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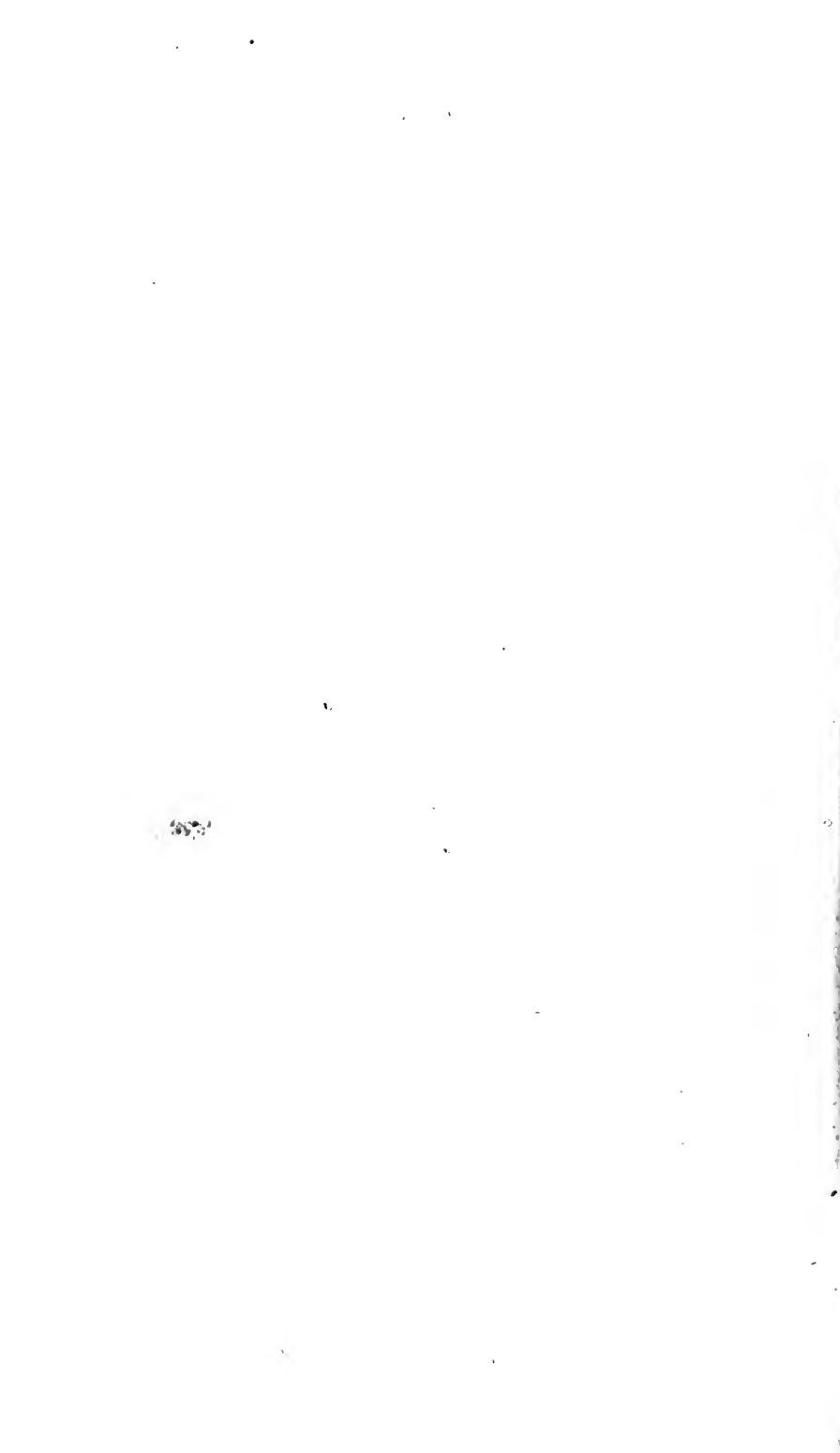




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# **IN AID OF MISSIONS.**

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A

**DISCOURSE**

THE

**SUBSTANCE OF WHICH WAS DELIVERED**

AT THE

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

OF THE

**BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY,****IN BRISTOL, (ENG.) SEPTEMBER, 1818.**✓  
**BY JOHN FOSTER.**

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**TRENTON,****PRINTED BY GEORGE SHERMAN,****1822.**

## ADVERTISEMENT.

[PREFIXED TO THE LONDON EDITION.]

THE length of the following Discourse, the prevailing cast of its composition, with the somewhat slight and arbitrary relation between it and the text, may suggest a doubt whether it might not with more propriety, after receiving a slight modification in the introduction, have been printed under the name of an Essay. But as the substance of it, throughout all the series of topics, though indeed with much less protracted illustration, was actually addressed to an auditory, (whose patience the preacher could not sufficiently acknowledge or admire) he has thought it would perhaps look like affectation to adopt any other title than one describing it as such an address.

## A DISCOURSE, &c.

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JUDGES v. 33.

They came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord  
against the mighty.

IT would be an impertinent use of our time to spend many moments in apologizing for the practice, too common perhaps among preachers, of accommodating the merely secular facts of scripture history, or objects in nature, to the purpose of representing, in the way of formal and extended parallel, the topics immediately belonging to religion. We may, however, just observe, that it seems to the honour of religion that so many things *can*, without the art of forcing resemblances, be accommodated to its illustration. It is an evident and remarkable fact, that there is a certain principle of correspondence to religion throughout the economy of the world. Things bearing an apparent analogy to its truths, sometimes more prominently, sometimes more abstrusely, present themselves on all sides to a thoughtful mind. He that made all things for himself appears to have willed that they should be a great system of emblems, reflecting or shadowing that system of principles in which we are to apprehend Him, and our relation and obligations to Him. So that religion, standing up in grand parallel to an infinity of things, receives their testimony and homage, and speaks with a voice which is echoed by the creation.

We need not therefore scruple to take for an introduction to our subject, a sentence pronounced, we may presume at the divine dictation, in reproach of a refusal of co-operation in a very different kind of service from that which we have on the present occasion, to recommend.

The negative form of the charge,—They came *not* to the help of the Lord.—may remind us of the greivous fact, that by far the greater number of the judicial negative statements in the Bible, respecting the conduct of men, are accusations.—The mention that they did *not* do the thing in question is very generally the implied assertion that they ought to have done it. And the consideration becomes still more awful upon recollection that we are told, that the last negative statement to be uttered on earth, and uttered by the greatest voice, will be with an emphasis of condemnation; “Inasmuch as ye did it *not*—.”

Observe how much guilt there may be in mere omission, and that even though we should suppose the persons, who decline the one specific duty, to be occupied the while in employments in themselves innocent and laudable. It is very possible that the people referred to in the text might have brought a plea on this ground against the justice of the malediction. They might perhaps have had to say, that they were diligently managing their rural economy, which there might be, at the time, particular reasons why they should not neglect; or that they were carefully instructing their children; or that they were employing the time in some peculiarly solemn forms of worship, perhaps imploring the intervention of heaven in the present alarming crisis, under a persuasion of the perfect sufficiency of the Divine Power independently of human means. But no such pleas would have availed, to avert the vindictive sentence which the prophetess was instructed to pronounce on their fai-

ture to do *that one thing* which the authorized summons had signified to be, in that juncture, their precise duty. Such allegations might indeed have been dishonestly made, as an attempt to veil selfishness and cowardice, the real causes probably for withholding the required service; and then the hypocrisy would have incurred a prompt exposure and a bitter rebuke; but even had they been made sincerely, and proved to be true, they would not have arrested or revoked the condemnation. It would have been denounced to the defaulters that the sentence could not be suspended; for that it is of the essence of disobedience and rebellion to assume to make commutations and substitutions of duty, to transfer obligations at our will and convenience, and to affect to meet and discharge *in substance*, under the form of preferred and easier services, the obligation which supreme authority has distinctly affixed to the harder one that is evaded.

Supposing these people to have really been of a quiet and harmless disposition, and assiduous in the useful vocations of ordinary life, there may appear, notwithstanding the urgency of the occasion, something hard in the alternative they were placed in, of suddenly coming forth into the utmost peril of life, or suffering all that was imported in so heavy an execration. And in the retrospect of the many forms into which human duty has been diversified by occasions, as displayed in the Bible and other records, we see many situations of exceeding hardship—not meaning, by such a term, an imputation on that Authority which prescribed their arduous exercises. The great contest against Evil, in all its modes of invasion of this world, (but we mean to refer chiefly to those requiring a more directly religious form of resistance) has been a service assigned in every possible difference of circumstance and proportion; and some men's shares have involved a violence of exertion, or

a weight of suffering, which we look upon with wonder and almost with terror. We shudder to think of mortals like ourselves having been brought into such fearful dilemmas between obedience and guilt. We shrink from placing ourselves but in imagination under such tests of fidelity to God and a good cause. The painful sympathy with those agents and sufferers terminates in self-congratulation, that their allotment of duty has not been ours. The tacit sentiment is, I am very glad I can be a good man on less dismaying conditions.

Now, to pronounce this sentiment to be wrong would be to say that pain is better than ease ; that it is more desirable, for its own sake, to pass through much tribulation to the kingdom of God, than to have, if that might be, an attendant spirit commissioned to annihilate the difficulties during our progress. But nevertheless, this feeling, so natural, of being pleased with our exemptions, and which becomes a sentiment of pure religion when it rises in gratitude to God for having appointed us to a less formidable service, is in danger of being indulged to the extent of a pernicious delusion. Under a deceptive notion that all we feel is gratitude to him, we may be making exemptions for ourselves which he has never made, all the while saying, we are thankful and therefore must be right. With the advantage of this imagined sanction, self-love may with a confident facility extend the sphere of privilege beyond one point, and beyond another, where he had marked the boundary, always enlarging with the strongest propensity on that side where the hardest duties are placed, till the mind reposes at length in a self-authorized scheme of duty which disowns all coincidence with the dictates of the divine will.

There is delusion in our self-congratulation in contrasting what is required of us with what has been imposed, in severer injunction, on some of our great Master's subjects, if we do not

recognize in our appointment something parallel, though it may be much inferior, to whatever was hardest in theirs. There is delusion if we are permitted to escape from the habitual sense of being, in the character of the servants of God, placed under the duty and necessity of an intense moral warfare, against powers of evil as real and palpable as ever were encountered in the field of battle. Not to feel ourselves pressed upon by resistless evidence and admonition of this fact, will be to be betrayed into all those false estimates of things which can be imposed on beings insensible of the very essence of their moral condition.

But the greatest number of even instructed persons have so faint an impression of this fact, of an urgent necessity of war till death, as the grand business and obligation of life, that no language sounds so inane, no figures appear so insignificant, no forms of common-place so flat and dead, as those which represent in a military character the exertions by which men are to evince themselves the servants of God. We might safely appeal to the consciousness of many hearers and readers whether, at the recurrence of these images in any religious reference, they have not a marked sense of insipidity and often of disgust, caused, in some degree, we may allow, by the too frequent iteration, but still more by the impression of unmeaningness and futility in employing such terms for such a subject.

It is striking to observe, at the same time, in what manner many of the persons who are thus tired to loathing of these images in their moral and spiritual application, shall be all energy when the same forms of thought come in literal representation of war. Most of the excitable animated class of spirits, whether in youth or in much more advanced life, can be kindled to enthusiasm by the grand imagery of battles and heroic

achievements. Those very terms of martial metaphor, under the spiritual import of which they are beginning, perhaps amidst some religious service, to sink in dulness, may relieve them by a sudden diversion of the mind away to some imagined scene of real conflict; and it shall feel a proud elation in rising from the stale and sleepy notion of a spiritual warfare, to the magnificence of the combats which are displayed in fire and blood to the eyes, and in thunder to the ears. The imagination shall follow some magnanimous mortal, of history or fiction, through scenes of tumult, and terror, and noble daring, and shall adore him as beheld exulting unhurt in victory, or breathing out his soul as a hero should die. The enthusiast while sitting still and abstracted, may at moments be almost beguiled in fancy into a personation of this favourite hero. And the scenes of destruction, thus fervidly imagined, shall really be deemed the sublimest exhibitions of man, in which human energy approaches the nearest to a rivalry with the immortals, his mind perhaps silently pronouncing this very term, conformably to that last perversity of human madness by which an epithet expressing negation of all relation to death, has been selected in special preference to be applied to men whose very business has been to deal in death, both as givers and receivers. If, in this inflamed state of the mind, the idea were again presented of the Christian warfare, of a contest against principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness, it would be repelled with disdain of the impertinence or arrogance which could assume for *such* matters any of the lofty terms belonging, and, (it would be proudly said) deservedly applied, to the transactions of Trafalgar and Waterloo. This contempt may be inspired by the imagination alone of the glories of war, but it would be felt in a still stronger degree by most of the men who have actually witnessed and shared the terrors and triumphs of martial



exploit, if it could happen that they should hear the figurative language in question, and lend for a moment attention enough to understand what it should mean. In short, between distaste for its insipidity, and almost resentful scorn of its impertinence of pretension, the metaphor would be, by the greatest number of men of spirit and imagination, flung back on the weak and dreaming religionists, as an idle fancy just fit for their jargon. Let these wars, enemies, and heroes of vapour, they would say, busy the feeble souls to which they can have the effect of realities.

But while this is their feeling, what shall we think of the state of their perception? Alas for the condition of the senses of the souls that have so little cognizance of a most fearful reality which exists on every side and presses upon them! How deplorable to see men exercising their faculties, in observation, and interest, and caution, on the elements and agents around them, and yet scarcely apprehending the presence of the worst of them all, and, excepting the Divinity, the mightiest; and to see them "sporting themselves with their own deceivings," while they are turning away with slight or scorn from the representations by which divine or human admonition is attempting to alarm them to a sense of their danger from this grand enemy, Moral Evil. And then to observe that among creatures so insensible there is, the while, a quick and ardent recognition of enemies, a martial spirit, and all the pomp and pride of wars, battles, victories! Truly it is a spectacle for the most malignant intelligences in the creation to exult over, that such creatures should be seeking glory in destructive conflicts with one another, while their most dreadful foe is invading them all. It is a spectacle of still darker character than that which would have been presented by opposed armed par-

ties or legions, gallantly maintaining battle on the yet uncovered spaces of ground, while the universal deluge was rising.

Alas ! again we must exclaim, for the stupified intelligence of that mind which can regard as fanatical extravagance this language which would arouse it to behold what is as certainly a reality as the soul is a reality, and as dreadful a one as the ruin of the soul is dreadful. What a renovation of perceptive faculty is necessary to that being who would ask, either in scorn or ignorant surprise, What and where is that foe, so malignant and powerful ? while there is glaring in full view the mighty mass, and force and operation, of all that depraves and destroys the souls of men. The insensibility to this fact as existing, and as being incomparably the most awful phenomenon on earth, would itself betray, in such a deprivation of moral intuition, the intervention of the very enemy described. Let the man of thoughtful and enlightened spirit survey the world of mankind, and see what there actually prevails in hostility against the universality of human spirits, in the combined form of intellectual and moral depravity,—of delusion and sin. Let him deeply consider *what it is* that he is beholding, while he sees this power of evil assailing, and committing grievous mischief upon, every human being, his experience testifying that himself is not exempted. Let him reflect that what he sees is an operation reducing unnumbered myriads of rational and immortal creatures to a state so much worse than that which would be the correct and happy condition of their being, that there is nothing in all terrestrial things great enough to give a measure for the difference. Let him form his judgment of the gloomy fact under his view on an estimate of the injury done to each one, and of the number so injured, including in the account the generations of all past time. And let him try whether an earnest and protracted attention to the dire exhibition will

detect a fallacy in its appearance of magnitude and atrocity, so that his last sober judgment should be as a relief from a superstitious terror. No; he will find, uniformly, that the evil reveals itself to him in still more substantial and deadly character, the longer his mind fixes with close and solemn inspection on any of its innumerable forms. The progressive aggravation of the impression might become overpowering, if there were to be suddenly imparted to him a great addition of religious light and sensibility, through which he should receive, while contemplating this vision of evil, a brighter manifestation of the holiness of God, and the perfection of his law. Even such a view as would thus overpower the strongest mind, might still be but a faint apprehension compared with the perception of some superior pure spirit beholding this world: and how much more so in comparison with the Redeemer's estimate and impression of the error and depravity of our race. No language of any world can ever disclose the depth of *his* thought and feeling at the view. *That* thought and feeling were the only adequate apprehension of the object. A devout observer will therefore feel too certain, that the portentous moral spectacle he is looking upon has in it an intensity and aggravation of evil but feebly expressed by adopting the terms and images of all that is the most odious and appalling in this world, and saying that the wide multitude of human souls are invaded, robbed, polluted, chained, tormented, murdered.

Sometimes, we contemplate, perhaps, the mighty progress of destruction, as carried over a large tract of the earth by some of the memorable instruments of the divine wrath, such as Attila, Zingis Khan, or Timour. We behold a wide spreading terror preceeding, to be soon followed by the realization of every dreadful presage in resistless ravage and extermination. The doomed, countless, multitudes, crowd tumultuously on our view,

in all the forms of dismay, and vain effort, and suffering, and death ; a world of ghastly countenances, desperate struggles, lamentable cries, streaming blood, and expiring agonies ; with the corresponding circumstances of fury and triumph, and the appropriate scenery of habitations burning and the land made a desert. The fancied forms of individual sufferers, incessantly marked forth from the confused aggregate, and presented to the mind in momentary glimpses, preserve the vividness of our perception of the misery, unconfounded in the view of its immensity, while that immensity throws over all, the more distinct impressions a general character of horror.

When a man of ardent imagination has dwelt upon such a scene till it almost glows into reality in his view, let him be assured it is the language of truth and soberness that affirms this spectacle to form but a faint and inadequate comparison for representing that other invasion, which is made upon the spirits of all mankind, that invasion of which, indeed, all these horrors are themselves but a few of the exterior circumstances and results. And yet creatures assailed and in danger of destruction by this more awful calamity, surveying in imagination, and shuddering while they survey, these furies and miseries of remote times or regions, shall bless their good fortune that *they* are not exposed to any agency of evil a thousandth part so formidable !

In following in thought those perpetrators of devastation and carnage, we have the consolation of foreseeing its end. The Cæsars and Attilas were as mortal as the millions who expired to give them fame. Of Timour, the language of the Historian kindling into poetry relates that, “he pitched his last camp at Otrar, where he was expected by the Angel of Death.\*” But the power that wages war immediately on the souls of men, the

\* Gibbon

power of delusion and depravity, has continued to live and destroy while all these renowned exterminators have yielded to the decree that sent them after their victims. It is perpetually invigorated by the very destruction which it works ; as if it fed upon the slain to strengthen itself for new slaughter, immortal by the very means of death. For the operations of sin on human beings are of a nature to facilitate its renewed and prolonged operations. The effects are continually reflected back on the cause, with which they unite, and impart an indefinite augmentation to its force ; the main principle of its strength, all the while, being in the natural aptitude of its unhappy subjects to receive the mischief which it applies. The beings therefore under the predominant power of sin are becoming, without intermission, more and more absolutely sinners ; so that each step in the advance gives stronger assurance of their maintaining that character in the next. But what an awful scene is a world with a vast multitude of inhabitants of whom the great majority are incessantly growing worse ! And to what dreadful perfection of evil might not such a race attain but for Death, that cuts the term of individuals so short, and but for the Spirit of God, that converts some, and puts a degree of restraint on the rest.

And now, if there is really thus in action, against the souls of our race, such an enemy as all these epithets and images can but faintly represent, can a professed servant of God look round and felicitate himself on having an extremely easy test of his fidelity ? Where does he find his privileged ground of immunity and indulgence, while this mighty force of evil drives and sweeps and rages, against God, and truth, against goodness and happiness, and his own spirit and all men's spirits, as really as an infernal legion could do ? In seeking such exemption he must abandon all the objects and interests against which

this hostility is directed ; must therefore, in effect, co-operate with the enemy. Let him consider what scheme it is possible to conceive of true service to the King of heaven in this bad world which should not commit him in conflict, at every point of its execution. Against *every* good he can think of he will find an appropriate antagonist evil already in full action, an action that will not remit and sink into quiet when he approaches to effect the intended good. Nay, indeed, in what way is it that the servant of God the most promptly apprehends the nature of his vocation but in that of seeing what it is *against*? And when he puts the matter to experimental proof, does he ever find that those apprehended adversaries are nothing but menacing shadows? Let him that has made the most determined, protracted, and extensive trial, tell whether it is idle commonplace and extravagance when we say that all christian exhortation is in truth a summons to war.

There are many forms and agencies of this grand enemy, moral evil, which press so immediately on a man's own personal economy that a habitual conflict with them is an essential condition of the christian character. A practical question of hostility or acquiescence is implicated with the ordinary course of his action and internal discipline. There are other forms, of great power and hatefulness, existing in the world, which do not so directly force themselves into the question of his being a christian or not. In judgment and feeling he must be, of course, their implacable enemy. But since they throw no temptation in his way, have the sphere of their malignant operation perhaps at a great distance, leave a very wide field clear for christian exercise, and perhaps, besides, may seem, by their magnitude and consolidated establishment, to bid a more complete defiance to the efforts of individuals than other evils that might be attacked, it may be allowed a matter of somewhat

less definable obligation in what degree he shall actively expend his animosity upon them. The exhortation to exert a share of his force in this direction, may be considered as partly an appeal to those higher sentiments of the religious spirit which aspire to the full magnanimity and zeal of the christian character. It is an admonition to the professed adherents of Him that came on earth for the purpose of a grand conflict, that if all the moral evil in the world is not acting immediately against *them*, it is against *Him*; and that the measure of their fidelity will be marked by the extent to which, in proportion to their means, they identify themselves with Him in his great warfare. It is an incitement to their ambition that it may never again be said, with respect to any part of his operations against evil among men, that he trod the wine-press alone, and that of the people there was none with him.

When animated to this high and enterprising spirit, a good man may wonder that the heathenism prevailing over large tracts of the world should so little, in this country or other protestant nations, till a comparatively recent time, have been accounted as comprehended within the sphere of required christian exertion. One most amiable fraternity of christians, indeed, whose gentleness at home involves a power of glowing into energy and heroism at the greatest distance, have made missions to the heathens an essential part of their system; but in general the friends of religion seem to have regarded those dreadful maladies of the moral world, the delusions and abominations of paganism, with a sort of submissive awe, as if, almost, they had established a prescriptive right to their place on earth; or as if they were an unchangeable uncontrollable part of the great system of things, like the destructive climates of some portions of the globe, and the liability in others to the terrors of earthquake. Or at least, when they have looked on

those mighty forms of darkness and iniquity, as destined to vanish at some time from the scenes of which they have been so long the curse, and have prayed for that time to be hastened on, they have found themselves anticipating and invoking, with undefined conception, some entirely unwonted and perhaps properly miraculous mode of divine interposition, and felt as if it would be for men to stand off and see what God can do;—in this very feeling perhaps admitting on their minds, in a degree, the imposition through which a defect of faith and zeal may be mistaken for humility and devotion.

Within a later period, however—within that, chiefly, which has shewn, on so vast a scale, the availableness of human agency for overturning things of ancient and wide and commanding establishment in the world,—many good men have begun to regard with much less prostration of feeling those gigantic “dominations” which have for so many ages held so many nations in the debasement of superstition. It came to be questioned why a servant of Christ should shrink from looking any of the powers of darkness in the face, from defying him in his Master’s name, or from making the experiment of an application of heaven’s own fire to his abhorred establishments of deceit and wickedness, in which the souls of men are destroyed. The practicability of that experiment became evident as the ideal defence round these tyrannies over the mind, the infernal charm by which they had made themselves to be regarded as inviolable to all attempts by men, broke up. And the evidence of the practicability enforced a conviction of duty on some of those to whom the cause of heaven was the object of highest concern on earth.

This impression was strongly felt by the first movers of the project of that Mission to India, which we cannot hesitate to represent as one of the most rational and efficient enterprises of



the enlarging christian ambition to make war on the greatest and most inveterate evils of the moral world. When awakened suddenly, as it were, to an ampler view of the world as a field of activity for the zealots for the best cause, they were struck with surprise at seeing so few adventuring upon it ; and they thought it high time that an end should be put to the quietude of sentiment, the antichristian tolerance, for what was so proudly and almost with impunity standing in defiance of that cause.

The might and virulence of the evil to which hostile attention was thus roused, were obvious enough, under a very general and imperfect knowledge, to place the design far out of any common order of religious enterprise,—far enough for it to provoke the contempt of those who have no notion of the interference of the Divine power ; far enough, indeed, to ensure frustration and disgrace if it were undertaken in dependence on any other than that superior strength. Yet the information possessed at that time, by even the cultivated part of the nation, had not sufficed to give any thing approaching to an adequate idea of the superstition and depravity of the people of Hindoostan. It is chiefly during the period since our Mission was commenced, and in a considerable degree in consequence of the discussions and the exposition of evidence occasioned by the animosity against it, that a rapidly increasing knowledge has brought the judgment of the community to that estimate of the character and condition of the Hindoos, which the translations made from their sacred books by the missionaries and other eastern scholars, and the reports of travellers reduced at last to the necessity of being honest, are fast contributing to place beyond all controversy. If there was perhaps in so old and well known a thing as human nature no undetected perversity, for these disclosures to bring to light as a new principle of evil,

they have, however, shewn some of its known evil principles inhering with such an absoluteness of possessive power, and displaying their despotism in such wantonly versatile, extravagant, and monstrous effects, as to surpass all our previous imaginations and measures of possibility. They have placed before us, as constituting the actual state of a prodigious mass of human existence, what it would have seemed to require a super-human genius for shapes of degradation and absurdity to have invented but as dreams of fancy.

There is much in the Hindoo system that is strikingly peculiar; but as it is the substantial greatness of the evil, rather than its specific discriminations, that requires to be presented to the view of christian zeal, our brief notices will mainly place the emphasis on qualities common to this with the other principal modes of paganism. Our object is rather to exhibit the system in its strength of pernicious operation than in any explanatory statement of its form and materials. There needs no great length of description, since the communications of missionaries, and various works in common circulation, have made all who take the least interest in the subject familiarly acquainted with the prominent features of the heathenism of central Asia. For the attainment of any thing like a complete knowledge it may defy all human faculty, which faculty besides, if it might search the universe for choice of subjects, could find nothing less worth its efforts for knowledge. The system, if it is to be so called, is an utter chaos, without top, or bottom, or centre, or any dimension or proportion belonging either to matter or mind, and consisting of what deserves no better order. It gives one the idea of immensity filled with what is not of the value of an atom. It is the most remarkable exemplification of the

possibility of making the grandest ideas contemptible, for that of infinity is here combined with the very abstract of worthlessness.

But, deserving of all contempt as it is, regarded merely as a farrago of notions and fantasies, it becomes a thing for detestation and earnest hostility when viewed in its practical light, as the governing scheme of principles and rites to a large portion of our race. Consider that there is thus acting upon them, as religion, a system which is in nearly all its properties, that which the true religion *is not*, and in many of them the exact reverse. Look at your religion, presented in its bright attributes before you, reflecting those of its Author; and then realize to your minds as far as you can, the condition of so many millions of human spirits receiving, without intermission, from infancy to the hour of death, the full influence of the direct opposites to these divine principles,—a contrast of condition but faintly typified by that between the Israelites and the Egyptians in beholding, on the different sides, the pillar in its appearance over the Red Sea. Consider in comparison the intellectual and moral systems under which we and they are passing forward to another world. While ours has, as its solar light and glory, the doctrine of One Being in whom all perfections are united and infinite, theirs scatters that which is the most precious and vital sentiment of the human soul, and indeed of any created intelligence, to an indefinite multitude and diversity of adored objects; the one system carrying the spirit downward to utter debasement through that very element of feeling in which it should be exalted, while the other, when in full influence, bears it upward in spite of a thousand things combining to degrade it. The relation subsisting between man and the Divinity, as unfolded to view in the true religion, is of a simple and solemn character; whereas the Brahminical theory

exhibits this relation in an infinitely confounded, fantastic, vexatious, and ludicrous complexity of form. While in the christian system the future state of man is declared with the same dignified simplicity, the opposed paganism between some inane dream of an aspiring mysticism on the one hand, and the paltriest conceits of a reptile invention on the other, presents, we might say sports, this sublime doctrine and fact in the shapes of whimsey and riddle. Ours is an economy according to which religion, considered as in its human subjects, consists in a state of the mind instead of exterior formalities; the institutes of the Hindoos make it chiefly consist in a miraculously multiplied and ramified set of ritual fooleries. It is almost superfluous to notice in the comparison, that while the one enjoins and promotes a perfect morality, the other essentially favours, and even formally sanctions, the worst vices. It may suffice to add, that while the true religion knows nothing of any precedence in the Divine estimate and regard, of one class of human creatures before another, in virtue of nativity or any mere natural distinction, the superstition we are describing has rested very much of its power upon a classification according to which one considerable proportion of the people are, by the very circumstance of their birth, morally distinguished as holy and venerable, and another more numerous proportion, as base and contemptible, sprung from the feet of the creating god, that they might be slaves to the tribe which had the luck and honour to spring from his head.

Such is the aggregate of perversions of all thought, and feeling, and practice. And yet, the system, *being religion*, acts on its subjects with that kind of power which is appropriate and peculiar to religion. The sense which man, by the very constitution of his nature, has of the existence of some super-human power, is one of the strongest principles of that nature; what-

ever, therefore, takes effectual hold of this sense will go far toward acquiring the regency of his moral being. This conjunction of so many delusions does take possession of this sense in the minds of the Hindoos, with a mightier force than probably we see in any other exhibition of the occupaney of religion, on a wide scale, in the world. But to the power which the superstition has in thus taking hold of the religious sense, is to be added that which it acquires by another and a dreadful adaptation; for it takes hold also, as with more numerous hands than those given to some of the deities, of all the corrupt principles of the heart. What an awful phenomenon, that among a race of rational creatures a religion should be mighty almost to omnipotence by means, in a great measure, of its favourableness to evil! What a melancholy display of man, that the two contrasted visitants to the world, the one from heaven, the other deserving by its qualities to have its origin referred to hell,—that these two coming to make trial of their respective adaptations and affinities upon human spirits, the infernal one should find free admission, through congeniality, to the possession of the whole souls of immense multitudes, while the one from heaven should but obtain in individuals, here and there, a possession which is partial at the best, and to be maintained by a conflict to the end of life against implacably repugnant principles in the mind. Well may a christian be affected with the most humiliating emotion, both for his race and himself, while he reflects,—I have a nature which might have yielded itself *entire* to a false religion, but so reluctantly and partially surrenders itself to the true one as to retain me in the condition of having it for the chief concern of my life and prayers that the still opposing dispositions may be subdued.

We may assume it as a fact, too obvious to need illustration in particulars, that this superstition, while it commands the faith

of its subjects, completes its power over them by its accordance to their pride, malevolence, sensuality, and deceitfulness ; to that natural concomitant of pride, the baseness which is ready to prostrate itself in homage to any thing that shall put itself in place of God ; and to that interest which criminals feel to transfer their own accountableness upon the powers above them. But then think what a condition for human creatures : they believe in a religion which invigorates, by coincidence and sanction, those principles in their nature which the true religion is intended to destroy ; and in return, those principles thus strengthened contribute to confirm their faith in the religion. The mischief inflicted becomes the most persuasive argument for confidence in the inflieter.

Observe, again, the power possessed by this stupendous delusion in having direct hold on the Senses, in so many ways, even exclusively of the grosser means, (the grossest possible, as you are apprised) of which it avails itself to please them. It comes out in manifestation upon the view of its devotees in a visible striking imagery, which meets them on all sides. All their vanities of doctrine stand, as it were, embodied before them, and occupy their faculties sooner than they can think, more constantly than they think, and in a mode of possession stronger than mere thought. Indeed it is a mode of possession which, (after faith has grown into the habit of the mind) may be effectual on the feelings though thought be wanting ; for we may presume that in India, as in other regions, when external forms and shows have been admitted as symbols of subjects of belief, they may preserve in the people much of the moral habitude appropriate to that belief, even at times when there is no strictly intellectual apprehension of the matter. The Hindoo is under the influence of this enchantment upon his senses, almost wherever the christian remonstrant against the dreams and rites

of his superstition can approach him, seeking access to his reason and conscience. The man thus attempting may have read idle fictions of magical spells, which obstruct the passing of some line, or preclude entrance at a gate ; but here he may perceive a *real* intervening magic, between the truth he brings, and the intellectual and moral faculties into which he wishes to introduce it. In his missionary progress among the people, perhaps he shall address them for the first time where there is in sight some votive object, some consecrated relic, or the tomb of some revered impostor : things which, connected, in their apprehension, as closely with religion as their garments are with their persons, must needs be indicative that that which they belong to is there ; they are felt as pledges of its reality, and signs of its authority impending over them. A very firm association has not only the effect of our being reminded by the less object of the greater, but of our having an aggravated sense of the reality of that greater.

His next address may be uttered in the vicinity of a temple, which, if in ruins, seems to tell but so much the more emphatically, by that image and sign of antiquity, at what a remote and solemn distance of time that *was* the religion which is the religion still ; if undilapidated and continuing in its appropriate use, overawes their minds with the mysterious solemnities of its inviolable sanctuary ; while the sculptured shapes and actions of divinities, overspreading the exterior of the structure, have nothing in their impotent and monstrous device and clumsy execution, to abate the reverence of Hindoo devotion toward the objects expressed in this visible language. The missionary, if an acute observer, might perceive how rays of malignant but imperative influence strike from such objects upon the faculties of his auditors, to be as it were reflected in their looks of disbelief and disdain upon the preacher of the new doctrine. What

a strength of guardianship is thus arrayed in the very senses of the pagan for the dogmas and fables and immoral principles established in his faith !

Or we may suppose the protester in the name of the true God to be led to the scene of one of the grand periodical celebrations of the extraordinary rites of idolatry. There, as at the temple of Jaggernaut, contemplating the effect of an intense fanaticism, glowing through an almost infinite crowd, he may perceive that each individual mind is the more fitted, by being heated in this infernal furnace, to harden in a more decided form and stamp of idolatry as it cools.

The very riches of nature, the conformations and productions of the elements, co-operate in this mighty tyranny over the mind by occupaney of the senses. Divinity, while degraded in the human conception of it in being diffused through these objects, comes, at the same time, with a more immediate impression of presence, when flowers, trees, animals, rivers, present themselves, not as effects and illustrations, but often as substantial participants, or at least sacred vehicles, of that sublimest existence, and the whole surrounding physical world is one vast mythology. In praying that the region may be cleared of idol gods, the missionary might feel the question suggested whether he is not repeating Elijah's prayer for the withholding of rain, which would certainly do much toward vacating the pantheon, by the destruction of the flowers, trees, animals, and streams.

This great enemy, against which we are wishing to excite christian zeal, is "mighty" in the strength of venerable antiquity. Antiquity is, all over the world, the favourite resource of that which is without rational evidence, especially so, therefore, of superstition; and the Brahminical superstition rises imperially above all others in assumption of dignity from



the past, which it arrogates as all its own, but emphatically that which appears the most solemn by remoteness. Unlike most other dominations over human opinion, which deduce themselves from an origin, and attain their honours in and by means of their enlarging progress downward in time, this proud imposture makes the past, back to an inconceivable distance, the peculiar scene of its magnificence. And it teaches its devotees to regard its continued presence on earth not as the progress of a cause advancing and brightening into greatness and triumph, but merely as something of the radiance reaching thus far, and with fainter splendour, from that glory so divine in the remote past. Its primeval manifestation was of power to prolong the effect to even this late period, in which the faithful worshippers have to look back so far to behold the glory of that vision it once condescended to unfold on this world. The grand point of attraction being thus placed in a past so stupendous as to assume almost a character of eternity, the contemplations, the devotional feelings, and the self-complacency, are drawn away in a retrospective direction, and leave behind in contempt all modern forms of faith or institution, as the insignificant follies sprung from the corruption of a heaven-abandoned period of time. The sentiments excited in them by the many signs of decay in the exterior apparatus of their system, such as the ruined state of innumerable temples, will rather coincide with this attraction in carrying the homage and the pride to the glory that was once, than lead to any suspicion of a futility for which the system deserves to grow out of use. This retrospective magnitude, this absorption of all past duration in their religion, this reduction to insignificance of whatever else has existed, (if, indeed, all that has existed has not been compre-

hended in it) cannot fail to produce a degree of elation in the minds of the Hindoos, notwithstanding their incapability of genuine sublimity of conception and emotion.

And again, however slight their affections toward their contemporary relatives, the idea of an ancestry extending back through unnumbered generations, all having had their whole intellectual and moral existence involved inseparably in their religion, and surrendering in succession their souls to become a kind of guardians or portions of it, must add a more vital principle of attraction to the majestic authority and sanction of such an antiquity. Generations of little account in their own times may acquire, when passed away, to be contemplated as ancestry, a certain power over the imagination by becoming invested with something of the character of another world,—a venerableness which combines with and augments the interest which they hold in our thoughts as having once belonged to our mortal fraternity. This combined interest going wholly into the sentiments of religion, in the pagans of whom we speak, they will feel as if a violation of that would be an insult to each of the innumerable souls of the great religious family departed, all worthier of respect than any that are now living in the world from which they have vanished. This habitual reference to their ancestors, with a certain sense of responsibility, is maintained by various notions and rites of their superstition, expressly contrived for the purpose, as well as by the pride which they can all feel, though they be but little sensible to the kind of poetical charm which might be felt, in thus standing connected, through identity of religious character and economy, with the remotest antiquity.

Nor can the influence be small, in the way of confirmed sanction and cherished pride, of beholding that which has been the element of the moral existence of an almost infinite train of

predecessors, attested still, as to its most material parts, by a world of beings at this hour coinciding with the devotee, in regarding it as their honour, their sanctity, and their supreme law. Let the Hindoo direct his attention or his travels whichever way he will, within the circuit of a thousand leagues, he meets with a crowding succession, without end, of living thinking creatures who live and think but to believe and act as he does. And what, in effect, do they all think and act so for, but as evidence that he is right? The mind can rest its assurance of its own rectitude of persuasion on this wide concurrence of belief, without therefore acknowledging to itself a degrading dependence. Its mode of seeing the matter is, not that the faith of a large assemblage of other minds is *its* faith, but that its faith is *theirs*; not—I think and act as they do, but, They think and act as I do. This sort of ambitious expansion outward, from the individual as a centre, saves his pride of reason from being humiliated by the consideration of the sameness of his notions with those of the great mass. The sense of community in human nature is strongly and delightfully admitted, when agreeing multitudes corroborate a man's opinions without depriving him of the self-complacency of believing that he holds them in the strength of his own wisdom.

This corroborating influence of the consent of contemporary multitude in the most essential points of the system, has, as we have already hinted, its effect among the Hindoos even without the intervention of social affection. Never did any where a greater number of human creatures exist together with so little of the attachments of kindred and friendship. It is a striking illustration of the tendency of their superstition, that it nearly abolishes these interests, keeping the whole population in the state of detached and most selfish particles. <sup>1</sup> This seems indeed to be foregoing one of the strongest means of power, since a

system of notions and moral principles might find the greatest account in so combining itself with the affections of nature as to engage them for auxiliaries. But then what a triumph of this bad cause that while, instead of enticing these charities into its service it tramples on and destroys them, it can notwithstanding make this assemblage of dissocial selfish beings act upon one another in confirmation of their common delusion, with an effect even greater than that which might have arisen from friendly sympathy. Of little worth in one another's esteem as relatives and friends, it is as things which the gods have set their stamp upon that they have their grand value. The religion is regarded as attaching in so very personal a manner to all its subjects, that they have the effect of figures sculptured on their temples, or of leaves of their sacred books of mythology. The seal or brand of the deities set upon them does not indeed *dignify* them all, but it makes them all vouchers to the religion. They all in conjunction personify, as it were, that system which as much requires the existence of Soodras to verify it as of Brahmins. The "miry clay" of the feet is as essential a part as the royal material of the head.

Thus the vast multitude are made to serve just as surety to one another, and all to each, for the verity of the superstition. And as the existence of any of them on any other account had been impertinent, their existence in such prodigious numbers must needs seem to demonstrate a mighty importance in that for evidence and exemplification of which it was worth while for them to be so many.

With so despotie a command over the people's minds, it would have been strange if this empire of delusion had forborne to assume the advantage and security of those temporalities, which no other spiritual tyranny was ever abstracted enough to forget, and which, indeed, it would have been fool-

ish impolicy to forget. Indirectly it possesses this mode of strength in having for its subjects the princely and opulent persons of the community. Their secular rank renders service, not only by its natural influence on the people of lower condition, but by the homage of an acknowledged intrinsic inferiority of that rank to the highest of the distinctions founded in religion. Their mansions, gardens, and groves, are made to testify, by all the permanent signs of dedication, that their property and state are held under the paramount rites of the divinities. But these divinities have also their direct revenues, in the form of fixed, many of them ancient, appropriations, with the addition of an undefined right of exaction, enforced by priests and consecrated mendicants upon the religious charity of the people. This charity is in one sense voluntary ; but when it is considered with what lofty pretensions these applicants make their demands, (not unfrequently even assuming some mode of identity with the gods themselves) and what benefits or curses are declared, and by the people believed, to depend infallibly on their surrendering or withholding the tribute required, it is easy to judge how much these offerings, and their quantity are left to free will. Their own rights and those of their idols might be trusted, for the power of maintaining them, to men whose demands of a share of the superstitious cultivator's produce are to be resisted at the believed hazard of a blast on the whole.

As if, however, such endowments, and such force of requisition, had left cause to fear that this infernal hierarchy should become deficient in the substantial resources for preserving its dominion of delusion and iniquity, the Christian Government over India has sought the honour of being its auxiliary ; in which capacity it is at once accepted and despised by the descendants of Brahma. The aid has been afforded not simply

in the way of securing, in observance of the principle of toleration, the pagan worship and means of worship from violent interference, but in the form of a positive active patronage. The administration of the funds for the ceremonial and abominations of idolatry, has been, to a very great extent, taken under the authority and care of the reigning power, composed of persons zealous on this nearer side of a certain extent of water for the established christian religion, which establishment has also been recently extended to that further side,—with what effect toward exploding, or even modifying, this very marvellous policy, or whether deemed to be perfectly harmonious with it, we must wait to be informed. In the mean time, the religious public is amply informed of a course of measures having been deliberately pursued tending to support and prolong the ascendancy of paganism. It has been disclosed to their view that the highest authority has taken upon itself the regulation of the economy of idols' temples, has restored endowments which had been alienated, and has made additional allowances from the public revenue, where the existing appropriations have been judged inadequate to preserve to those establishments the requisite dignity ;—requisite for what, but to prevent any relaxation of the hold which the imposture has on the people? And, be it remembered, the revenue which is to afford this aid is constantly pressing heavily for its means of competence on the distressed resources of this christian country.

We cannot presume to conjecture how much sooner this accessional mean of power will begin to fail, than those ancient ones, with which the system was invested when none of its gods or sages could have forseen a reserve of assistance in such a quarter. Perhaps a confidence,—entertained upon the assurance of that spirit whose prophets were once before trusted in

by a government,—a confidence that this pagan system will be permanent, contributes to prevent any alarm respecting the kind of judicial notice, which the Governor of the world might take of its christian supporters, in the event of his striking it down.

You will all perceive the propriety of our adverting to this melancholy topic, in a train of observations designed, as we have said before, not as any attempt at a summary of the component matters of the Hindoo superstition, but as a slight illustration of the circumstances through which it has so firm a command of the minds of the people. To avail ourselves once more of the precise terms of our Text, by which terms, in truth, it was that the particular course of observations we are pursuing was suggested, we are shewing how “mighty” is that enemy against which the servants of God are, in the present instance, summoned to his “help.” And how much all the other means of efficacy, possessed by a superstition, are reinforced by the direct patronage of the government of a country, is as obvious to common sense as it is too notorious in all history.

If we add to all these modes and causes of the mightiness of this superstition, the indefatigable activity of the powers of darkness, meaning literally, infernal intelligences, which we believe to be busy in this world, it might be readily admitted, we should imagine, that there is nothing in it worthier to have sprung from the inspiration, or to be kept in force by the energy, of such wills and agencies. If there are theologians who deny the intervention of such a cause in this enormity of most malignant evil, is it, perhaps, that they feel some need and use of its being laid to the sole account of man, for supporting that other favourite opinion of theirs, which denies the radical corruption of human nature? What new hopes, or consistencies,

or faculties, for the prosecution of this warfare, might be afforded by their view of the matter, which makes the human nature to be so excellent, and makes all this to be its spontaneous product, it would be of no use for us to stay to inquire, since it is our destiny to proceed in the contest under the notion, that such a magnitude of evil can be no less than the leagued depravity of *two* bad natures. Those who can ascribe it all to one, and at the same time entertain a high veneration for that one, would seem to make a no very contemptible approximation, in point of rationality, toward the idolatry of which we have been speaking.

Now, can a system of intellectual and moral perversion, of which the demoniac energy but faintly glimmers in this brief description of some of its characteristics, shew itself in the view of the adherents of the true religion, without conveying a provocation to their conscience and zeal to come forth, in aid of any reasonable project for carrying a new power into attack on what has, through so many ages, maintained its character of defier of the living God, in spite of all that might have been supposed to operate toward its destruction from time, and Nature, and the vaunted reason of man? Who would not wish that the effect of the pious indignation, and prayers, and inventive study, and subsidiary liberality, of all good men, might be, as it were from heaven, to which this would all be an appeal, reflected in burning radiance to scorch and blast here and there the extended array of idolatry, and at length to annihilate it? Will not each one in our assembly ask within himself, Is there not in that system, made up of so many depravities, some small part, some poisonous atom, some serpent vehicle of an evil principle, which *I* may be the means of destroying? And that minute portion of active principle, which noxiously works on in consequence of my not crushing it,—



may it not be accounted to work in my name, making my contribution real, however diminutive, to the deadly effect of that system which I *might* contribute just so much to abolish? But even though the state of the matter were, that no actual effect at all should result, none discernible by Him who discriminates every thing included in all things, still, might I not be required, in mere proof of my fidelity to him, to give some demonstration of hatred, to fling some practical salutation of war, against an infernal monster that, in character of a constellation of gods, arrogates the worship of a large portion of the human race, and repays it with perdition? Can I hope to go, without some haunting sense of dishonour, to that superior empire of the Almighty where every *possible* feeling goes forth in devotion, from a region where I have been nearly at peace with such an odious usurpation?

But even this state of peace with it has not been enough for some of our countrymen to maintain: and we think the partiality, arising in some instances almost to fanaticism, which, both at home and abroad, they have manifested without reserve for this grossest paganism, may serve to enforce our demand on christian zeal. It may do so, partly, by the illustration thus afforded of the quality of the design, since that may be presumed to be greatly excellent which has had the exact effect of irritating out by contrariety the worst vice lurking in profane minds; and it may additionally do so by the consideration, that if a peculiarly odious kind of depravity, of the existence of which there was perhaps no previous suspicion, suddenly discloses itself in a nation, there should be an extraordinary effort to promote a counterbalancing good. Such an effort, besides that it is due to the honour of God, would seem to be called for in behalf of the *character* of a christian people. It may also involve somewhat of that policy, in reference to their welfare,

which sober men would not easily pronounce superstitious as exemplified in the parallel case of a ship, in which, if several of the passengers were expressly and ravingly insulting Omnipotence, any others fearing the "God of the sea and the dry land" would consider an extraordinary degree of homage rendered to him on their part, in direct contravention, a matter not altogether foreign to the safety of the vessel. If their devotions had been, in the first instance, the cause of bringing out this malignant impiety, they would be certain, upon the exhibition of it, rather to double than remit the earnestness and frequency of their prayers.

The promoters and immediate experimenters of a christian attempt on the pagans of the East naturally expected, in spite of the pretended miraculous mildness of the Hindoo character, to encounter a strenuous and perhaps malicious opposition from the idolators. But it was hardly within their calculation, that a very considerable number of persons of some note in England, persons enjoying the advantages of education ; of weight in the legislation, the mercantile system, and the literature, of the country ; belonging to its respected ranks, classes, and professions, (the consecrated profession not excepted) and avowing, for the most part, a veneration for the religious establishment ; would be provoked to join in a violent outcry against a scheme for imparting the gospel to the people of India ; and that their strain of virulent invective against the "pernicious fanaticism" of missionary enterprise, would ever and anon be heard modulating itself into an expression of favour and reverence for the execrable superstition threatened by that enterprise. Its pious projectors were not fully apprised how prone men are to have a partial feeling toward a religion which it is clearly safe for them to make light of in their hearts. They are so because, through its generic quality, (of religion) it

somewhat assists them to make light of a more formidable thing of that quality and name. It comes, probably, with a great shew of claims,—antiquity, pretended miracles, and an immense number of believers: it may nevertheless be disbelieved with most certain impunity. Under the advantage of this disbelief with impunity, the mind ventures to look toward other religions, and at last toward the Christian. *That* also has its antiquity, its recorded miracles, and its multitude of believers. Though there may not, perhaps, be impious assurance enough to assume formally the equality of the pretensions in the two cases, there is a successful eagerness to escape from the evidence that the apparent similarity is slight and superficial; and the irreligious spirit springs rapidly and gladly, in its disbelief, from the one, as a stepping-place, to the other. But that which affords such an important convenience for surmounting the awe of the true religion, will naturally be a great favourite, even at the very moment it is seen to be contemptible, and indeed, in a sense, *in consequence* of its being so. Complacency mingles with the very contempt for that from which contempt may rebound on christianity.

These fierce advocates of paganism it were in vain to warn of a time, when the summons to them will be in effect, to “come forth *against* the Lord,” if they dare then repeat their well remembered words of reverence for idolatry; if they dare then,—when their profane affectation of a liberal homage to all “religions” as proper and good for their respective parts of the world, will sink in an insufferable conversion to the one true religion; and when the merits of that estimate in which the people’s condition towards God is held a matter infinitely subordinate to the consideration of what they are with respect to government and trade, will be illustrated, in so many millions of souls assembled for retribution, with eternal existence before

them, and all the material of that secular condition, with reference to which alone they *had* been regarded, ready to be burnt up. Then will such men meet their account with the impostors and apostates, and whatever other enemies of Christ will hear with the most emphatic despair the sentence, Behold ye despisers, and wonder, and perish. It can be of no use, we repeat, to admonish *them*; but we may urge it on the friends of true religion and the illumination of the world, that to this phenomenon of a zealous avowal and effort in favour of paganism, in this christian country, in this stage of its knowledge, their contrary zeal and exertion should be what the living rod of Moses was to the serpents of the magicians.

It is at the same time to be acknowledged, that there is a great abatement of the public manifestation of this disposition in favour of idolatry, and this animosity against the Indian mission. However unallayed the rancorous sentiment may remain, it is a spirit of which the display has proved a little incommodious on the score of character. Indeed, in the season of its most virulent eruption, some of the persons in whom it raged thought it worth while, (others were more bold or honest) to endeavour to give it a disguised appearance. It was made to inspirit some argument of pretended political expediency. It was vented under the form of a representation, urged with every seeming of a most sincere and wrathful earnestness, that missionary proceedings permitted but a very little while longer, would infallibly work the destruction of the British empire in Asia, although it is probable they all laughed in private at such as might be simple enough to let themselves become, upon this representation, affected with this panic. Such assertions were hazarded in a sanguine confidence, for which it is a lamentable reflection on our country that there should have been no slight grounds, that the matter would not

be suffered to proceed to the trial. But a power from heaven interposed, acting partly by the instrumentality of the zeal of the religious part of the community; the Government were decided to prolong the impunity of the reviled missionaries, which has silenced many that were incapable of feeling any restraint from the fear of God; and time and experience have brought contempt on all their rant and prognostication.

We have alluded to such men only to gain from them a service for which we shall owe them no thanks. Religion should keep pace with physical science in the art of making noxious things contribute to salutary operations. No moral force, however bad in origin and principle, should, when it cannot be annihilated, be left free from attempts to beguile it to promote a contrary purpose to that which it naturally intends; and we wish to make the force of evil, emanating from these men's minds, act in coincident impulse with the motives which should carry the servants of God into a closer and still more animated conflict with the powers of heathen darkness.

This good cause has prevailed on the judgment, and obtained the practical aid, of the religious public, to an extent which we are willing to regard as an omen from heaven, of great effects to be accomplished in its progress. But it is not improbable there may still remain, among a minority of good men, some feelings not quite reconciled to schemes of such wide scope, such interminable demands of assistance, and such a distant field of execution; schemes, in short, of which the greater portion of the cultivated community have but recently begun to moderate the ridicule poured on them as fanatical and impracticable.

There is much difference of mental constitution for receiving the impression of such projects. There is a class of good men naturally formed to be exceedingly sober, and cautious, and

deliberate, and anxious for all things to be kept in right proportions and manageable compass. Excellent qualities ; adapted specifically to some departments of duty, and of great use in a certain measure of interference in all. But let it be suggested to their possessors, that there is perhaps no class of men so apt to over-value their peculiar endowments, in contra-distinction to those of a different order ; and no class more needing to be warned of the faults akin to their virtues, and into which those virtues are liable to be insensibly transmuted. Nor, while they are in an especial manner ready to take credit to themselves for independence of judgment, are there any good men whose feelings and opinions are more at the merey of those from whom they differ, no class being liable to be driven further on one side the middle line, in a concern of duty, by what appears to them an extreme on the other. And in their own extreme, when they have once taken their position there, they will maintain themselves with all that stiffness of temper which, to deserve the name of firmness or independence, ought to have kept them out of it.

It may be conceded to these worthy men, that the advocates of missions have not always avoided extravagance. Especially when under the influence of a large assembly, supposed to be animated by interests which extend to the happiness of a world, they may have been excited to use a language which seemed to magnify these interests, and the projects in which they were embodied, at the expense of all other duties and concerns : insomuch that some of those extra prudent friends of ours, in the auditory, have been wondering what, at that rate of devotement of time, exertion, and money, we are to do, not only with the other claims of religious duty, but with the whole ordinary economy of life, pressing upon us as it does with so many peremptory demands. But allowance must be made for a

little excess in the pleader of such a cause. Its great importance, of which he is at all times soberly certain, expands into a kind of dazzling magnificence before him when a thousand minds seem to be contemplating it in sympathy with him. It appears to him as with a reflection of all the complacent regards which those minds are fixing upon it. Under such a temporary animating influence, all the topics and arguments which he has previously accumulated in favour of the selected subject, become as it were dilated and on fire, without any intentional exaggeration; and unless he had a capacity like Bacon, of keeping all subjects within his view almost at once, in their relative proportions as in a map, he will naturally represent the claims of the selected one in terms partaking a little too much of ambition and monopoly. We cannot wonder that our calculating friends should be making, in their minds, a strong protest against this excess; but they are aware how little they need entertain any apprehension for its consequences; as well knowing that the persons addressed are never betrayed into such enthusiasm, as to forget to take the practical standard of their duty at a sufficient reduction of the requirement made or implied in the hyperbolical language of the advocate.

While, however, some concession is thus made to the cautious good men, who are more afraid of extravagance than of any other error in designs for promoting religion, they must be told, that it would have been an ill fate for christianity in the world, if christians of their temperament could always have held the ascendancy in projecting its operations. If they would for a moment put themselves, in imagination, in the case of being contemporary with Wickliff, or with Luther, and of being applied to by one of these daring spirits for advice, we may

ask what counsel they can suppose themselves to have given? They cannot but be instantly conscious that, though they had been protestants at heart, their disposition would have been to array and magnify the objections and dangers; to dwell in emphatic terms on the inveterate, all comprehensive, and resistless dominion of the papal church, established in every soul and body of the people; on the vigilance and prompt malignity of the priests; and on the insignificance, as to any effect, of an obscure individual's efforts against an immense and marvellously well organized system of imposture and depravity, even if that individual could be beguiled enough to expect, that his protestation would not soon bring him to encounter the *ultima ratio* of his provoked enemy, in the form of tribunals, dungeons and death. In short, if in those instances such counsel had been acted upon as they would have given, that zeal which was kindling and destined to lay a great part of the mightier Babylon in ashes, would have smouldered and expired in a languid listless hope, that the Almighty would *sometime* create such a juncture of circumstances as should admit an attempt at reformation without the folly and danger of useless temerity. And so we might, but for Wickliff and Luther, have been immersed in the half paganism of popery at this very day.

And to descend to the undertaking in favour of which we are at present assembled;—all that has been accomplished by it in India, and is now accomplishing, as introductory, we trust, to a religious change not less glorious or extensive than the Reformation, may be regarded by its active friends as, in some sense, a reward for having refused to be controuled by the dissuasive arguments, and desponding predictions, of many very worthy deprecators of rashness and enthusiasm.



It is from this quarter that we may hear disapprobation in form of the question, What can we do against an evil of such enormous magnitude, and so consolidated? It may be answered, (and this has indeed been already suggested) What you can do, in the sense of what precise quantity of effect a severe calculation may promise from a given effort, is not always to be the rule of conduct; for this would be to deny the absolute authority of the Divine Master. We refuse to obey him for his own sake, and refuse with an impious arrogance, if we insist on being endowed, or on the right of acting as if we could be endowed, with his own foresight of consequences, that foresight on which, we may presume, are founded the wise reasons of his commands. It may be added, that the contrary spirit has been signally honoured, inasmuch as some of the most effectual and the noblest services rendered to God in all time, have begun much more in the prompting of zeal to attempt something for him, as it were at all hazards, than in rigorous estimates of the probable measure of effect.

We may observe also, how all history abounds with great effects from little causes, thus indeed representing a prevailing fact in the constitution of the world. Some such consequences now existing in magnitude, bear a peculiarity of character which will hardly allow us to look at them without a reference to their origination; others have so blended in the conformation of the ordinary state of things, that they do not necessarily nor readily suggest the thought of their first causes. The actual condition of our part of the world consists of a number of grand, distinguishable, though combined effects, at various distances from their respective primary causes; how interesting it would be to survey backward their progress; but they are so familiarised around us that we are seldom reminded of the manner and the diminutiveness in which they began. A mys-

terious hand threw a particle of a cause, if we may so speak, among the elements ; it had the principle of attraction in it ; it found something akin to it to combine with, obtaining so an augmentation, to be instantly again augmented, of the attracting and assimilating power, which grew in a ratio that became at length stupendous ; and it exhibits the final result, (if any result yet attained could be called final) in perhaps a grand modification of the condition of a people, a continent, a large portion of the globe. What was the commencement of the true religion in this land, and of those several reformatations which have partly restored it from its corruptions ? And what would be the term of proportion, according to our principles of judging, between the object as seen in the diminutiveness of the incipient cause, and in its present extent of prevalence ?—between, (if we may be allowed the figure) the germ in the acorn and the majestic oak ?

A result thus growing to an immense magnitude from a cause apparently so inconsiderable at the commencement, is the collective consequence of a great number of causes progressively starting and multiplying into consentaneous operation, each of them respectively having in the same manner its enlarging series of consequences. And in looking to the future progress of this undertaking in India, is it not perfectly rational to assume, that many small means and little events will be, in their respective times and places, the commencements, and in a sense the causes, of trains of consequences interminably advancing and enlarging ?

For example, we may imagine the destiny of some particular copy of the Bible or New Testament, in one of the native languages ; and an emphatic interest would attach to such a volume, could there be any sign to indicate this destiny, at the moment of its issuing from the repository. It may be supposed

to come into the hands, in a way much like casualty, of a heathen somewhat more thoughtful than his companions. Disgust or indignation at the first aspect of what he finds there may prompt him to throw away the book, which he may perceive to be virtually an impeachment of his religion, his gods, his priests, and himself. But a certain disquiet, of curiosity mingled with a deeper sentiment, shall have seized him, and shall impel him, as by fascination, to that book again: he shall feel as if the eye of a spectre had glanced upon him. A rising suspicion that all within him, and around him, may have been wrong, shall be aggravated by repeated perusal to full conviction; while the dawn of the true light and of a happier state is breaking on the night of his soul. Communications and discussions with his relatives and neighbours may accompany the latter part of this process; and his finally complete persuasion will be followed by zealous exertions to impart what he will deem the greatest good on earth. The vast majority will obdurately resist; but within a year he shall find one or two, and in the next several more, surrendering to the same convictions, and then, as it were instinctively, unfolding their new faith as a net for proselytes. Who shall presume to say what the consequence may not be in fifty or in thirty years? Which of our *christian* deriders of the madness of missionary hopes, would venture to pledge his fortune for the inviolateness, half a century hence, of those shrines and idols, at present frequented and adored in the district where such a man is perhaps at this hour beginning, by the intrusion of the supposed Bible, to be disturbed in his "unchangeable opinions and rites," as these christians have so often pronounced them?

We may without extravagance suppose these events to happen in a great number of instances, here and there in that realm of darkness; and we might add many other diminutive

incidents and agents. The possible effects of a few tracts, conveyed in a manner appearing at first unaccountable, to a great distance from the place where they may have been put into pagan hands, by good men little apprised of the dignified appointment with which those humble gifts left their own, has been delightfully exemplified in some of the rather recent accounts of the mission. Among the little causes thus presented to the imagination as destined to produce great effects, will appear some images of the infantine countenances of the pupils now taught, and hereafter to be taught, in those numerous schools brought into existence by this mission, not indeed contrived for proselytizing, as the immediate purpose, but certain to contribute to it indirectly in the course of years.

You are glad to admit how reasonable, how sober, it is to expect that many such apparently inconsiderable things will thus grow to magnitude in the progress of their effects contributory to the success of the good cause. But it will occur to you that, in imagining these diminutive causes, we have not begun quite at their beginning. It is a pleasing thing to see, in the hands of the supposed pagan, the book or tract which may thus explode his superstition, and perhaps be the cause of ultimately setting his temple and idols on fire; but how is that formidable substance to come, gratuitously, into his hands? Think what must have preceded. Think of the complicated process of its preparation, involving so many kinds of workmanship. And this brings the train of the operation up to its originating matter in your own hands, a commencement so long antecedent to the pagan's receiving the supposed book, the event from which we have dated such pleasing consequences, but on which consequences we are not to be indulging our anticipative gratulations as if the book were to fall from the sky. The little cause, then, which we may follow onward in thought

to such noble effects,—see it deriving itself from a still less,—a piece of money ; which may have carried its image and superscription, in the insignificance of ordinary service, through a thousand hands, at each movement very harmless to the cause of evil, till it has come into that hand which has devoted it to produce a bible, which may have the effect at length of a thunderbolt on an idols' temple. Here is a direct answer to the question, perhaps very querulously asked, What can *we* do?

If it should be said, that such an imagination of happy results cannot be an effectual motive, because no individual can be so bereft of sense as to fancy *his* particular contribution the distinct cause of one of those trains of results, even supposing them certain to be realised, we may confidently ask, whether a whole assembly might not deem themselves honoured if, of the variety of means which *all* their contributions will certainly bring into application, one may reasonably be presumed—one bible, or tract, or other instrumental expedient—to be appointed the cause of so happy a train of consequences. And there can be no extravagance in assuming that this is probable. In other and more general words, if we could calculate, first, the whole amount of all the contributions that have been and shall be made, and then the consequence, that is, the whole number of such distinct trains of pleasing effects as we have anticipated, it is probable that number would be great enough to allow, by the rule of proportion, one such train to be assigned to the share which the liberal contributions of one large assembly will form, in the whole amount of what christian liberality will have contributed.

If it be objected, that the whole of this presumption, of great consequences to originate, in numerous instances, from bibles and small religious treatises scattered at a venture among the

heathens, and from here and there one of their children growing up into a preacher of christianity, partakes too much of a sanguine credulity to be in conformity to what we should deem the sound principles of calculation in ordinary matters,—we might reply, for one thing, that these presumptions are not founded solely on speculations of probability ; for that the history of our own and other missions has recorded a very considerable number of successes of truth, commencing, and to some extent, progressive in a manner very similar to that we have imagined. But the chief answer is, that in those right principles of calculation in ordinary affairs, we do not acknowledge an equal authority as applied to the higher concern of promoting the kingdom of Christ. They are here incompetent ; partly because the measure of effect probably to be obtained by the use of given means in this concern is by its very nature far less definable ; but chiefly because there is another and transcendent element in the calculation, namely the direct interference of the Divine Energy, in a manner incomparably less regulated and, might we say, subordinated, to settled and known laws, than in the common course of nature and of human proceedings. Insomuch that to attempt to impose the principles established in the relations of common things, as limitary on the means, the efficacies, and the hopes, of a design for extending the divine glory, would be like leaving the winds out of the account of forces, in preparing a vessel for the ocean, and thinking only of oars and rowers.—Let it be remembered how Moses was rebuked for alleging the principles of ordinary calculation, in pleading to be excused from an enterprise in which supreme power engaged itself to attend him.

It is probable the chief strength of whatever reluctance may still remain among the friends of christianity to yield their full co-operation in projects for extending that religion over the

heathen world, consists in a kind of Religious Fatalism, which would give the objection some such form as this;—If that Being whose power is almighty has willed to permit on earth the protracted existence against him of this enormous evil, why am I called upon to vex and exhaust myself in a petty hostility against it? Why, any more than to attempt the extinction of a volcano? If it were his will that this grand evil should fall, should we not soon feel, without our having moved from our place, the earthquake of its mighty catastrophe?

The objection might even, in a degree, assume the merit of a reverential submission to the sovereignty and mystery of the Divine Government. And it has that peculiar adaptation to do mischief, which is possessed by those fallacies that come in the form of the most simple obvious inferences from some great and undeniable truth or fact. The fact is, that he who is infinitely good could abolish this odious superstition if he willed it; then, if he that can do it, if he would, does not will it, why should we will it, that cannot?

We may question this objector as to the real length to which his opinion or feeling goes. Let him tell whether it may approach to this,—that, the thing contemplated being permitted by him that is infinitely good and powerful, it is therefore not of a nature hostile to him, not of a tendency directly the reverse of that of his attributes, not of deadly malignity to his creatures; that, in short, the brand of divine reprobation stamped by both revelation and reason upon idolatry, and on each of its deceits and depravities severally, is itself, in truth, but a deceit of another kind, a mere accommodation to a certain superficial and conventional theory, the real fact being, after all, that God is at peace with the thing thus reprobated.

We may presume he will instantly reply in the negative, and say, that he holds this mass of error and turpitude to be intrinsically and incommutably opposite to the divine goodness, and holiness, and pernicious to man, any other judgment of the matter being, according to all fact and all scripture, utterly and impiously absurd, while the divine permission of this great evil appears at every step of thought but therefore the more mysterious.

Well then, we immediately say to him, there are two views, according to one of which you are to form your scheme of conduct ; on the one hand, a mystery in the divine government, a permission infinitely inexplicable to you, and on the other, the most glaring manifestation of the quality of the thing so permitted, as hateful in itself and in the sight of God. Consider from which of these two it is the most rational for you to take your rule of action, that where your understanding is utterly lost, or that where all is demonstration or self-evidence. Will you presume to ascend up through the dark region of mystery to the celestial throne, and, sharer of sovereign intelligence, enter into and act upon God's own reasons for permitting the evil ; or will you accept, as the proper element for you to think and act in, the clear light he has given you, beneath that dark region, on the nature of things around you? *You* will permit an evil because God does so ! Be warned that *your* permission of it is amicable coincidence with it, if granted on any other ground than a perfect comprehension of the reasons why he permits it. Your dilemma, therefore, would be, identification with God, or alliance with his enemy !

But perhaps you will say, that far from any tendency to such an alliance, you are, as an indispensable part and proof of your fidelity to God, a mortal foe of this foe to him, in every estimate of your judgment and every sentiment of your heart ; and that the only exemption sought, upon the plea of the divine



permission of the evil, is, that you may be allowed to remain quiet with respect to action, and not be summoned to expend and waste your feeble strength on that which the almighty strength spares.

Now in the first place, there seems to be a most groundless assumption implied here, namely the *continuance* of this permission indefinitely into futurity; whereas, for any thing that you can know, hostile means put in action at this period may coincide with a divine decree to terminate that mysterious suffering: and then, whatever were the natural inadequacy of those means, they would seem to have caught the fire of Gideon's lamps, and be made to flame out with supernatural power of rout and confusion to the host of pagan gods.

But in the next place, you cannot consistently acknowledge that the circumstance of the divine permission of this dreadful system of delusion affords no particle of ground for conciliation to it, but leaves you under the full obligation of a mortal enmity,—and at the same time claim from that circumstance an exemption from practical efforts against it. What indeed is its permission but simply its existence? in virtue of which it can give you no exemption from the duty of attacking it, which would not be equally an exemption from all duty whatever in the form of opposition and conflict, which would not confer an universal inviolability on evil, and end practically in the maxim, that the more evil there is on earth, the less there is for the servants of God to do. Under which condition of things how impertinent, how worse than useless, how thriftless of happiness, were that pious animation of feeling which you are admitting to be an internal duty, that holy indignation in the soul against what is working infinite mischief and misery to a large portion of mankind. Vain passion of christian zeal! Illusory and almost penal fire from heaven! animating the heart but to con-

sume it, if there should be no practical mode and machinery for conveying outward its energy to strike against the hated object. To have the mind beset and filled, as by main force, with the revolting images of pagan abominations, and to know that this infernal usurpation triumphs in the slavery of millions of our common family, and yet, the while, to submit to be unfurnished with expedients of devout revenge, to have no arrows, no power of throwing reflected convergent sun beams, no missiles charged with the elements most noxious to a malignant nature, would be felt as a hard *imposition* by a man of zeal, who would dread to have his soul, in reference to the service of God, in the condition of a hero in chains ; what shall we think, then, of a servant of God desiring as an *exemption* and a *privilege* to be allowed thus to expend away the vital force of his spirit without action ? We cannot believe that he *has* any of that zealous emotion which he pretends. No, my good friends, you must not profess to feel and fulfil a duty of enmity in spirit against the permitted evil, and at the same time acknowledge no duty of offensive exertion. The true animosity would be so intent on some means of action, that it is quite certain the state of feeling which persuades to decline such means is far too pacific toward what is insulting God and destroying man.

But it is still more plainly to our purpose, as against this religious fatalism, to alledge the matter of fact, that though it has been the mysterious will of the Supreme Governor to permit such great evils in the earth, it has as evidently been his will to maintain a continual war against them. Why have there been any vindictive interpositions of his among the inhabitants of the world ? Let the memorials of cities, and tribes, and nations, and in one instance a world, destroyed, testify whether he has set men the example of peace with irreligion and iniquity. What is the inscription on the monuments of beings that

his vengeance has smitten? What has been the interpretation required to be put on all the formidable signs held out to deter, and all the plagues that have followed when those signs warned in vain? None of the victims could say that they were lying signs and wonders, as pretending to be heaven's protest against the evil to which man was perverted.

And if we contemplate the Divine Being as a revealer of truth and a lawgiver, the same hostile character and design are conspicuous. Every thing he declared or dictated is instantly seen to be adverse to something which it had not been his will to prevent from existing in human notions or conduct. Well indeed might great alarm be felt to see so very many things marked for men to be committed in deadly strife against; but what would have been the piety, or the prudence, or the consequence, of a remonstrance to him against so severe a vocation, on the plea that himself had permitted, and could have prevented, every thing that he was thus imperatively involving them in painful conflict with over every step of ground till they should fall into the grave?

We repeat, that the whole course of the extraordinary divine interference among men has been in the direction, and has commanded human spirits, on their allegiance, to concur in the direction, which we are endeavouring to give to your zeal. In visions and oracles sent to patriarchs, in deliverances and avenging inflictions, in the miraculous suspensions of the laws of nature, in institutions of religion, in the illuminations of prophets and apostles, in the excitement of the best men to the most invincible pertinacity of warfare, in the mission of angels, and, transcendently above all, in the "manifestation of the Son of God to destroy the works of the Devil,"—in all these forms of the divine dispensation, and in all the operation that has been in enlarging progress from them to this hour, one spirit breathes,

one perpetual emanation of divine will and agency against that which will, nevertheless, be permitted to retain some measure of existence on the earth till a very late period, when the “Lord shall consume it with the breath of his mouth, and destroy it with the brightness of his coming.”—Such has been the spirit of all the Divine Intervention. The sun is not more conspicuous by his own light, than this character of the religious economy.

Now then for a professed servant of God to refuse acting in conformity to this entire tendency of his cause, and to justify himself on the ground of the divine permission of that which the cause is directed against, what is it but, in effect, to say to the Supreme Governor,—I behold two views of thy government: there is thy permission of an awful array and amount of evils, and there is a system of thy dispensations framed to work in most direct and absolute opposition to them. The impossibility of apprehending the unity of principle of these opposed parts of thy government throws a dark mystery on the one of them. But with me, unlike my fellow-mortals the mystery rests on the latter view, on the economy constituted for resistance to the evil; whereas the reason for its permission is so plain to me that I can, in dissent from all thy faithful servants since the world began, adopt it as my rule of conduct. In pursuance of this adoption, I dare to believe thou art, in truth, *not* so much the enemy of this same Evil as is pretended, even in thy own revelation; and that I shall, upon a certain secret understanding, please thee fully as well by declining to join in an attack upon it, as by devoting to the utmost my active forces to co-operate against it, in a war which I do at the same time perceive clearly that thou thyself, for what reason of state I cannot conjecture, hast raised and maintained with a palpable and continual interference.

Let us suppose him to act in this spirit toward his own soul. When he looks there, he sees there is a proportion, a lamentable one, of "that abominable thing" which has rendered the world so horrid a scene. But the Almighty power has *permitted* its existence there. What then? Can he on that account remain quiet, while it is poisoning the essence of his being, and feel as if it were an homage to God to second, if we may so express it, that permission? With plain sad proof of the very active quality of the mischief, which seems also to become, even while he is looking at it, if under a suspension of resistance, sensibly stronger, by the force of a principle of augmentation altogether indefinite if left to its own progress, and which tells him, as in a demon's accents, that his soul is the intended victim, can he calmly contemplate this permitted state and operation, just as one of the inexplicable phenomena of the divine government? And if he pretended reverential submission, what manner of god could he deem himself adoring, that would be pleased with such a sacrifice? My brethren, unless his pretensions to religion are false, and his soul is actually surrendering to perdition, he will, at the sight of this mournful predicament of his own spirit, be ardently intent on an application of the means of resisting the destroyer. And he will be at once alarmed and indignant if he should perceive his mind admitting, under some influence of the consideration that God has not prevented the awful fact of sin within him, any slighter estimate of the required energy and promptitude of the resistance, than that which should be commensurate to the evil itself, viewed absolutely, in all its atrocity and activity.

But now let him revert to the heathen slaves of darkness and sin.—If it would be cruelty to his own soul to make the lighter of the invasion, or the means of expulsion, of its deadly enemy, because God has not precluded nor exterminated it, he may be

reminded, and all the friends of christianity may be reminded, of the obligation implied in the second great commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

Try once more how strongly you can bring upon your minds the reality of an immense multitude of spirits, of your own nature, existing on earth. You can by thought place yourselves as sensibly amidst the countenances, the vital warmth, the talk, the worship, the infelicities, of people at the distance of some thousands of leagues, reckoned through the air, as of the inhabitants of an adjacent portion of your own country. With as absolute a sense of fact as if you were at this hour in India, and were just now desecring a tyger crouching to spring on one ill-fated person, or a serpent throwing its folds round another, you can behold the prodigiously numerous tribe of souls, actual living immortal essences, images and counterparts of your own, as it were watched for, fascinated, sprung upon, grappled, by things arisen in fearful eruption from the bottomless pit. Look at them involved in the power of the Old Serpent. Now suppose the case, that a professedly benevolent man, sojourning in that country, happened to be in a spot where he saw a tyger eying with deadly glare the intended but unapprehensive victim, or a serpent in the very act of contracting itself to dart on an unwarned human object; and suppose too, that this spectator had an advantage of position which exempted him from danger, and also that he had in his hands the most efficient means for striking the monster with death or sudden fright; or that at the very least he could alarm the person in peril. Now what sort of philanthropist shall we represent if we next suppose, that while looking at this creature of living flesh and blood, who is perhaps approaching every instant nearer the spot where death is lurking, he coolly thinks what a fatal predicament, wonders that the God of nature should

suffer, or theologically accounts for his suffering, beasts of prey and serpents in a world made for man ; considers that, at any rate, as God *does* suffer them, men must of course be devoured by them ; and so, quietly awaits and witnesses the catastrophe, highly self-complacent, perhaps, in the sort of selfish piety with which he goes away blessing the Providence which had not doomed *him* to be the victim.

We need not make the application. We will only suggest whether, since the whole accountableness for all the error and wickedness of paganism must rest somewhere, the alleviation obtained before the Supreme Judge by the heathens who have been denied the means of deliverance from so wretched a condition, may not be at the expense of those who shall have refused to try those means upon them ; and then whether, in the solemn time of adjudgment, these latter will dare to reflect off this accountableness for omission on the Judge himself, in the allegation that the evil was of his own permission, when they will have the consciousness that he gave them the means of at least attempting its destruction.

This religious fatalism, from the dominion of which we should be glad to see the active powers of all good men rescued, may somewhat change its tone, still, however, aiming to elude the requisition to come forth in the activity of the cause. It may affect to recover from the kind of hopeless dead prostration of feeling at the awful fact of God's permission of so dreadful an evil, into adoration of his power as almighty to destroy it. And how loftily God shall be extolled, and how emphatically man shall be degraded, when it is hoped that some absolution from duty may be suborned from the contrast ! Feelings of indolence combined with ideas of the sovereignty of God will form a state of mind prolific of such reflections as these : Of what

consequence can be the trivial efforts of such insignificant creatures, as co-operating or not with the energy of an almighty power? What signify, in a great process of nature, some few rain-drops or dew-drops the more or the less? What are we, to be talking, in strains of idle pomp, of converting the people of half a world? How reduced to contempt, how vanishing from perception will be the effects of all our petty toils, when mightier powers shall come into action, as the footsteps of insects and birds are effaced and lost under the trample of elephants. Were it not even temerity to affect to take the course where the chariot of Omnipotence is to drive? as if we would intrude to share achievements proper to a God, or fancy that something magnificent which he has to do, will not be done unless we are there. No, let our text be, as best becomes the humility of mortals and sinners, “Be still and know that I am God.” If he wills the conversion of the heathen nations, he has such powers and means for accomplishing his purpose as may well allow a sabbath to the hands of all his servants, while their souls may adore him in his triumphs.—Very true; and so in the literal warfare referred to in our text, there were means of overthrowing the heathen invaders without the intervention of the people of Meroz, or any other people; for the stars in their courses were pre-appointed to fight against Sisera. It was not because he *needed* them for combatants that the God of armies had required their presence in the battle.—After what has been already said of the employment of feeble means to produce a triumphantly disproportionate effect, it is superfluous to make any other answer than an admonitory suggestion to this indolence, or indifference, or pride, or all of them together, pleading under the semblance of piety, that as it has been hitherto God’s usual method to employ human instrumentality in his great works of beneficence, his now de-



clining to do so would but be the alarming expression of his judgment that the human agents now are not worth being employed on earth, nor being translated to heaven. One should think that dread of the fatal privilege of exemption under such a judgment, would suppress the disposition to seek, and the willingness to accept, an exemption on any ground whatever.

The religious fatalism, in a still further modification, will make professions of anticipating with great delight the certain accomplishment of the glorious revolution in question *when God's selected time shall arrive*. Then, too, as in former great changes, there will be noble work, and enough of it, for such humble instruments as men to perform : meanwhile, beware of premature attempts, and wait for the signs that the time is come. Language like this has within the memory of many of you been among the common-places of our christian communities. If there be still some cautious christians who are reluctant to let it grow obsolete, we might ask them whether they have exactly figured in their minds in what manner the expected grand process is to begin, or what appearances they could accept as signs that the period is come when their efforts would not be like a vain attempt to constrain the fulfilment of a divine purpose before its appointed time. Are there to be extraordinary meteors, significantly passing eastward as they vanish ? Are they to hear that the temples of Seeva are sunk suddenly in ruins at the stroke of thunder ? Or, still more of prodigy, are all the chief statesmen, and mercantile men, and military men, especially concerned in the affairs of the east, to become with one accord inspired with a fervent zeal for the christianizing of Asia, perhaps impelled literally to a spiritual crusade, with prelates in their train, against Hindoo idolatry ?

Perhaps they will, after all, disclaim the expectation of any extraordinary signals from heaven, when it occurs to them that they are in danger of the impiety of demanding a *specific* change in God's mode of declaring his mind to men. And probably they will profess that they wait for no other tokens than such as might afford a rational presumption according to the rules of judgment commonly admitted among wise men. Then we may confidently ask why they should not accept, as the required signs, the circumstances that have attended, thus far, the christian enterprise in India. Is it to be taken as a rebuke from Heaven, on a rash anticipation of Heaven's designs, that our missionaries have been kept in their positions and their work with a general impunity and freedom, notwithstanding that during many years of the time there prevailed against them a systematic unrelenting hostility of spirit, in authorities which in all human appearance might have crushed them in a moment, and were subject to no visible cause of restraint on their will,—a preservation somewhat resembling that of Daniel in the lions' den? Or, that the comparatively little rancour, and the very considerable favour, experienced among the natives, have seemed to betray some divine coercion put upon the lions and the furies of direct paganism itself? Or, that they have been uniformly preserved in the excellence of the christian character in a scene presenting many temptations to forfeit the distinction, and while bearing the moral responsibility of an undertaking in which that forfeiture would have been fatal? Or, that by the multiplicity and extent of their labours and attainments they are constantly recalling to our imagination the hundred-handed giant of fable? Or, that between the produce of their own exertions and the encreasing supplies from the religious public, pecuniary means have never failed to accrue for the constantly

enlarging prosecution of the design,—even a very great disaster having operated like some disruption which brings a gold mine to light? Or, that while the sacred scriptures have been spreading with astonishing rapidity among the nations of the East, the undertaking which has given them this range of mischief to the gods has produced several marked good effects in our religious societies at home; especially in the point of helping to break up, by the introduction of so many new subjects connected with religion, the *monotony* which too much prevailed in their religious services, topics, and feelings?

What is the interpretation which our sooth-sayers of the colder climate of the church put upon these signs, conjoined, as we are delighted to view them conjoined, with the enlarging missionary exertions and successes of our brethren of other religious denominations? They may consider whether they should not in their solicitous and alarmed veneration for Heaven's appointment of times and seasons, abet the gods and their priests in an appeal to the Lord of the world against these missionary intruders, as committing impiety against *Him* in having "come to torment *them* before the time."

It has been the lot of a number of the persons who have thus obeyed what they believed the command of Supreme Authority, to die in the service. They had devoted themselves so to die, and rejoiced in the confidence that they were also devoted by a superior decree. In what manner may we believe that their departing spirits have been received by their great Master? Has it been a *qualified* "Well done good and faithful servants," that they have heard?—as if he should say,—Feeble in judgment, rash in temperament, but honest in intention, you are pardoned through a peculiar extension of mercy, and are admitted now to a state of illumination in which you may cultivate the humility that was so defective on earth, and see in the

future progress of your Lord's administration, how long his servants ought to have repressed the presumptuous impetuosity of their zeal.

No, this could not be their reception in a world where they were so soon to be joined by the first-fruits of that very zeal, those converts from idolatry who, subsequently to some of their teachers, have died in the faith of Christ, and carried evidence to heaven more striking than even angels could in any other form have borne thither, that the power of God has not been withheld from accompanying his cause, to a region whither some of his professed servants would not have contributed to send it. And if we may imagine the nature of the emotion which their accession to the great assembly has excited there, we cannot believe it to have been that sentiment of melancholy felicitation which should receive them as an almost solitary exception to a still unaltered gloomy appointment, an exception made as if merely in order to evince, by the deliverance of these few, the supremacy of God over all his general appointments, in the same manner as two individuals have been exempted from the general law of mortality. Rather it was that sentiment which would hail them as signs that a decreed change of dispensation, a new aspect of the divine sovereignty, is beginning to shine on a dark hemisphere of the world, that death is becoming incomparably more tributary to heaven, and that the ancient barrier between the realms of Asia and the kingdom of eternal glory is beginning to break down.

Represent to yourselves also the emotions of these proclaimers and these converts of the truth, in their mutual recognition, when thus re-united, and in communion with the preceding believers, apostles, and confessors. If but a comparatively faint apprehension of the emphasis of those congratulations could be

brought, by some momentary illapse, upon the souls of the most neutral or even the most hostile spectators of the attempt which has had such a consequence, it would instantly turn to grief at the thought that those heavenly felicities had owed none of their rapture to them.

And let us remind those professed Christians, whose coldness toward a great project of evangelization would put itself under the form of reverently awaiting the disclosure of the Divine purposes, that by their profession they aspire to join ere long that company to which departed missionaries and their converts have been added. It may be the destination of some of them to leave this world at nearly the time appointed for the translation by death of other of these indefatigable labourers, and of more of their proselytes. Now will no feeling partaking of apprehension, arise at such an idea? No mortifying anticipation arise at the thought of entering the other world in company with an angelic being, the different rank of his nature precluding all comparison, or precluding reproach for the difference, if comparison were made. But methinks there is something to cause great displacency, and even a degree of intimidation, in the thought of approaching the most illustrious society in the universe in the company of spirits of our own nature and our own times, trained under nearly similar privileges and instructions, or possibly the very same, but who through superior zeal shall have left us in an immense disparity. Think whether no pain would attend, even on the passage to heaven, the sense of the contrast between persons who, in going thither, shall be finishing a course of ardent devotedness to their Divine Lord, in exertions to extend his kingdom in destruction of the cruel reign of superstition, with a degree of success attested by immortal spirits of redeemed heathens that shall have preceded them to the sky, and that are to follow—

and persons who, so like them as we have supposed in the introduction of life, and having made also the same profession of devotedness to Christ, shall yet be conscious of having scarcely made an effort in aid of that service, of having scarcely perhaps given it their cordial good wishes, or of having hardly been sorry that the comparatively small number, as yet, of conversions from heathenism, should seem to afford some advantage to the recusant or caviller. Would not the consideration of such a contrast exciting such feelings, at such a time, suggest to christians whose faculties seem more readily applicable to the exercise of finding objections to animated schemes of christian experiment, than to that of devising means for their success, a new topic for solicitude and perhaps for prayer, namely, that they may be permitted to enter the superior state in a way that shall not immediately bring them in communication or comparison with their brethren ascending from the war against idolatry. It would appear impossible to avoid at least feeling such a wish, unless a man has the testimony of his conscience that, though projects which seem to him to partake somewhat of enthusiasm are not exactly adapted to seize his mind, he is diligently intent on promoting the cause of God in plainer, and let him call them if he will, soberer methods. But experience does not authorize us to expect much zeal or exertion in *any* generous department from those who recoil from missionary projects as premature and enthusiastic. For ourselves, my brethren, when we think of those devoted agents of the best cause, shall we not earnestly wish and pray that where their souls shall be, there ours may be also?

To revert, but for one moment more, to the repressive influence of the consideration of the sovereignty of the divine appointments on some good men's principles of action and hope, we may observe, that the most assured belief in the divine

decrees, as comprehending all things, has not *necessarily* the effect of paralyzing the active powers. There is no denying that such is its tendency in cold, inanimate, indolent spirits, that are really indifferent to the objects placed in view. And so for *any* one of the whole list of religious truths, there is some particular state of mind which is apt to take from it an injurious effect. But let there be an earnest interest about the objects in question, and then the zeal and activity will be promoted rather than repressed by the faith in all-comprehending and absolute decrees. Accordingly it has been, we think, for the greater proportion, by decided predestinarians, that the most ardent and efficient exertions of religious innovation have been made upon the inveterate evils of the world. Not only were they not checked and chilled by this article of their faith. Not only were they not withheld from driving impetuously against the hated thing before them by any surmise whether it might not, for the present, be guarded invisibly by the shield of a decree. Not only did they dart their weapons, when the enemy appeared to be within their reach, without being stopped by any suspicion of an optical deception in this seeming nearness, this possibility of striking it. This is only supposing them not to be *the less* energetic in consequence of their predestinarian faith; it is what they might be, supposing them the while to *forget* it. But it was not as forgetting their principle, and being, for the time, as under the influence and advantage of a contrary one, that they so nobly exerted themselves. No, it was under the full recollection of it that they acted; and it imparted to them a great augmentation of vigour. It was in the element of this doctrine of decrees that they felt their impetus the mightier, their weapons the sharper, their aim the surer.

And while their opponents in belief might be wondering at the phenomenon of such a glow of life, and play of strength, in an element which they had been constantly pronouncing the most mephitic in the whole world of opinion to moral energy, the persons on whom the faith had this influence could have shewn how explicable and how far from absurd was such a practical effect, in the case of men in the prosecution of plans for the destruction of what was opposed to the kingdom of God. The first consideration in the matter was the trite and obvious one,—they were certain from the view of facts and of every thing in revelation, that the Almighty will make very great use of human agents in what remains of the course of his dispensations on earth. Next, whatever concealment may rest on the precise nature of his more special determinations, which constitute, so to speak, the divided portions of his one grand design, there can be no question whether that grand design be the abolition of the dreadful tyranny of evil over the human race. Therefore in putting themselves directly into his hand as willing instruments, they were confident they had much more than a chance of being made use of in this process of destruction. Many even unwilling instruments will be so employed, but then on a stronger principle the willing ones. This willingness was probably inspired on purpose to adapt them.—Thus they had the confidence arising from the certainty that what they were intending generally was what God intends generally, and intends to employ in great part human beings to carry into effect.

But no man who is in earnest can stop in generals. Those devout predestinarians, those genuine adorers of the God of decrees, assumed a large right of applying specially the announcements of divine purposes made in general terms. When they found in the sacred book expressions, for instance, pro-



nouncing the determination of the Almighty Mind for the destruction of superstition generally and comprehensively, they have regarded these as bearing with infinite emphasis on those particular forms of superstition which they were most intent on destroying. Those particular forms must be distinct objects of intention in the comprehensive act of the supreme will. And in being so, they appeared to these men, who were so earnest for their destruction, as if they were under the special sentence of distinct appropriate decrees, and under this doom exposed forth to invite these enemies to come to their extermination. And they came, in the full confidence that they should be made to contribute to it,—that it was decreed that they should.

But further, the inspired book presented to their view some predictions and promises, relative to the progress of the kingdom of Christ, of so marked a character, as to bring out the divine decrees in much definiteness of form, by the very terms of the declaration. In these comparatively distinct representations of the movements which are to fulfil on earth the purposes of heaven, these zealous spirits have beheld the very image, perhaps on a larger scale, of what they were prosecuting in heaven's name. They were quite certain that those appointed and predicted movements must, at any rate, involve such operations as they were attempting ; and the whole success must be the success of those included parts. The inference was very near at hand—These very plans and proceedings of ours are decreed, as portions of the sovereign scheme ; our work and we are a part of eternal destiny.

We are not here called upon to suggest the cautions against the possible excesses and dangers of this assumption in good men of coincidence with the divine purposes. Our object was to shew, that the consideration of sovereign decrees, which cold unwilling minds are apt to allege for their inertness in good

designs, as if it were the necessary influence, may on the contrary become one of the mightiest forces for action. It is this that can make, but under a far nobler modification, the man that the poets have delighted to feign, who would maintain his purpose though the world fell in ruins around him. A missionary against the paganism of the Hindoos may feel an animation specially appropriate to the service, in this assurance, that his intention is the intention of God. Those people very commonly fortify themselves in the notion, or the pretence, that they are immediately actuated by some deity, and therefore fulfilling, under a law of necessity, his determinations: the missionary will feel peculiar invigoration in advancing to the assault of a superstition with such a principle in its front, in the force of a principle somewhat analogous in form, but of heavenly essence. While they will have it, that he may as well spare the efforts on *them* which it were his more proper business to level at the gods, if he could reach them, the energy of his soul will reply, that he accepts the challenge so made for those enthroned abominations, for that he verily believes that he and his confraternity are an Avatar for their destruction.

We have dwelt greatly too long on this topic of religious fatalism, a term we have employed to signify a false application, in reasoning and feeling, of the doctrine which acknowledges God's sovereign and unalterable predestination of events. Our excuse must be, that these reasonings and feelings are peculiarly apt to suggest themselves in contravention to such claims as those we are at present wishing to exhibit. And besides their own direct force, they lend strength to other repugnant feelings of a less speculative nature, sometimes by enabling them to assume the guise of submission to a law of religion, and always by affording them the sanction of seeming to be in

agreement, at least, with such a law.—We may briefly notice two or three of the more secular causes of the refusal of the desired assistance.

If we just name Party-spirit, it is not in order to indulge in any accusatory complaints that our particular undertaking has materially suffered by it. Doubtless we may be somewhat the worse for it; but we have as little the inclination as the means for calculating how much. And even were a calculation made and verified, of that proportion of pecuniary and any other modes of aid which a perfect christian liberality would have awarded to our project, and which party-spirit may have withheld from it, we should still be gratified in the assurance that the greater part of what may have been so averted, has probably been devoted to other excellent designs to which we wish all possible success. We are too confident of the prolonged favour of Providence on our work, and too much pleased at seeing that Providence favouring the exertions of the same tendency made by other sects of the great christian community, to regret not having obtained any one particle of the means which have availed to good in their hands. And we think we have too systematically avoided giving any just cause of jealous reaction to our friends of the other denominations, to be debarred in modesty from denouncing, with emphatic censure, the spirit which cannot see the merit of a noble object when there is some point of controversy with its promoters, and which would almost rather wish it might be lost, than aid *them* to attain it: a spirit which, in promoting an interest professedly as wide as the world, as liberal as the sun, would enviously account success, or the means of success, conferred on a different class of labourers in the same general cause, so much unjustly subtracted from our own connexion and project; and would avenge on the grand catholic object the petty offences of party, or affronts to individual vanity.

If the christian communities most liable to feelings of competition, were asked in what character they conceive themselves to stand the most prominently forward before the world, as practically verifying the exalted, beneficent, expansive spirit of their religion, it is not improbable they would say, it is as conspirers to extend heavenly light and liberty over the heathen world. But if so, how justly we may urge it upon them to beware of degrading this the most magnificent form in which their profession is displayed, by associating with it littlenesses which may make it almost ridiculous. Surely, in thus going forth against the powers of darkness, they would not be found stickling and stipulating that the grand banner of the cause should be surmounted with some petty label of a particular denomination. Such mortals, had they been in the emigration from Egypt, would have been incessantly and jealously busy about the relative proximities of the tribes to the cloudy pillar. A shrewd irreligious looker-on, who cares for none of our sects, nor for this our common object, might indulge his malicious gayety in saying, All this bustling activity of consultation, and oratory, and subscription, and travelling, is to go to the account, as you will have it, of a fervent zeal for christianity : what a large share of this costly trouble I should nevertheless be sure to save you, if I could just apply a quenching substance to so much of this pious heat as consists of sectarian ambition and rivalry.

We cannot too strongly insist again, that a sense of dignity should spurn these inglorious competitions from the sections of the advanced camp against the grand enemy. *Here*, at all events, the parties should acknowledge the Truce of God. If they have, and must have, jealousies too sacred to be extinguished, let their indulgence be reserved for occasions and scenes in which they are not assuming the lofty attitude of a war against the

gods. But the great matter, after all, is to be solemnly intent on the object itself, on the good to be done, compared with which, the denomination of the instrument will appear a circumstance vastly trivial. Let all the promoters of these good works be in this state of mind, and the modes in which the evil spirit in question might display itself will be things of imagination or of history. For then we shall never see a disposition to discountenance a design on account of its originating with an alien sect, rather than to favour it for its intrinsic excellence; nor an eager insisting on points of precedence; nor a systematic practice of representing the operations of our own sect at their highest amount of ability and effect, and those of another at their lowest: nor the studied silence of vexed jealousy, which is thinking all the while of what it cannot endure to name; nor that laboured exaggeration of our own magnitude and achievements which most plainly tells *what* that jealousy is thinking of; nor that manner of hearing of marked and opportune advantages occurring to undertakings of another sect which betrays that a story of disasters would have been more welcome; nor under-hand contrivances for assuming the envied merit of something accomplished and never boasted of by another sect; nor excitements to exertion expressly on the ground of invidious rivalry, rather than christian emulation; nor casual defects of courtesy interpreted wilfully into intentional hostility, just to give a colour of justice to actual hostility on our part, for which we were prepared, and but watching for a pretext; nor management and misrepresentation to trepan to our party auxiliary means which might have been intended for theirs.

While we would earnestly admonish all the promoters of our object to display an example in every point the reverse of such tempers and expedients, we will assure ourselves of the favour-

able dispositions of christians in general towards a design which has its own sphere of operations, in which it has both the happiness and the merit of interfering with no other. It has not, by either interference or ostentation, given any provocation to party jealousy ; and we may add, that it is grown to a strength and an establishment beyond the power of that unfriendly spirit, were it excited, greatly to injure.

When we mention the Love of Money, as another chief prevention of the required assistance to our cause, we may seem to be naming a thing not more specifically adverse to this than to any and every other beneficent design. A second thought, however, may suggest to you a certain peculiarity of circumstance in the resistance of this bad passion to the claims of a scheme for converting heathens. By eminence among the vices which may prevail where the true God is not unknown, this of covetousness is denominated in the word of that God, *Idolatry*. Now as it is peculiarly against idolatry that the design in question is aimed, the repugnance shewn to it by covetousness may be considered as on the principle of an identity of nature with its enemy. One idolater seems to take up the interest of all idolaters, as if desirous to profit by the warning, that if Satan be divided against himself his kingdom cannot stand.

Or rather it is instinctively that this community of interest is maintained, and without being fully aware ; for the unhappy mortal, while reading or hearing how millions of people adore shapes of clay or wood or stone or metal, of silver or gold, shall express his wonder how rational creatures can be so besotted ; shall raise his eyes to heaven in astonishment that the Almighty should permit such alienation of understanding, such domination of the wicked Spirit : and there is no voice to speak in alarm to his conscience, *Thou art the man !*

As this unhappy man may very possibly be a frequenter of our religious assemblies, and even a pretender to personal religion, he is solicited, in the name of Jesus Christ, to bring forth something from his store in aid of the good cause. He refuses perhaps ; or, much more probably, just saves the appearance and irksomeness of formally doing that, by contributing what is immeasurably below all fair proportion to his means ; what is in such disproportion to them that a general standard taken from it would reduce the contributions of very many other persons to a fraction of the smallest denomination of our money, and would very shortly break up the mechanism of human operation for prosecuting a generous design, throwing it directly on Providence and miracle, with a benediction perhaps uttered by this man, (for he will be as liberal of cant as parsimonious of gold) on the all-sufficiency of that last resource : Yes, God shall have the glory of the salvation of the heathens, while he is happy to have secured the more important point—the saving of his money.

How much it were to be wished, that the fatuity which this vice inflicts on the faculty which should judge it, (herein bearing one of the most striking characteristics of idolatry) did not disable the man to take an honest account of the manner in which it has its strong hold on his mind. If when his eyes and thoughts are fixed upon this pelf, regarded as brought into the question of going to promote the worship of God in Asia, or staying to be itself worshipped, he could clearly feel that he detains it from fervent affection to it as an absolute good, he would be smitten with horror to find his soul making such an object its supreme good, for supreme it plainly is when thus preferred to the cause of God, and therefore to God himself.

But perhaps he thinks his motive regards the prospects of his family. Perhaps he has a favourite or an only son, for whom he destines, with the rest of his treasure, that portion which God is demanding. In due time that son will be put in possession by his father's death, and will be so much the richer for that portion. That this wealth will remain long in his hands, a prosperous and undiminished possession, is not perhaps very probable when we recollect what has been seen of the heirs of misers. But let us suppose that it will, and suppose too, that this son will be a man of sensibility and deep reflection. Then, his property will often remind him of his departed father. And with what emotions? This, he will say to himself, was my father's god. He did, indeed, think much of me, and of securing for me an advantageous condition in life; and I am not ungrateful for his cares. He professed also not to be unconcerned for the interests of his own soul, and the cause of the Saviour of the world. But alas! it presses on me with irresistible evidence, that the love of money had a power in his heart predominant over all other interests. It cannot be effaced from my memory that I have often observed the strong marks of repugnance and impatience, an ingenuity of evasion, an acuteness to discover or invent objections to the matter proposed to him, however high its claims, if those claims sought to touch his money, which he contemplated, and guarded, and augmented, with a devotedness of soul quite religious. But whither can a soul be gone that had such a religion? Would he that acquired, and guarded even against the demands of God, these possessions for me, and who is thinking of them now as certainly as I am thinking of them, oh would he, if he could speak to me while I am pleasing myself that they are mine, tell me that they are the price of my father's soul?



If the rich man in the parable, (that parable being regarded for a moment as literal fact) *might* have been permitted to send a message to his relatives on earth, what might we imagine as the first thing which the anguish of his spirit would have uttered in such a message? Would it not have been an emphatic expression of the suffering which the wealth he had adored inflicted on him now, as if it ministered incessant fuel to those fires? Would he not have breathed out an earnest entreaty that it might not remain in that entireness in which it had been his idol; as if an alleviation might in some way arise from its being in any other state and use than that in which he had sacrificed his soul to it? Send away some of that accumulation; give some of it to the cause of God, if he will accept what has been made an abomination by being put in his stead.—Send some of it away, if it be but in pity to him of whom you surely cannot help sometimes thinking while you are enjoying it. Can you, in your pleasures and pride, escape the bitter thought, that for every gratification which that wealth administers to you, it inflicts an unutterable pang on him by whose death it has become yours, and by whose perdition it is so much?

How different the reflections of those inheritors, who feel in what they do *not* possess a delightful recognition of the character of their departed relatives; who feel that they possess so much the less than they might have done, because those relatives have alienated to them nothing of what was sacred to God, and to charity; and who can comprehend and approve the principle of that calculation of their pious predecessors, which accounted it even one of the best provisions for their heirs to dedicate a portion of their property to God. How different therefore the feelings of a descendant of such a person

for to abet and sanction a proceeding is to incur the accountability as completely as if the manifestation of an opposite opinion would *prevent* that proceeding; and it were an idle evasion to plead that the course of measures in question would have been pursued, all the same, though disapprobation instead of coincidence had been avowed by these individuals. With this obligation resting on memory and on conscience, they could not, one should think, without alarm for their christian principles, give their sanction to what must inevitably create speedy and large demands on their property, unless they had very solid ground for assurance of being left still competent to meet the claims peculiarly authoritative on them as christians. They had to consider then what, in sober calculation, it was probable or possible there should at length be spared to them by the voracity of such an enormous gulph as they saw swallowing up, year after year, the means of the community. We will presume that they *did*, as a matter of conscience, solemnly consider this question, and that through the progressive stages of experience they were still satisfied, as remaining constant in the assurance that their approval of the policy which caused such a tremendous consumption, did not involve their consent to an alienation from the cause of Christ of any thing honestly belonging to it. But then we must tell them, that they will now come with a very bad grace to say that they have been deceived, and that the cause of Christ must pay the forfeit of their miscalculation. Surely against the claims of a service to which their best strength was put under the prior and paramount obligation acknowledged by their profession, they will hesitate to plead that they have been lamed in their willing adherence to another, of such widely different character.

To those who are not liable to this sort of *argumentum ad hominem*, while deploring the disability inflicted by the conse-

quences of national conduct, it may be suggested as at once a consolation and incitement, that by far the most unequivocal omen of an amendment of the national condition, even in a temporal respect, is the very circumstance of this recently arisen zeal and activity for extending the prevalence of the true religion in the world. From what has been seen thus far we may affirm, that the Almighty has clearly indicated this as the part of the world from which he is determined to draw the chief human means of accomplishing his most glorious designs relatively to it all ; that here he has his mines, and his assembling camp, that here is the part where lie the sinews of the holy war. But if so, and if that war is to be on so great a scale as appears to be prefigured in the visions of his prophets, may we not venture to say that he will, that he must, protect the stores applicable to his approaching campaigns, from the renewal of such dreadful depredations as we have witnessed, and from the unmitigated continuance of such as are suffered now ? We may assure ourselves that he will in due time warn off the sacrilegious hands that would seek to plunder a property appointed to so sacred a service. And what a glorious change of the national condition, when God shall, as it were, place his angel between what shall remain after all the ravage of ambition and war and corruption, and the re-approach of these spoilers. And how gratifying to behold too, in the contrasted operations, the difference of the power of producing an effect, in that, whereas an astonishing and unparalleled expenditure in the vulgar kind of war has resulted in—leaving men, relatively to the objects of that war, nearly where they were, the grand spiritual power, which we behold entering into action, will require an incalculably less portion of material means for its consumption in an operation by which it is to transform the moral world.

You will not, my brethren, feel it a damp upon the pleasure of anticipating this rescue from the spoilers, that the temporal means so redeemed will still not be held in entire and absolute property by their possessors, but will still be in part under a foreign and authoritative claim. For, besides that it is pleasing to devout minds to hold and regard all things as belonging to God, and as to subserve whatever purpose he pleases, they may be very confident that he will make it to be the better for the community itself, in a temporal respect, whenever there shall prevail in it a disposition to apply its resources to promote his cause. Indeed this very spirit will involve a principle of counteraction to all such things as we have seen most miserably destroying the temporal welfare of the nation.

For the present, while many friends of religion are labouring under the grievous pressure, we may suggest it to them as a consideration not unfit to accompany that prudence with which their conduct is to be left in charge, that the offerings to God from what calamity has left have a peculiar value in his esteem, and in the feelings of the sufferer may contribute to exalt adversity into piety. Should we go back in thought to that period of the world when sacrifices, literally, were appointed for the expression of homage to Heaven, we might imagine the case of a devout man whose corn-fields, or plantations, or flocks, had for the greater part perished by some destructive visitation, as by tempests, or fire, or locusts, or disease. Let us suppose him, nevertheless, in looking pensive over the scene, to consider whether yet some small portion of the remainder might not be spared for God, as a token of humble resignation to him that gave and had taken away. Would not that probably be the most acceptable sacrifice that had ever burnt on his altar, and offered with the most affecting emotions of religion? Nor would it seem to him to lessen what

was already so little, but rather to augment it in value by bringing a divine benediction upon it. Or suppose a pious man, of that ancient time, to have been cast, by shipwreck, alone on a desert coast. If his religion, predominant in all scenes and over all feelings, inspired the wish to make a burnt-offering to his God, his only means might have been a little provision saved from the wreck, and fragments of his ship for fuel. But in the solemnity of bearing toward heaven the expression of a sublime devotion, this would surpass all other sacrificial flames he had ever kindled or beheld. It might appear to his faith, amidst the gloom of the solitary shore, as a symbol of that presence which was in the fire that Moses saw in the desert.

Having thus recounted a few of the things which are most apt to prevent the assistance called for by an undertaking like that now presented before you, and having endeavoured to diminish their force, we will draw to a conclusion by suggesting a few additional incitements to "come to the help of the Lord."

And, surely, such an expression itself is exceedingly captivating; both as illustrative of the marvellous condescension of the Almighty, and as pointing to the great fact in his government on earth, that he chooses to make men the instruments of his beneficent designs; a fact which bears a no less gracious aspect as presented in other expressions in the bible, as where active good men are honoured with the description of "workers together with God."

The energy of his mere will *might* strike, in instantaneous destruction, on the idols, and the temples, and the whole monstrous fabric of mythology as a system of actual belief. And if we were regarding their extermination in no other respect than that of its speed, we might be tempted to desire so illustrious

a catastrophe. If such a thing might be, a servant of God would be willing to forego the honour of his share in the demolition. But when he finds it so evident that, in the divine plans, it is not the sole object to attain the one last effect, but that they are condescendingly formed in such a manner that their execution shall be an employment, and a discipline, and an honour, to human agents, will he not exult to think, that even *his* unworthy hand may bear a torch or fire-brand to contribute to the conflagration of the system that seems to defy heaven? He will deem it a glorious thing that the supreme Lord should have chosen that, in the sight of higher, stronger, happier intelligences, such feeble fallen and guilty beings should be summoned forth to accomplish, in his strength, (in whose strength alone those nobler minds, also feel themselves strong) a great work for the honour of his kingdom. It will also be a religious triumph as against the principalities and powers of evil, that it should please the Almighty to accomplish his victory by the means of creatures who, in thus serving their God, would be avenging their race ; that these powers should perceive that when the irresistible might was at last to be put forth, it was to be through the medium of beings of that order which they had so long despised, and tyrannised over, and tormented.

It is a still further cause of delight, that this putting forth of strength under the external form of weakness, is analagous to the one greatest manifestation of vindicating and redeeming energy.

As an incitement to christians to give this direction to a portion of their zeal, they may be reminded that, while enjoined to preserve moderation in their own demands upon this earth. they are entitled to be ambitious, shall we not say arrogant, on behalf of their Lord. In their view the worst usurpation

beyond all comparison, in the world, must be that which any where presumes to withhold an inhabited tract from his kingdom. On whatever it is that does so presume, let them expend the animosity which might otherwise find its meaner exercise against the boundaries that obstruct their own projects of acquisition. And in this nobler direction it will not be the passion which frets itself against what is unalterable, and despairs; for they can descry on every spot of the pagan regions, as if shining through the gross darkness that covers the people and the place, a mystical mark, to indicate its assignment by that covenant which has given to the Messiah the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. That is the decree in heaven, which the faithful may joyfully behold in anticipation as descending in divine force on the earth, and there becoming the reality of a kingdom.

They see among leading mortals an ardent competition for dominion over spaces and sections of territory, with angry controversy about titles and usurpations, and an incessant resort to the expedient which wastes the contenders and the subject of contention. Let them rise in sublime disdain from the view of these wretched strifes, among a multitude of potentates, to the contemplation of that one victorious dominion which will come, at length, upon all the contending tribes and powers of the world like the deluge.

In the mean time, if they observe any state making a great progress in power and occupancy on the face of the world, it will well become their character to show a most animated concern that the kingdom which has their peculiar allegiance may be as evidently advancing, and that to this progress that enlargement of the temporal dominion may be made to subserve. And here you will all be reminded of the wonderfully rapid extension of the British acquisitions in Asia, where we cannot

help taking it is an omen in favour of a still better cause, that a lying spirit has betrayed so many pagan and Mahomedan powers to provoke by hostility their own destruction. We can, in this view of such vast conquests, thank the contrivers and the heroes, whose contempt would at any stage of the career have been excited at the notion of its having been the real cause of their success that they were preparing the way for christianity.

Men of council and of war may scorn this fanatical mode of estimating splendid conquests; but we can see little on any other ground to console good men for the heavy addition made by these conquests, so splendid, to those public burdens which leave them such scanty means of doing good of their own choice and in their own manner. You have been contributing, and will further and long have to contribute, to the cost of this extension of empire, and can hardly accept national fame as an equivalent: for how small a portion of the cost restored, if that were possible, would you consent to lose your share of such fame! Whereas, had that which has thus been taken from you been applied to the purpose of illuminating and evangelizing the people on whom it has been expended, you would now be consoled to reflect, that what was quite lost to your own use was promoting the only interest for which you could be content to suffer in your own. Well, though any such objects were, of course, antipodes to every thing within the contemplation of politicians, here is a design which seeks to *redeem* to this very purpose what has been taken and expended in a spirit infinitely foreign to it; and what, unless so redeemed, may be justly accounted, for the greatest portion of it, lost in the most absolute sense. The advocates of this design have no way of avoiding the confession that it seeks to impose a little more cost for India, on persons to whom that country has, independently of



their will, cost too much already ; but it is an addition somewhat of the nature of an insurance for christianity on all that has been expended before. It is like something to be thrown into the water to cause that miraculously to float which were else irrecoverably sunk.

The object is, that the true religion may advance upon the track of our victorious armies, may plant stations on the fields of their encampments and battles, may demolish, in the moral sense, as many strong holds of superstition as our artillery has reduced fortresses, may, in short, carry on operations corresponding to the wars in all the points esteemed the most glorious. And what a delightful thing, that thus a Power never thought of by either of the parties in the long conflict, should come in and take the best of the spoils, and assume, in a better sense, the dominion which so many potentates have lost ; shewing the one people how they had, in truth, been beguiled through expenditure and exertion, for an object for which they would have scorned to make, knowingly, a thousandth part of such a sacrifice, and the other that their independence was lost but that their souls might be saved. But how is a design which looks to such consequences, to be prosecuted ? It is evident there is no way but that in which the friends of religion may, if they will, decline to afford their aid.

Among the many reasons why we think they should not so decline, we may suggest the certainty that all contributions will be applied in a manner to produce the greatest possible effect. One of the most conspicuous and uncontested of the merits of the undertaking has been the economy of expenditure throughout the whole system. The statements of what has resulted, in a substantial form, besides an immensity of such exertions as cannot be brought into formal account, give evidence that all who have been concerned in expending have had a conscien-

tious regard to the object. As to the missionaris themselves, it is impossible to conceive a stronger pledge for the careful application of the whole resources than the memorable fact of their having, for so many years, generously devoted the whole produce of their own indefatigable labours. *This* warfare therefore, in Hindoostan, is in no danger of incurring a charge which has been constantly and heavily laid on the conduct of our other wars there. We may be assured that all the supplies afforded to *this* service will really go into the apparatus of hostility, and will be felt in the enemy's camp. It is very gratifying to a contributor to have cause to be thus confident, that the small sum which passes from the hand as a reality in the surrender, will have a reality of effect in the remote service to which he intends it; that it may at that distance strike as a missile from a christian hand against some consecrated abomination.

While we pay the tribute of our admiration and gratitude to the devotedness, the disinterestedness, and the astonishing performances, of the fraternity at Serampore, we cannot help being reminded that the chief of these labourers are considerably advancing in life, and the leader of the whole band verging fast in point of years, to the decline. We will not dwell on the irreparable loss which the cause sustained by them with so noble an energy is one day to suffer. But it does seem highly desirable that the remaining portion of the lives of these veterans should be turned to the utmost account. For one thing, a few spirits so long and severely disciplined, who have mastered so much difficulty that nothing which can remain appears at all formidable to them, and who habitually, and now as it were mechanically, labour at the extreme pitch of their labouring power,—and that power indefinitely encreased by practice,—a few such men, and those also acting in concert, are to be

estimated at perhaps ten-fold their numerical force, even considered in reference simply to the amount of work they can perform. But again, so long as these men are spared, to remain in conjunction at the head of the system, they will preserve in it a compactness, a judiciousness of distribution, a commensurateness of agents to their respective work and to one another, and a comprehensiveness of scheme greatly conducive both to rapidity of execution, and to that uniformity of character throughout the whole, which is of great importance in a cause that, in provoking the conflict with so mighty a league of iniquities, has need to be in harmony within itself. Add to this, that the high example of these leaders is forming a standard for their younger co-adjutors, who will be the better qualified to become their successors, the larger the scale on which they behold their manner of operation.

Now, while it is not in human power to make any addition to the *length* of these invaluable lives, it is possible to make, if we may so express it, an addition to their breadth. That is, it is possible for these men's minds and their system to be brought into action on a larger amount of materials, and therefore over a space both morally and locally more extended. And great emphasis is to be laid on the consideration that more copious aid supplied during their life would be, not simply so much more of means put in action, to produce an addition of effect proportioned to the value of those means considered absolutely ; but means put in action according to a ratio of force peculiar to a transient conjecture, the like of which cannot exist again : such enlarged aid would serve the cause in the magnified proportion of these men's pre-eminence of adaptedness to serve it.

Nor is it any disparagement, by anticipation, to the zeal and talent which the supreme Head of the church will appoint in long succession to this work, when we represent the special

importance of aiding the cause in this particular stage, on the ground that a combination of men uniting the advantage of a patriarchal priority in time, with individual endowments so distinguished, and with such complete conformity of agencies, constituting, as it were, a great intellectual machine, can never be equalled in the power of making the most efficient application of whatever shall be devoted to the service.

The right policy, in this case, is the same as that which would impel a state, engaged in some ambitious enterprise, to push its military operations most earnestly, and with every practicable reinforcement, during the last campaign in which those operations could probably have the advantage of being directed by an unbroken band of veterans trained in conjunction to victory in the service.

And even as regarding these men themselves, willing, like St. Paul, to forego, if it might be put at their option, a more speedy emancipation from their toils to heaven, and to labour on to the last period of exhausted nature,—it seems due from our sympathy and gratitude to wish, that if death should not deny them the time, the christian public should not refuse them the other means, for advancing the introductory process of the great work to a point where they would be perfectly willing to bid it adieu. That supposed limit of their christian ambition is not altogether an imaginary one? Elijah's chariot, sent to bear them away, would not inspire in them such joy, in quitting the world, as to know that the most important parts of the revelation of God had been brought to speak in *every* considerable language of Asia.

But at all events, they will depart with the delight of knowing, that their distinguished lot on earth has been to open the way, in an important sense, to the region whither they are going, for a countless multitude, many of whom they will be

assured are to follow them; while they will rejoice to have staid long enough to see the evinced and completed efficacy of their appointment as evangelists in some that are gone before them. They will know that by the cause in which they have lived, and laboured, and are dying, a new and beneficent mode of the divine attention has been determined upon a formerly estranged and desolate tract of the world; inasmuch as wherever there are faithful witnesses to the truth, and repenting sinners, and pagans making sacrifices of the idols to which they had offered sacrifice, and commencing in the name of Christ a new life, amidst prayers and praises in languages which never addressed the Almighty before, there is, if we may humbly so speak, something to necessitate toward that spot a far more special emanation of favour and providence from heaven, than when that moral waste contained nothing related to God. If there were but one particle there of such new and sacred existence, heaven *must* continue in communication with the spot where there is something so much its own, till it became extinct, or were resumed to the sky. How happy then if there shall be there an augmentation, every day, of what thus bears a special relation to God, to become as it were a continually mightier attraction of the divine benignity thitherward; till at length the language of prophecy shall be fulfilled, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.”

In the confidence of such a progress of the gracious dispensation of which we have beheld the commencement, it might be permitted to indulge for a moment in the contemplation of India as in a future age, in which distant period we can in a measure conceive what will be the reflections of a devout observer, regarding the scene in reference to the past. With

the picture on his imagination, of India as the missionaries will have recorded that they found it, he may look over the ample region, to wonder what is become of that direful element which was once perceived pervading and corrupting the whole wide diffusion of mental and moral existence, bringing out to view, as it were in a darkness visible of depravity, the souls of men conspicuously through their less sable exterior. The dusky visages, the attire, the structure of habitations, and the grand features of Nature, will be seen the same ; but a horrid something, composed of lies, and crimes, and curses, and woes, that did rest in deadly possession over all the land, will be broken up and gone. Where has a place been found for what occupied for ages after ages so many cities, and villages, and houses, and minds ? What tempest has driven it away ? What presence has been here which *that* presence could not abide ? Was it that Spirit in awe of which eternal night vanished at the creation of the world ?

He may look from the southern shores toward the sublime mountain-boundary of the region on the north, and reflect what a sence it was to confront heaven, in all this breadth, with deities, and doctrines, and devotions, detestable to the true God ; each individual of unnumbered millions being infatuated and busied by notions and practices not one of which could have been on earth but by the fall of our nature. But how glorious for that reflecting observer to feel it verified in him that this is but a vision of the past, and that, departing like a dream when one awakes, it leaves him in view of a bright and blessed reality. How he will exult in the palpable evidence that the Son of God has spread his dominion from those shores to those mountains ; that the oracles of truth have taken place of the most silly, and loathsome, and monstrous legends with which the father of lies ever made contemptuous sport of the folly of

his dupes ; and that the new religion admitted in faith has crowned itself and its believers with all its appropriate virtues. When joining with them in exercises of worship to the true God, he may have short lapses of the mind into a view of the past, presented in vivid images of the fantastic fooleries, and the orgies, that once celebrated the infatuation which reigned as religion in the people, on the very same spot, as attested by some relic of the ruins of a temple ; and he will recover from such brief alienation of thought to verify the fact, that he actually is among persons reverently calling on God in the name of Christ. That disease of the soul will be gone that exhibits itself in alternate lethargy and raving. The charities of humanity, restored among them, will shew why it was that their ancestors could look upon, or even cause, the death of relatives and friends with stockish indifference. And finally, he will see the effect of that which missionaries are seeking to promote among them, in the manner in which the death of christianized Hindoos will differ from that sullen quiet, that stoicism without philosophy, with which the pagan Hindoo submits to fate.

And if we might, for a moment, entertain so improbable an idea, as that this observer and comparer should be uninformed of the general course of means and operation, through which the Almighty Spirit had accomplished this great change, we can suppose his conjectures on the subject to be much too magnificent. How came thousands of temples to be surrendered to the decay of time or the violence of dilapidation, an infinity of idols to be demolished, a mythology and ritual, involving the whole life and being of the human multitude, to be exploded, the power of Brahmins and priests to be annihilated, a whole intellectual and moral system to be supplanted by its opposite ? Might not such questions put his mind on the effort to imagine the most extraordinary modes of divine interposition ? Ho

might fancy, perhaps, that some great convulsion of nature had contributed to the overthrow of so many structures forming the glory and the fortresses of superstition ; that portentous phenomena, bearing a menacing aspect upon the pagan rites, had been displayed in the heavens ; that contemporary miracles, in the strict sense of the word, had attested the record of the ancient ones ; or that some peculiarity of temporal good fortune, frequently attending the converts, had marked them out to the gross apprehension of the idolaters as favourites of the Power that governs the world. And might he surmise in addition, that the foreign state which had conquered Hindoostan, must have systematically lent, during the acquisition and possession, its whole influence arising from conquest and dominion, to promote christianity by every expedient short of force ?

No, he might be told, you see, in all this glorious view, nothing which is to be referred to any such causes. The work began in some of the humblest movements that ever pointed to a great object, movements in which the actors perhaps owed their toleration to contempt. A train of ideas was excited in the minds of some individuals respecting the prophecies relative to the heathen nations. Their conversations about these with their religious friends, led to meetings, prayers, little arrangements of co-operation, and slender contributions of money. A gradual extension of these measures resulted in the sending of several zealous men, by means of conveyance marked with the disfavour of the high authorities, to begin the experiment. It was commenced under appearances very far from resembling Constantine's pretended vision of a cross in the clouds, inscribed as the sign of victory ; or from recalling to mind the accounts of pagan priests of other ages having been affrighted by the trembling of their fanes, accompanied by fearful voices from



their recesses, announcing their abandonment of the solemn abode by the deities. Had these servants of Christ taken up their design on any condition of the intervention of preternatural omens and instrumentality, the only dictate of their experience, through every stage, would have been to lay it down. But, wild as they were accounted, both the promoters in England and the agents in the East, they had entertained no presumptions which could lead to the conclusion of its not being worth while to persevere, and to enjoin on their successors an interminable perseverance, in the trial of what the Almighty should see fit to accomplish at length by means of the diffusion of the Bible, and a never tired repetition of missionary journeys, addresses, and conferences, with the co-operating effect of schools, and writings on religion. This economy of plain expedients, (it may be supposed to be said to the future admirer of the transformation) these operations so little related to poetry or prodigy, or to the wild ardour of fanaticism, went on in augmenting vigour, while those who had commenced them sunk, one after another, in the dust. On their tombs their successors devoted themselves to prosecute the same labours of the holy war. Converts from heathenism, in still greater numbers every year, were brought in as captives, but to go out under the oath of hostility against that of which they and their ancestors had been the slaves. The succeeding generations of the christians of the west, were happy to continue from that quarter their alliance and aid in the mightier progress of a cause, which their ancestors had begun in so diminutive a form, committing in faith and hope its success to God. The influence of that Sovereign Spirit has descended in a progressive increase of efficacy far more than proportioned to the enlargement of the system of means: And so it has come to pass, (it might be said to the future admirer) that you can exult in the dis-

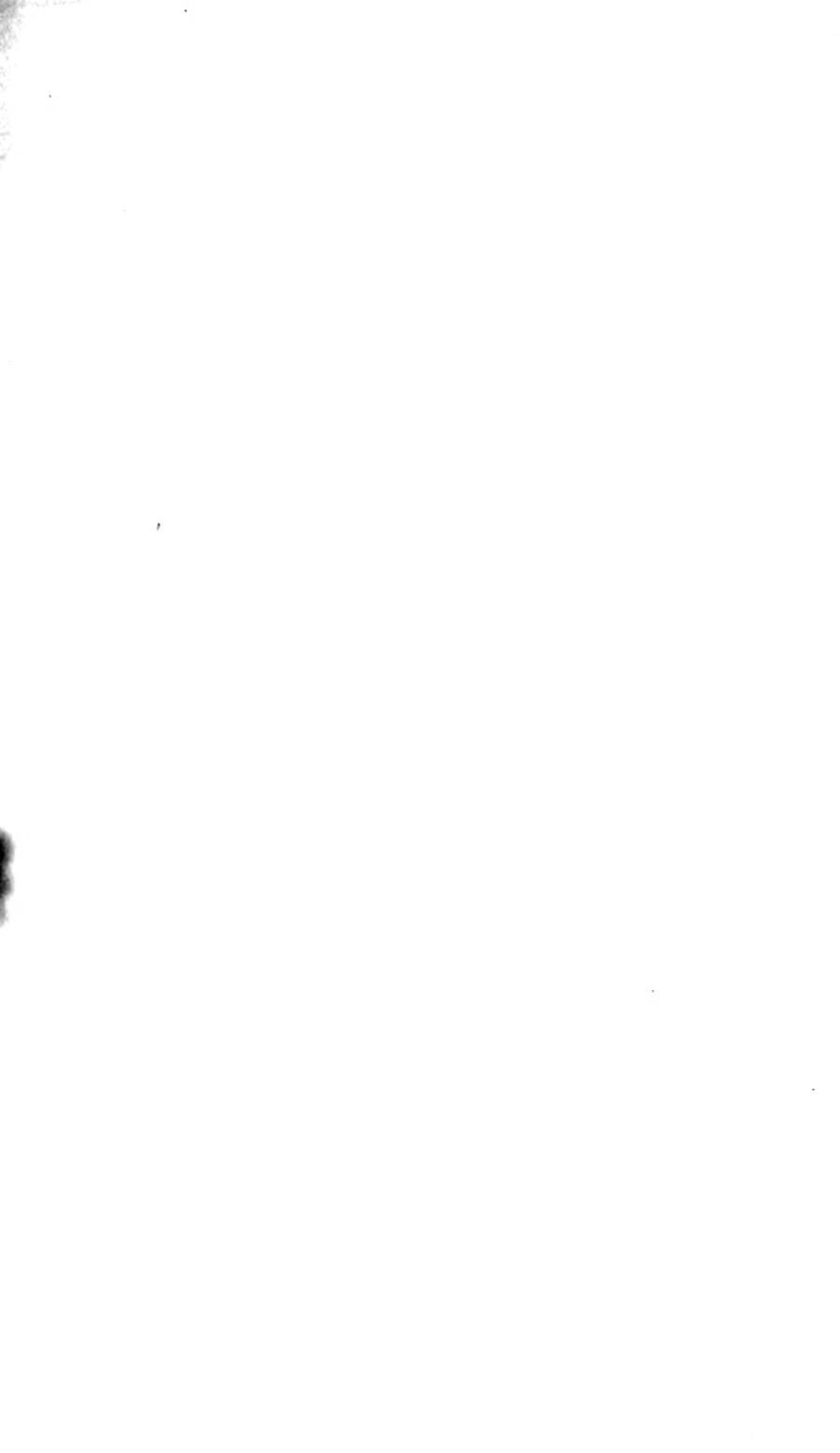
appearance from the world of one mighty form of evil, against which the christians of a past age had to maintain a long hostility.

My brethren, against this prodigious form, and against the whole dreadful power, of evil, it is our vocation to be engaged in the war. It were in vain to wish to escape from the condition of our place in the universe of God. Amidst the darkness that veils from us the state of that vast empire, we would willingly be persuaded that this our world may be the only region, (excepting that of penal justice) where the cause of evil is permitted to maintain a contest. Here perhaps may be almost its last encampment, where its prolonged power of hostility may be suffered in order to give a protracted display of the manner of its destruction. Here our lot is cast, on a ground so awfully pre-occupied ; a calamitous distinction ! but yet a sublime one, if thus we may render to the Eternal King a service in which better tribes of his creatures may not share ; and if thus we may be trained, through devotion and conformity to the Celestial Chief in this warfare, to the final attainment of what he has promised, in so many illustrious forms, to him that overcometh. We shall soon leave the region where so much is in rebellion against our God. We shall go where all that pass from our world must present themselves as from battle, or be denied to mingle in the eternal joys and triumphs of the conquerors.









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