with hints of interpretation that make it possible to work out a piece of symbolism otherwise inexplicable. In the first place, the symbolic character of the whole book is plainly announced. "He sent and signified it by his angel to his servant John" (chap. 1: 1): the things communicated were exhibited in "sign" or symbol. The symbolical character thus intimated is illustrated beyond the possibility of misapprehension. Thus, in the very first scene, John first saw seven golden candlesticks which he was presently informed (chap. 1: 20) stood for seven churches; thus, too, the "odours" ascending from angels' golden vials, represented the prayers of the saints (chap. 5: 8); a woman, a certain great city having authority (Rev. 17: 18); a resplendent edifice of gold and precious stones, the bride-community of the friends of Christ (Rev. 21: 9-10).

With this guidance we look at the war in heaven between Michael and "the dragon, the old serpent, the Devil and Satan". And we ask the meaning. First we note the description of "the Devil and Satan"—"A great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his head; and his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth" (verses 3, 4). It is not altogether beside the mark to observe that the colour and form of this creature are out of harmony with the popular conception which assigns to the devil blackness of colour and a single head, and a person mainly of human shape. We need not press this discrepancy, since no one is prepared to submit an authentic image of the popular devil.

The Apocalyptic dragon is, of course, a hieroglyph; and the question is, the meaning of the hieroglyph; for which we have not far to seek: for a few chapters on, we find a word of interpretation on the heads and horns, prefaced with this significant sentence: "Here is the mind which hath wisdom" (17:9): as much as to say, the matter is one requiring wisdom to penetrate, and that the man who looks at it simply as a pictorial description of the devil, is not exercising wisdom: "The seven heads are seven mountains (or hills) on which the woman sitteth, and (an additional meaning) there are seven kings (sovereignities—forms of sovereign power, succeeding each other on the seven hills), five are fallen, one is, and the other is not yet come.... And the ten horns are TEN KINGS which have received no kingdom as yet . . ." From this it is manifest that the seven-headed ten-horned dragon is symbolical of a certain incorporation of political power upon earth. This perception is increased by a consideration of the woman mentioned in connection with the explanation of the heads— "seven hills on which the woman sitteth". What are we to understand by the woman? The last verse supplies the answer: "The woman which thou sawest is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth". Was there a great city in this position in John's day? Yes—ROME, the queen of the world at that time, and holding authority over the subject kings everywhere, e.g., King Agrippa. Has Rome anything to do with seven hills? Yes; she is known in history as the sevenhilled city. The city stands on seven hills; and this topographical peculiarity is made the occasion of

exhibiting a peculiarity of her political history, viz., that Rome-political has been upheld by seven successive forms of government, of which the Papacy is the sixth repeated and (coming after the seventh—the Gothic kingdom) therefore forming the eighth, though one of the seven—a riddle propounded in verse 11. The seven dragon heads were therefore symbolic of topographical and historical peculiarities of Rome; the ten horns of a coming division of her empire into many independent parts which has taken place.

Thus the dragon as a whole is a political symbol—the symbol of a constitution of the things among the nations of the earth—a constitution having its centre in Rome. Now it is this symbol which is labelled "[THAT OLD SERPENT, the DEVIL and SATAN, which deceiveth the whole world](#)". Consequently, we have here a clue to the discovery of the Bible devil. We are to find him in the system of things established among men, in its official relations. We need not seek him in a subterranean hell; nor need we contemplate the invisible air, where ancient and some not very ancient theologians maintain the Powers of Darkness hold high and crowded revel in the full blaze of sunlight, darting, unperceived by man, the arrows of their malignity into the minds and bodies of Adam's race. We are to look on earth; we are to see man; we are to behold the governments which corrupt and brutalize and oppress the nations.

Looking in this direction we have to ask a question which takes us right into the heart and essence of the devil question from a Bible point of view: why is the Roman system of government as historically developed and diversified in the centuries, styled "[the Great Dragon, Devil and Satan](#)"? and why "Devil and Satan"? and why "[that old serpent which deceiveth the whole world](#)"?

CHRIST DESTROYS THE DEVIL, THROUGH DEATH

We make the acquaintance of the abstract phase of the subject (in which all other forms of Bible diabolism have their root) in the contemplation of a statement we had occasion to quote earlier, viz., that Jesus partook of the flesh and blood of his brethren "[that through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, THAT IS, THE DEVIL](#)" (Heb, 2: 14). The Revised Version alters this wording a little, but not the meaning. "[Destroy him that had the power of death](#)" is changed to "[Bring to nought him that had](#) (or "hath", see margin) [the power . . .](#)" If possible, this is stronger, for to bring to nothing is to annihilate. The statement before us is that the annihilation of the devil was achieved by the death of Christ. This was what he died for: "[that through death he might bring to nothing him that had the power of death, that is, the devil](#)". If the devil of this statement is the popular devil, how are we to understand it? Did the death of Christ accomplish the annihilation of the devil? If so, how? How could being killed by the devil kill the devil? And how if he killed the devil, can the devil in that case be still alive; and how are we to understand the devil having the power of death in view of the fact that the power of death rests with God, and with God only, who inflicts it at His pleasure? (Deut. 32: 39). Whichever way the statement is considered, it cannot be made to yield an intelligible idea if we attach the popular meaning to the word "[devil](#)". There must be another meaning. There is another meaning.

SIN AND DEATH

We begin to find it in the consideration of other statements as to what was accomplished by the sacrifice of Christ. We cannot do better than calmly look at a number of these statements:

"[He put away sin by the sacrifice of himself](#)" (Heb. 9:26).

"[Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures](#)" (1 Cor. 15:3).

"[He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities](#)" (Isa. 53:5).

"[His own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree](#)" (1 Pet. 2:24).

"[He was manifested to take away our sins](#)" (1 John 3:5).

"[Our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity](#)" (Titus 2: 13, 14).

"[Our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world](#)" (Gal. 1: 3, 4).

"[This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins](#)" (Matt. 26:28).

"[Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood](#)" (Rev. 5:9).

These are divinely inspired definitions of the result achieved by the death of Christ. Who can read them without perceiving that the work accomplished was a work in relation to men themselves, and that the thing destroyed in the death of Christ was sin? It is of the highest importance that we should here seek to realize how this result was accomplished. We cannot become enlightened in this matter except by considering the history of sin. This is a very important history in relation to our race, though made light of by most men. It is told very briefly by Paul, whose words are the utterance of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5: 12). He says, "[By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin](#)". He is referring to Adam's disobedience at the beginning. How death came "by" this disobedience is very plain in the reading of the divine narrative in Genesis. Adam having been created in a good and happy state, it was said to him that he should abstain from eating of a certain tree, with this intimation: "[In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die](#)" (Gen. 2: 17). In the course of time he broke the command; he did what he was told not to do; he disobeyed, and this was sin; for sin and disobedience (in their primary sense) are interchangeable terms. It is the consequence we have to consider: sentence of death was passed: "[In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return](#)" (Gen. 3: 19). This sentence took effect upon Adam's nature, and became a law or quality of it, which was henceforth "corruptible" and "mortal". His nature became physically a dying nature, and therefore a death-nature, because of sin. Afterwards, children were born to Adam with the result of multiplying men who, having his nature, had also the "[sentence of death in themselves](#)" (1 Cor. 1: 9), which came originally by Adam's sin, and who in their moral manifestations revealed the effects of their inheritance.

Now God purposed in Himself to bring good out of this sore evil. He purposed to bring the human race back into harmony with Himself (not every individual of it—comparatively few individuals of it—but ultimately the entire race as a race). He purposed to abolish death and to bring life and immortality to light (2 Tim. 1: 10) But how was this to be done? Sin had brought death and sin reigned. It was to be done by putting away sin—by not imputing sin—by forgiving sin. But was this to be done in an arbitrary manner without ceremony or condition? Was it to be forgiven in the way a man might suddenly forgive a debt owing by a friend? The death of Christ (prefigured by a long-established ritual of sacrifice) is the answer. Forgiveness was to be offered in a way that secured the recognition of justice—the humiliation of man and the exaltation of God. It was to be made conditional upon a recognition and submission to what was accomplished in Christ. "[Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins](#)" (Acts 13: 38).

But let us pause for a moment to consider what was accomplished in him. The orthodox doctrine of the death of Christ creates great difficulty and confusion here. It proclaims the death of Christ as a payment of debts due by others—a suffering of punishment that ought to have been inflicted on others. If this be the case, there is an obliteration of the doctrine of forgiveness; for debts cannot be said to be forgiven that have been satisfied. And there is no explanation of the fact that believers die. If Christ died instead of them, believers ought not to die. And there is then confusion caused in our conceptions of the moral government of God by the idea that the innocent should be punished instead of the guilty, as was certainly the case if Christ suffered a punishment which was due to us and not due to him.

The difficulty is removed if we contemplate Christ as a partaker of the death-stricken flesh and blood of Adam's race which died in him. That he is so to be contemplated is evident from the apostolic declaration that he was made in all things like unto his brethren, and that he partook of their precise nature that he might destroy death in it conformably with the moral requirements involved (Heb. 2: 14-17). When we look at Christ thus as partaking of our death-stricken-nature, we are able to comprehend in what way his death was fitted to declare the righteousness of God" (Rom. 3: 25). In the days of his flesh (Heb. 5: 7) which were days of "[weakness](#)" (2 Cor. 13:4) he was a man suffering with all his brethren the effects that came by Adam's sin. It was on our account still, as a matter of fact, that "[he was made sin](#)", (2 Cor. 5: 21); "[made of a woman](#)" (Gal. 4: 4); "[sent in the likeness of sinful flesh](#)" (Rom. 8: 3); "[made of the seed of David according to the flesh](#)" (Rom. 1: 3). Consequently, when he died, "[he died unto sin](#)" (Rom. 6: 10): sin was condemned in the flesh (Rom. 8: 3). The righteousness of God was declared (Rom. 3: 23).

But in his own character, he was absolutely sinless due to the fact, that though the Son of David through Mary, he was the Son of God by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1: 35). In this, his perfect obedience (Rom. 5: 19; Phil. 2: 8), he, was the spotless Lamb of God. Without this, his offering for sin would have been of no avail, for dying, he would have remained dead. It was in his resurrection to life immortal, after the suffering of death, that lay the great victory of the scheme in him. Without his resurrection, his death would have been in vain (1 Cor. 15: 17), and without sinlessness, his resurrection would have been impossible. Without sinlessness he would

have been in the position of Adam's race whom he came to redeem with himself; for he also participated in the redemption wrought out in himself (Heb. 9: 12, R. V. ;5:9).

When we look at the Son of God after his resurrection, free from all further dominion of death (Rom. 6: 9), we look at a Son of Abraham in whom the power of sin has been destroyed—its moral power overcome, for he was tempted as we all are (Heb. 4 : 15), but overcame (John 16: 33; Rev. 3: 21); its hereditary claims extinguished in death (" [body of sin destroyed](#) ", Rom. 6: 6); and its physical hold on human nature obliterated and destroyed by a resurrection to eternal life and glory. We look at a representative of the race - God's own work— God's own Son—in whom the relation between God and man has been rectified; in whom the calamity of Eden has been repaired. But as we look, we see that so far this result is limited to himself. He only is delivered: he only has obtained eternal redemption. But is it the purpose of God to extend the glorious result to many others? It was with this purpose He raised up such a saviour.

It but remains to glance for a moment at the principle on which the result is extended. It is all "[through this man](#)" (Acts 13: 38). "[There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved](#)" (Acts 4: 12). God offers to all who believe and obey him (putting on his name in baptism, and observing all things that he has commanded—Acts 2: 38; Matt. 28: 20) the forgiveness of their sins for his sake (Eph. 4 : 32) and eternal life by his hand at his coming manifestation in the earth in power and great glory.

THE MEANING OF THE WORD "DEVIL"

In all this we may seem to have wandered far from the subject of the evil one; but it is not so. We cannot speak of the result of the sacrificial work of Christ, without speaking of the devil, though we may not mention his name, because the object of that work, in scriptural language, was, as we have seen, to destroy the devil and his works. What is manifest is that sin and the devil are in their radical relations equivalent terms. What we have to consider is, how it comes that sin in the abstract should be spoken of and personified as the "[devil](#)". The answer is to be apprehended in view of the meaning of the word. It is a common noun, such as enemy, liar, thief, etc. This would be seen if the word were translated. Strictly speaking, it is not translated, but lifted out nearly unchanged from the Greek and set down into English. In one or two cases it is translated, such as in 1 Tim. 3: 11, where the wives of the deacons are forbidden to be slanderers (the word in the original is the word elsewhere rendered Devil). Here we get a peep at the real meaning of the word as given to us by Parkhurst in his Lexicon, where he tells us that *diabolos* (the word translated devil) is a compound of *dia* through, and *ballo* to cast, and means to dart or strike through; hence, to slander, to utter falsehood maliciously, to speak lies. "The Devil" therefore, for purposes of understanding, is best to be read in English as The Liar, The Slanderer, or The Accuser.; and then the way lies open to ask, Why sin should be personified as a liar, a slanderer? The answer to this will be seen in the nature of sin. It is the doing of that which God has forbidden, not because God has forbidden it, but because gratification or advantage will come of it. When Adam disobeyed in the garden of Eden, it was not from a bad motive, as men talk; it was from a conviction that the forbidden tree was good, and would open his eyes and make him wise. So the narrative informed us in Eve's case (Gen. 3:6). A man may not commit sin from sheer wickedness, but to get some good for himself. The good he seeks cannot come of it. Hence, sin universally is a lie, and, when personified, is a liar. It is also a slanderer, and a slanderer of God. It so to speak presents itself to its victim, and says, "Listen to me; do as I tell you and you shall have great enjoyment and benefit. God is unkind in putting restrictions upon you: He keeps you from much happiness. Life and joy are in my ways and not in His ". Thus it slanders God, and utters falsehood to the ruin of those who listen; for destruction and misery are in the ways of sin; and the highest joy and purest well-being are connected with that loving submission to God in which we are exercised in the keeping of His commandments.

Sin, as the great deceiver of mankind, is there well spoken of as the Liar, the Accuser, the Slanderer of God—alias the Devil. In its literal aspect, it is, of course, an impersonal thing, tempting without being a conscious tempter, as expressed by James. "[Ever man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed; then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death](#)" (Jas. 1: 14).

SATAN

So with the word "Satan": this also, is an untranslated word it is not an English word. It is not even a Greek word, except by adoption. It comes from the Hebrew, from which it has passed into Greek and thence into English. If it had been translated, the Bible doctrine of Satanism would not have been so obscure to many. It simply means an adversary, as will be evident to the least instructed from the following instances of its use: "[The Lord stirred up an adversary \(A SATAN\) unto Solomon, Hadad the Edo-mite](#)" (1 Kings 11: 14). "[Lest in the battle, he \(David\) be an adversary \(A SATAN\) to us](#)" (1 Sam. 29: 4). "[There is neither adversary \(Satan\) nor evil occurrent](#)" (1 Kings 5: 4).

There are New Testament instances, such as where Jesus addresses Peter as "[Satan](#)" when he opposed Christ's submission to death (Matt. 16: 23): and where Pergamos, the headquarters of the enemies of truth, is described as Satan's seat (Rev. 2: 13).

Now if Satan means adversary, we will read the scriptures intelligently if we read adversary wherever we find Satan. When we do this we shall find it easy to avoid the popular conception when we come across the personification of sin in this term. The adversary (entering into Judas (John 13: 27) leads us to inquire, What adversary? The facts supply the answer. We are informed that Judas was a thief and bare the bag and what was put therein (John 12: 6). At the last Supper, his avaricious disposition led him to entertain the purpose of selling Christ. This purpose was the adversary entering into him. "[It were good for that man](#)", said Jesus "[that he had not been born](#)", showing that the sin of Christ's betrayal was charged upon the man Judas.

AN EVIL HEART

There is another case where the sinful action of the human heart is described as the inspiration of "[Satan](#)" (Acts 5: 3). Ananias and Sapphira went into the presence of the apostles with a lie on their lips; Peter said, "[Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back part of the price of the land?](#)" The meaning of Satan filling the heart crops out in the next sentence but one; "[Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart ?](#)" (verse 4); also in Peter's address to Sapphira, who came in three hours after Ananias. Peter said unto her, "[How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the spirit of the Lord?](#)" (verse 9). But supposing we had not been thus informed that the lie of Ananias was due to a compact with his wife, from selfish motives, to misrepresent the extent of their property, we should have had no difficulty in understanding that Satan filling the heart was the impulse of the flesh, which is the great Satan or Adversary, moving him to the particular line of action which evoked Peter's rebuke.

As we have seen, James defines sin as the outcome of a man's own lust. Hence, the action of lust in the mind is the action of the New Testament Satan, or Adversary. All sin proceeds from the desires of the flesh. This is declared in various forms of speech in the Scriptures, and agrees with the experience of every man.

["Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies ..."](#) (Matt. 15: 19).

["The carnal mind is enmity against God: it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be"](#) (Rom. 8: 7).

["Now the works of flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like"](#) (Gal. 5: 19, 21).

["For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. . . is of the world"](#) (1 John 2: 16).

THE ENEMIES OF GOD

The great Satan, or adversary, then, which every man has to fear, and which is ever inclining him to a course opposed to wisdom and godliness, is the tendency of the mere animal instincts to act on their own account. This "[Satan](#)" may, of course, take an external form, as when Paul says of the persecuting enemies of the truth "[God shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly](#)" (Rom. 16: 20; or, of his escape at his first trial, "[I was delivered out of](#)

the mouth of the lion" (2 Tim. 4: 17). Of the same lion-power, Peter says, "Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world" (1 Pet. 5: 8, 9). This devil-adversary, who sought by the stress of persecution to turn the brethren from the faith, was the constituted authority of the time, of whom also Jesus said, "The devil shall cast some of you into prison" (Rev. 2: 10), but he exhorts them to fear none of the things that should come upon them. These statements are manifestly inapplicable to the popular devil. They apply only to the various forms (official and otherwise) of Satanism which originate in the underlying perversity of human nature. This untutored tendency of the flesh is the root of all the Satanism which must be vigilantly repressed. If a man surrender to the flesh he surrenders to Satan; he walks in the way of death. "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Rom. 8: 13). The object of the gospel being sent to the Gentiles by Paul was "to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God". Ignorance, or darkness, is the great power of the adversary lurking within us: for where a man is ignorant of God's will, the flesh has a controlling power with him. "The Gentiles are alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them" (Eph. 4: 18). Enlightenment, through the hearing of the Word, creates a new man within, who, in process of time, kills the old man "who is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts" (Eph. 4: 22).

Introduce the active, plotting, intelligent fiend of popular theology, and the whole picture is changed and involved in bewildering confusion. But he cannot be introduced. Our experience forbids us believing in the existence of such a being: for look at the fact; men are prone to evil in proportion to the relative strength of the animal nature. Some men are naturally amiable, intellectual, benevolent, and sincere. Others, again, are naturally coarse, low, and brutal, through the power of ignorance and an inferior organization. Jesus recognizes this fact in the parable of the sower. The seed fell into different kinds of soil. One is styled "good ground". In this, the seed grew well, and brought forth much fruit. In his explanation of the parable, Jesus defines the good ground to be "the honest and good heart" (Luke 8: 15). This is in exact accord with experience. Only a certain class of mind is influenced by the word of truth: The soil is better, both as to quality and culture.

These general explanations will cover all the other instances in which the word "Satan" is used in the New Testament. All will be found capable of solution by reading "Satan" as the adversary, and having regard to the circumstances under which the word is used. Sometimes "Satan" will be found a person, sometimes the authorities, sometimes the flesh; in fact, whatever acts the part of an adversary is, Scripturally, "Satan"; but "Satan" is never the superhuman power of popular belief.

SIN PERSONIFIED

Christ, through death, destroyed the Bible devil. He certainly did not destroy the popular devil in his death, for that devil is supposed to be still at large; but in his own person, as a representative man, he extinguished the power of sin by surrendering to its full consequences, and then escaping by resurrection, through the power of his holiness, to live for evermore. This is described as "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8: 3). Sin in the flesh, then, is the devil destroyed by Jesus in his death. This is the devil having the power of death, as the following testimonies show:

"By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin" (Rom. 5:12).

"By man came death" (1 Cor. 15: 21).

"The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6: 23).

"Sin hath reigned unto death" (Rom. 5: 21).

"Sin bringeth forth death" (Jas. 1: 15).

"The sting of death is sin" (1 Cor. 15: 56).

Having regard to the fact that death was divinely decreed in the garden of Eden, in consequence of Adam's transgression, it is easy to understand the language which recognizes and personifies transgression, or sin, as the power or cause of death. The foregoing statements express the literal truth metonymically. Actually, death, as the consequence of sin, is produced, caused, or inflicted by God, but since sin or transgression is the fact or principle that moves God to inflict it, sin is put forward as the first cause in the matter. This is intelligible: but what has a personal devil to do with it? He is excluded. There is no place for him. And if he is forced into the arrangement, the result is to change the moral situation, alter the scheme of salvation, and produce confusion:

for if the, power of death lies with a personal power of evil, separate from, and independent of man, and not in man's own sinfulness, then the operations of Christ are transferred from the arena of moral conflict to that of physical strife, and the whole scheme of divine interposition through him is degraded to a level with the Pagan mythologies, in which gods, good and bad, are represented to be in murderous physical hostility for the accomplishment of their several ends. God is thus brought down from His position of supremacy, and placed on a footing with the forces of His own creation.

THE FLESH AND THE SPIRIT

But, the objector may say, True, sin is the cause of death; but who prompts the sin? Is it not here that the devil of popular belief has his work? No Bible answer can be more to the point than what has already been quoted from James: "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of HIS OWN LUST, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (Jas. 1: 14, 15). This agrees with a man's own experience of himself; sin originates in the untrained natural inclinations. These, in the aggregate, Paul terms "another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind". Every man is conscious of the existence of this law, whose impulse, uncontrolled, would drive him against the dictates of wisdom. The world obeys this law, and "lieth in wickedness". It has no experience of the other law, which is implanted by the truth. "ALL that is in the world" John defines to be "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John 2: 16).

When a man becomes enlightened in the truth, and is thus made aware of God's will in reference to the state of his mind and the nature of his actions, a new law is introduced. This is styled "the Spirit", because the ideas upon which it is based have been evolved by the Spirit, through inspired men. "The words that I speak unto you", says Jesus, "they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6: 64). Hence the warfare established in a man's nature by the introduction of the truth is a warfare of the two principles—the desires of the flesh and the commands of the Spirit. This is described by Paul in the following words: "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other" (Gal. 5: 17). "Walk in the spirit", says he, "and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (verse 16). He says in another place, "Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof" (Rom. 6: 12).

These principles seem brought to a focus in the following extract from his letter to the Roman ecclesia: "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh-; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. . . Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:5-9, 12-14).

In view of these declarations of Scripture, the supposition that the personal devil's work is to suggest sin has no place. The suggestions of sin come from a man's own inclinations, which tend to illegitimate activity. These are the origin of sin, and sin is the cause of death. Both together are the devil. "He that committeth sin is of the devil" (1 John 3: 8).

THE PRINCIPLE OF PERSONIFICATION

But why, it may be asked, should such a plain matter be obscured by personification? No other answer can be given than that it is one of the Bible's peculiarities to deal in imagery where the principles involved are too subtle for ready or literal expression. Thus the world which is merely an aggregation of persons, is personified: "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own" (John 15: 19). Thus, too, riches are personified: "No man can serve two masters. . . Ye cannot serve God and mammon" Matt. 6: 24). Sin is personified apart from the terms which define its character as the Great Liar and Adversary: "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (John 8: 34). "Sin hath reigned unto death" (Rom. 5: 21). "Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants

to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of SIN unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? . . . Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Rom. 6: 16, 18). The Spirit of God is personified: "When HE, the Spirit of truth, is come, HE will guide you into all truth; for HE shall not speak of himself" (John 16: 13). Wisdom is personified: "She is more precious than rubies, and all the things that thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour" (Prov. 3: 15, 16). "Wisdom hath builded her house; she hath hewn out her seven pillars" (Prov. 9: 1). The nation of Israel is personified: "Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O Virgin of Israel: thou shalt again be adorned with thy tabrets" (Jer. 31: 4). "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus: Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke; turn thou me, and I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God" (Jer. 31: 18). The People of Christ are personified: "Till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a PERFECT MAN" (Eph. 4: 13) "There is one BODY" (Eph. 4: 4). "Ye are THE BODY OF CHRIST" (1 Cor. 12: 27). "Christ is the head of the church, and he is the saviour of THE BODY" (Eph. 5: 23). "He is the head of THE BODY, the church.....I fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for HIS BODY'S SAKE, which is the church" (Col. 1: 18, 24). "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Cor. 11: 2). "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and HIS WIFE hath made herself ready" (Rev. 19: 7). The natural disposition to evil which a man forsakes on becoming Christ's, and also the new state of mind developed by the truth, are personified "Ye have put off THE OLD MAN with his deeds" (Col. 3: 9). "Put off, concerning the former conversation, the OLD MAN which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts. . . put on the NEW MAN, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4: 22-24). "Our old man is crucified with him" (Rom. 6: 6). The spirit of disobedience which dwells in the world is personified: "Wherein in time past ye walked, according to the course of this world, according to THE PRINCE OF THE POWER OF THE AIR, THE SPIRIT THAT NOW WORKETH IN THE CHILDREN OF DISOBEDIENCE, among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind" (Eph. 2: 2, 3). "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall THE PRINCE OF THIS WORLD be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said signifying what death he should die" (John 12: 31-33).

These proofs and examples of personification furnish an answer to the question why sin in the abstract should be personified. They show, first, that principles and things are personified in the Bible; and, second, that this is done with great advantage. There is warmth in such a style of speech, which is wanting in expressions that conform to the strict proprieties of grammar and fact. This warmth and expressiveness are characteristic of the Bible in every part of it, and belong to the Oriental languages generally. Of course it is open to abuse, like every other good, but its effectiveness is beyond question.

"THAT OLD SERPENT"

The phrase "THAT OLD SERPENT", as one of the Bible devil's synonyms, is clearly an allusion to the part performed by the serpent in the Original introduction of sin. This part we have already considered. The natural serpent, more observant than other animals, and gifted for the time with the power of expressing its thoughts, reasoned upon the prohibition which God had put upon "the tree in the midst of the garden": and concluding from all he saw and heard, that death would not be the result of eating, he said, "Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3: 4, 5). Thus the serpent became not only a devil, but the devil in the historical sense, for he originated the slander under the belief of which our first parents disobeyed the divine command, and introduced sin and death to the world. He was therefore the natural symbol of all that resulted from his lie. The present constitution of the world is the amplified result of his suggestions; and therefore, it is no unnatural description which symbolically labels the present evil world as "that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan". The individual serpent itself has long since passed away in the course of nature, but the fruits remain, and the principle lives. The idea instilled by it into the minds of our first parents has germinated to the production of generations of human serpents. Mankind has proved but an embodiment of the serpent idea; so that they are all calumniators of God in disbelieving His promises and disobeying His commandments. Hence Jesus could say to the Pharisees, "Ye serpents, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Matt. 23: 33); and again, "Ye are of your father the devil (slanderer—serpent), and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning (he brought death upon mankind by inciting Adam and Eve to disobedience), 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"

(John 8: 44). The children of this world are "the children of the devil" because they are the progeny of a serpent devil-contaminated paternity.

The world as it now is, is the embodiment of the devil-principle. This principle originated in an agent; and for that reason the principle retains the name of the originator in common discourse. Therefore it is that the world in its corporate and organized antagonism to God, as prophetically exhibited to John in the political symbol of a great red dragon with seven heads and ten horns is named, that old serpent, the Devil and Satan. Therefore, too, that the putting down of the governments of men and the setting up of the Kingdom of God at the commencement of the millennium is symbolized as the binding of the dragon, "that old serpent, the Devil and Satan" (Rev. 20: 2). His deceiving of the whole world refers to the government as distinct from the people.

THE TRIAL OF JESUS AND JOB

The temptation of Jesus is usually cited in opposition to these conclusions. The great feature of the narrative relied upon, is the application of the word "devil" to the tempter: but this proves nothing. If Judas could be a devil, and yet be a man (John 6: 70), why may the tempter of Jesus not have been a man? His being called "devil" proves nothing.

It merely proves that it was one who busied himself to subvert Jesus from the path of obedience. Who he was it is impossible to say, because we are not informed. We have nothing but the word devil to go by; and this is no guide to the form of the diabolism. In this respect it is something like the case of the Satan who afflicted Job. We are not told who the adversary was that proved such a terror to Job, but his title would show that he was inimical to the interest of Job, and probably the sons of God in general—a wicked, overbearing lord, whose envy and malice were only equal to the dominion he seems to have exercised. He was not the popular Satan, for he did not come from "hell" to attend the assembly of the sons of God, but from "going to and fro in the earth". He was not the "devil" of popular superstition, who is so coy of spiritual influence that he flies when the Bible is presented, or the godly fall on their knees, for he came, boldly into the blaze of the divine presence, among a crowd of worshippers. He was not the archfiend on the alert to catch immortal souls; for he had his eye on Job's estate and effects, and ultimately got his envious malice to take effect on Job's body. But, you say, what about the calamities of tempest and disease that befell Job? Was it in the power of mortal man to control these? The answer is, these were God's doings, and not the adversary's. "Thou movedst ME against him to destroy him without cause" (2: 3). This is the language in which God describes Satan's action in the matter. It was God who inflicted the calamities at the adversary's instigation. This is Job's view of the case: "Have pity upon me, O ye my friends", says he, "the hand of God hath touched me"(19 : 21). And the narrator, in concluding the book, says, "Then came there unto him all his brethren . . . and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him" (42: 11). Even if the adversary had actually wielded the power that affected Job, that would no more prove him a supernatural agent than do the miracles achieved by Moses prove him to have been no man. God can delegate miraculous power to mortal man.

There is no real countenance to the popular theory of the devil in any part of the Bible. The countenance is only apparent; and would not even be that, if there were no personal-devil theory extant, taught from the days of infancy. With such a theory in existence, a plausible case can be made out. Bible words and pagan theories are put together and made to fit; and superficially considered, the result is striking and impressive, and highly demonstrative of a personal devil. It is, however, a mere logical juggle.

" DEVILS "

A few words on "devils" are necessary to complete the case. As to the Old Testament, the word is only found four times, viz. in Lev. 17:7; Deut. 32: 17; 2 Chron. 11:15; and Psalm 106: 37. These passages only require to be read for the reader to see that so far as the Old Testament is concerned, the word "devils" in Bible use is applied very differently from that which popular views of the subject would indicate. For instance:

"They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not" (Deut. 32: 17).

Here the "devils" sacrificed to by Israel were the idols of the heathen. This is still more apparent from Psalm 106: 35, 37

"They were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works; and they served their idols, which were a snare unto them. Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, and shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan."

It is needless to say that the idols of Canaan were "lifeless blocks of wood and stone", and that, therefore, their designation as "devils" shows that the Old Testament use of the word gives no countenance to the idea that "devils" are personal beings of a malignant order, aiding and abetting and serving the great devil in all his works of mischief and damnation.

The New Testament appears more evidently to favour the popular creed: but examination will show that no real support is furnished. In the first place Paul uses the word in the same way as it is used in the Old Testament. He says, "The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils" (1 Cor. 10 : 20, 21). Now, that "devils" here applies to the idols of Pagan worship is manifest; first, from the fact that the sacrifices of the Gentiles were offered at the shrines of the idol-gods of their own superstition; and second, from the following words of Paul in the same chapter: "What say I then? that the idol is anything, or that which is offered in sacrifice to the idols is anything?" (verse 19). This is conclusive. Paul applies the word "devils" to idols, of which he says, "We know that an idol is NOTHING in the world" (1 Cor. 8: 4). Therefore, the word "devils" as used by Paul lends no countenance to the popular view.

DEMONS

Of course the reader will understand that "devils" in the original Greek is a different word from that translated "devil". This distinction between the two must be recognized in order to appreciate the explanation applicable to "devils", as distinct from "devil". While "devil" is in the original diabolos, "devils" is the plural of daimon, which has a very different meaning from diabolos. Daimon is the name given by the Greeks to beings imagined by them to exist in the air, and to act a mediatorial part between God and man, for good or evil. These imaginary beings would be expressed in English by demon, evil genius, or tutelary deity, all of which belong to Pagan mythology, and have no place in the system of the truth.

In view of the heathen origin of this "doctrine of demons" it is a natural source of wonder that it should appear so largely interwoven with the gospel narratives, and receive apparent sanction both from Christ and his disciples. This can only be accounted for on one principle; the Grecian theory that madness, epileptic disorders, and obstruction of the senses (as distinct from ordinary diseases), were attributable to demoniacal possession, had existed many centuries before the time of Christ, and had circulated far and wide with the Greek language, which, in those days, had become nearly universal. The theory necessarily stamped itself upon the common language of the time, and supplied a nomenclature for certain classes of disorders which, without reference to the particular theory in which it originated, became current and conventional, without involving an acceptance of the Pagan belief. On the face of it, the nomenclature would carry that belief; but in reality it would be used from the force of universal custom, without any reference to the superstition which originated it. We have an illustration of this in our word "lunatic", which originated in the idea that madness was the result of the moon's influence, but which nobody now uses to express that idea. The same principle is exemplified in the phrases "bewitched", "fairy-like", "hobgoblin", "dragon", "the king's evil", "St. Vitus's dance", etc., all of which are freely used denominatively, without subjecting the person using them to the charge of believing the fictions originally represented by them.

Christ's conformity to popular language did not commit him to popular delusions. In one case, he apparently recognizes the god of the Philistines: "If I by Beelzebub cast out demons, by whom do your children cast them out?" (Matt. 12: 27). Now, Beelzebub signifies the god of flies, a god worshipped by the Philistines of Ekron (2 Kings 1: 6), and Christ, in using the name, takes no pains to dwell upon the fact that Beelzebub was a heathen fiction; it was a mere accommodation to popular speech on the subject of demons.

CASTING OUT DEMONS

The casting out of demons spoken of in the New Testament was nothing more or less than the curing of epileptic fits and brain disorders, as distinct from bodily diseases. Of this, any one may be satisfied by an attentive reading of the narrative and close consideration of the symptoms, as recorded.

“Lord, have mercy on my son: he is lunatic, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him. . . . And Jesus rebuked the devil (demon), and he departed out of him” (Matt. 17 : 15, 18).

From this, the identity of lunacy with supposed demoniacal possession is apparent. The expulsion of the - influence which deranged the child's faculties was the casting out of the demon.

“Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb; and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw” (Matt. 12: 22).

“And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit” (Mark 9: 17).

There is no case of demoniacal possession mentioned in the New Testament which has not its parallel in hundreds of instances in the medical experience of the present time. The symptoms are precisely identical—tearing, foaming at the mouth, crying out, abnormal strength, etc. True, there are no exclamations about the Messiah, because there is no popular excitement on the subject for them to reflect in an aberrated form, as there was in the days of Jesus, when the whole Jewish community was intensely agitated on the subject. The transference of “the devils” to the swine is only an instance in which Christ vindicated the law (which prohibited the culture of the pig), by acting on the suggestion of a madman in transferring an aberrating influence from the latter to the swine, and causing their destruction. The statement that the devils made request, or the devils cried this or that, must be interpreted in the light of the self-evident fact that it was the person possessed who spoke. The insane utterances were attributable to the deranging influence, and therefore, and it is an allowable liberty of speech to say that the influence—called in the popular phrase of these times, demon or demons—spoke them; but, in judging of the theory of possession, we must carefully separate between critical statements of truth and rough popular forms of speech, which merely embody an aspect, and not the essence of truth.

GOD AND "THE WORLD"

Bringing these investigations to a focus, it must be evident that the introduction of "the evil one" into the Lord's prayer in no way alters the position of the question, if the R.V. translation were free from all doubt. It still leaves the question to be determined who the evil one is. For this, we must look to the general constructive teaching of the scriptures. Tried in this way, the popular theory of the devil disappears entirely. The most striking fact in the case is the entire absence from the Scriptures of a formal devil theory. The doctrine of God's existence, His creative power, His relation to His universe, is not only implied in the appellations He appropriates to Himself, but formally propounded. "I am God, and there is none else" (Isa. 46: 9). "To whom will ye liken me, or shall I be equal; saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things" (Isa. 40: 25, 26). But of a devil we have no such information. The passages supposed to contain the information refer as we have seen to something else. We have but the term, and in such associations as to show us that something altogether different from the popular devil is meant. The Evil One is on a par with "mammon", and "the god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4). It is a personification of the present evil world, including every form of temptation to which it is possible for a man to be subjected. Another prayer of Christ, where the Revised Version introduces the evil one, shows it: "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil (the Revised Version adds 'one'). They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17: 15-16). The identity of the world and the evil one is apparent from the construction of these sentences. If it could be made more apparent, it would be by the following tabulation of New Testament parallelisms

1. TO OVERCOME THE EVIL ONE IS TO OVERCOME THE WORLD

1 JOHN 2:14

Ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

1 JOHN 5: 5

Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

2. TO BE KEPT UNSPOTTED FROM THE WORLD IS TO BE KEPT FROM THE EVIL ONE

JAMES 1: 27

Pure religion and undefiled is ...to keep himself unspotted from the world,

JOHN 17 15-16

I pray not that thou, shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil (R.V. "evil one")

3. To TAKE AWAY SIN IS TO DESTROY THE DEVIL

HEB.9:26

He put away sin by the sacrifice of himself,

HEB. 2:14

That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil.

4. TO PUT DOWN THE GOVERNMENTS AND TAKE THE KINGDOMS OF THE WORLD IS TO BIND THE DEVIL

REV. 17:14 and 11:15

These (the ten kings) shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them . . . The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.

REV. 20:2

And he laid hold on the dragon (having the ten horns representing ten kings), that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.

These passages thus placed side by side exhibit the world in its sin-constitution as the devil. We are told that all that is in the world is "[the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life](#)" (1 John 2 : 16). Hence the devil is identified with the evil principles at work among men. These are summed up and personified in "[the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts](#)" (Eph. 4 22). This old man is the evil one; he is a multitudinous old man; he embraces the population of the world, just as "[the new man](#)" consists of the sum total of all in Christ. By this, we are enabled to understand how it is that to be a friend of the world is to be a friend of the Evil One, and therefore the enemy of God (Jas. 4 : 4).

Here lies the practical importance of the question. If we recognize the Evil One in the world as it is now constituted, it will enable us to take that right attitude of separation which Jesus enjoined and exemplified, but if we make the mistake of looking for him in an unknown spectral being or influence, whose movements are not to be discerned, we shall be in danger of frustrating our own prayers by watching a false danger while accepting the fellowship and friendship of the Evil One alias the world, from whom Jesus teaches us to pray to be delivered.

The Bible has a wonderful message of hope for every man and for the world. If you would like to read more about its true teaching, write for a list of pamphlets and books to

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