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A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_bib-sacra\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php)

## ARTICLE V.

## THE DOCTRINE RESPECTING ANGELS.

Translated from the Theological Lectures of Dr. A. D. C. Twisten, Professor of Theology in the Frederic William University at Berlin, by Rev. Henry Boynton Smith of West Amesbury, Mass. [Concluded from Vol. I. No. 4, p. 793.]

§ 4. *The employments of Angels.*

IN conformity, now, with their nature and their states, both classes of angels, the good and the evil, have certain spheres of action, which it is especially important for us to consider, since they thus come into connection with ourselves.

We will first treat of the employments of the holy angels. Without doubt, their efficiency is by no means confined to their operations in this world; but their other spheres of action are not definitely revealed to us. They are indeed said to look into the plan of redemption (1 Pet. 1: 12); to wonder at the divine wisdom in the execution of this plan (Eph. 3: 10); to rejoice at its success (Luke 15: 7, 10); and to fight against the evil spirits, who are its enemies (Rev. 12: 7); but such general statements hardly give us a clear insight into their precise mode of action in these respects. We may learn, however, from them as much as this, that the glory of God, which is the chief end of the world, and especially of free and rational beings, is likewise their aim; and a similar idea is expressed in the passages where they are described as praising and worshipping God, (e. g. Psalm 103: 20. 148: 2).

These last descriptions may suggest to us a distinction between the angelic employments and those of men; the former having for their object the direct expression or exhibition of inward emotions, the latter having more the character of what we call work or labor. The importance of this distinction is clearly brought out in Schleiermacher's System of Christian Morals. By work or labor is to be understood a kind of action which is but a means to an end, which has its end not in itself but out of itself; when a man labors, his object is not the mere labor but something different from it; he operates upon foreign and heterogeneous materials for another purpose than that of merely working: hence, in itself considered, labor affords no enjoyment; one would willingly be exempted from it, if the end could be reached without

it. But that kind of action which has for its object the direct exhibition of inward emotions—which includes all art and all forms of worship—has its end in itself, its only purpose is to give expression to what is already in the mind, to give to our thoughts and emotions an adequate external representation; and this is done in consequence of a powerful inward impulse, the mere expression of which is an immediate and high gratification. In respect to men, it will generally hold true, that their life has been toil and labor; in a future life, when our work is done, we hope to enter into rest (Heb. 4: 16), where we shall no more hunger nor thirst, where the sun shall not light on us nor any heat, where God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes, and where we shall sound a new song to his praise (Rev. 7: 16, 17. 14: 1—3). Yet even here God sometimes vouchsafes a foretaste of that bliss which we shall there share with the elect angels;<sup>1</sup> but it is with us only transient, enjoyed in those moments when we are elevated above the painful consciousness of our own imperfection and sinfulness, are filled with adoration of the divine grace, and feel as if we had only one desire and one duty—that of pouring out the fulness of our emotions and thoughts, in words and deeds of thankfulness and praise. These states, which with us are only transient, may be considered as permanent with the angels, since they are beings who are not still striving after, but who actually possess a perfection corresponding with their nature. Again, in respect to the actions of men, we can distinguish a two-fold relation, by which they are conditioned, on the one hand a relation to nature, on the other hand to one another; and both these are requisite to give us the materials, the instruments, the arena, the motives and the occasions of our actions. Of these two it is only the second, the relation to one another, which the Bible authorizes us to consider as belonging to the angels. For, while we do not find that any relation they may bear to nature is stated as a necessary condition of their action, yet we do find hints of a certain order and subordination existing amongst them, which imply the existence of an organized community, and which by the so called Dionysius the Areopagite, and since his time, has been expanded into the notion of a heavenly hierarchy.<sup>2</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> *Baier*, de Ang. § 33. not. a, says that this state non in otio consistit, sed *ἐνέργειαν* quamdam importat, but an *ἐνέργεια* of a character wholly different from the *κόπος καὶ μόχθος* of the present life.

<sup>2</sup> Comp. *Petar. de theol. dogm.* tom. III. de ang. Lib. II., especially cap. II. and following.

Evangelical (Lutheran) theologians, have not rejected this view, so far as it is accordant with Scripture; while they have carefully reduced to their true worth or rather worthlessness all those fictions respecting the angelic hierarchy which were invented by an arbitrary and poetical fancy.<sup>1</sup>

In respect to this world, the holy angels are exhibited as the ministers of divine providence for the protection of the heirs of salvation (Heb. 1: 14), and for the punishment of the ungodly (Gen. 19: 13). Though they may have important offices to perform in respect to us, yet we should never permit ourselves to look to them for aid, rather than to Him whom angels serve, as does all that is in the world. The evangelical church has, therefore, rightfully declared it unchristian and unscriptural to offer to the angels religious reverence or prayer, (Rev. 19: 10. 22: 9. Col. 2: 18); nor does she admit the distinction, of which the Scriptures know nothing, that the Roman Catholic theologians make between *λατρεία* and *δουλεία*. Since the angels are only our fellow-servants, (*σύνδουλοι*, Rev. 19: 10. 22: 9,) we cannot recognize any such alleged intermediate idea, between what belongs to God and what to the creature, as is necessary to be assumed in the *doulia* paid to angels. And experience proves that this is an insult to the honor that should be showed to God alone; it is or it becomes idolatry. Not that we deny that there is a kind of reverence, which should be paid to our fellow-creatures, in proportion to their degrees of moral perfectness, or to the authority and station they possess. This has been called a *cultus non religiosus, sive civilis sive moralis*; and Augustine (de Civit. Dei, X. 1.), although not in accordance with the usage of language, discriminated it by the word *δουλεία*, from the worship of God, the *λατρεία*, the *cultus religiosus*. That angels might in like manner be honored, as we honor wise and pious men, we would not be understood to deny. But angel-worship (the *cultus reli-*

<sup>1</sup> *Quenstedt*, De ang. Sect. II. qu. 8. thesis; "we concede that there is a certain order and distinction among the good angels, but we reject as uncertain and false such statements as these; that there are just nine orders or choirs of angels, and that these are divided into three classes or ternions, which are called the hierarchical classes, and that these classes are distinguished in dignity, grades and offices—as that, for example, the first or highest has an immediate knowledge of divine things, and teaches the second, and the second the third; that the first rules over the second, and the second over the third; and likewise that the highest class assists but does not serve, but the middle and lowest serve, etc; concerning which matters from the times of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, scholastics and Pontificals have much philosophized."

gious) is to be entirely rejected. And it is a perversion of the distinction that Augustine makes, when the word that he used to fix the contrast between this two-fold mode of reverence, is made to bear an intermediate signification that can only serve to destroy the distinction. For in truth there can as little be an intermediate between the cultus religiosus and non religiosus, as between God and the creature.

As to the question—what are the services in which God employs the angels—some theologians enumerate so many, that there would seem to be hardly any condition of life or any religious or moral object, in which we should not be justified in anticipating and expecting angelic assistance.<sup>1</sup> In corroboration of such statements, passages of the Bible are indeed adduced. But where these are not to be interpreted as figurative descriptions of divine providence (e. g. Ps. 34: 8. 91: 11, 12), they are by no means, generally speaking, of universal application. They refer rather to special cases of extraordinary divine interposition; to the principal eras in which God has made a revelation to man (e. g. the giving of the law, Gal. 3: 19; the advent of Christ or his departure from the world, Luke i. ii. xxiv. Acts 1: 10; his return to judgment, Matt 24: 30, 31); or to those persons who were the chief instruments in promulgating God's revelation (e. g. prophets or apostles, Dan. 6: 22. Acts 12: 7). As a general rule, then, there is no reason, in addition to the two-fold dependence of things upon God and upon the finite causes that belong to the visible world, to assume a third kind of dependence, a dependence upon the world of spirits. Some divines, indeed, if we may judge from scattered intimations,<sup>2</sup> have held the opinion that the beneficent powers of nature are under angelic protection, or that angels work

<sup>1</sup> Comp. *Erasmus Schmid* upon Heb. 1: 14, in his *Opus Sacrum Posthumum*, 1651; and *Baier*, *Compend. de Ang.* § 35—40. According to the latter, "the ministry of the angels is partly expended upon individual believers, and partly upon the ecclesiastical body; they minister to the former when they protect the germs of life and the years of infancy; the adults they serve in every honorable function, and are present with the dying. In reference to the ecclesiastical state, they assist in the ministry of the word; they prevent the introduction of idolatry into the church; they are present in the sacred assemblies. Further, they aid the body politic, by preventing the bonds of the State from being broken; by assisting and defending the magistrates and other officers; by warding off dangers and troubling unjust foes. And in fine they are of much use in domestic matters, by bringing about the marriages of godly people; by guarding household affairs; by protecting those nearest and dearest to the family, children," etc.

<sup>2</sup> When *Erasmus Schmid*, as cited in the preceding note, among other things thus discourses: "There is no doubt but that as intensely as evil angels strive

in them; but when they have attempted to state this as a matter of doctrine, it has uniformly been repelled;<sup>1</sup> and it can hardly be justified by Scripture.

Still less importance can be attached to the notion of special guardian angels, to whom God has committed the weal of nations, communities or individuals. What advantage, then, may we derive or expect from their tutelage? Is it not enough to have the protection of the omnipresent God, the care of an omniscient and all-loving Father? Can we or need we perfect or enhance our union with Him through Christ and his Holy Spirit, by means of other spirits more closely united to him? The passage in Acts 12: 15 is, at the best, only a weak support for this notion; and the opinion of the Christians then assembled in the house of Mary, is refuted by the narrative itself. The words of Christ (Matt. 18: 10), do indeed bear witness that, as the conversion even of the sinner causes joy in heaven (Luke 15: 7), so is likewise the least in the kingdom of heaven an object of affectionate interest to the highest of the angels who behold the face of God; but from these words it cannot, with certainty, be inferred that to any individual angel is committed the special care of such a little child. But, on the other hand, we are not warranted in absolutely denying it; we know too little of the functions God has assigned to the an-

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to injure man's prosperity, with as much intensity, yea, with much greater, do the good angels repel the attempted evil, and likewise fight against the evil angels themselves. And as the evil angels try to inflict upon men typhonic whirlwinds, hail-storms, tortures, diseases, the plague, and other evils of that kind; so, on the other hand, do the good angels help to years of fruitfulness (*εὐεργασίαν*), tranquil air, moderate breezes, beneficent rains, take care of the salubrity of the air, and point out remedies for diseases. And as, in John 5: 4, it is said of the pool called Bethesda, at Jerusalem, that an angel went down, at a certain season, and troubled the water; there is, therefore, no doubt that, by command of God, the ministry of angels extends to warm springs, metallic mines, and such like. But how few there are that know these things?" And such views could hardly be maintained, unless the very powers of nature are considered as the workings of angels; or the latter (in conformity with our third canon, vide *Bibl. Sacra*, Vol. I. p. 774) are conceived of as working through and in the same way with the powers of nature.—In the above passage, Schmid leads us to another view of the offices committed to the good angels,—that is, that they directly oppose the evil spirits, and prevent them from doing injury. And if this be so, it is conceivable how we seldom or never become aware of the attempts of evil spirits against us. But where shall we stop, when we begin to hunt out causes to account for effects, and effects to account for causes—both of which are equally beyond the bounds of our experience?

<sup>1</sup> Such as *Hutter's* copious refutation of the notion, that the motions of the planets are to be ascribed to angels, as 'intelligentiis motricibus orbium coelestium;' *loc. de creat. qu. vii.*

gels, in general or in particular. Our theologians have therefore expressed themselves rather problematically than decisively upon this point, and are not entirely agreed in their statements. For, while some of them think it to be certain that every man is guarded by angels, but are doubtful whether by one tutelary angel in particular; others think the last to be probable, yet without denying that, in certain cases, a number of angels may be sent to a man's assistance. But it is much more important for us than the determination of this question, to be careful lest such representations of aid from angels keep us back from giving our whole trust to Him, who, above all things, demands an undivided heart; or from conscientiously making use of all the powers and means, which God has assigned to us in this world.

As it is, now, the object of the holy angels to glorify God, so on the contrary, the evil spirits, in all their doings, have self for their object. Although we are not able to state, definitely, what are the ways in which they promise to themselves gratification of their self-love, their pride and their ambition, we yet know as much as this, that only such motives impel them to action, and prescribe to them their aim. In respect to ourselves, moreover, while the holy angels are the willing ministers of God in promoting our salvation, the evil spirits are intent upon drawing us away from God and plunging us into ruin. For even if we regard it as their special purpose to bring us into subjection to themselves, this itself is our destruction. And since it is impossible for them, by the use of their own powers, or by such an application of the agencies which God alone can create, as is conformed to the nature and destination of their powers, to produce anything which can have permanent existence; they consequently exercise their might and satisfy their desires in a continual work of destruction.<sup>1</sup> And in this they have but too well succeeded. The devil has made himself to be the god and prince of this world (John 12: 31. 2 Cor. 4: 4); he has established a kingdom of darkness, of which he is the head, whose members are the other evil spirits subordinated to him, whose arena is our earth, whose instruments are the men that have given themselves over to his authority. For even the evil spirits form an organized community, not indeed based upon love nor upon the voluntary recognition of a higher law, which annuls

<sup>1</sup> Thus far can what is related in Matt. 8: 28—34, of the demons who did not know what else to do with the swine in which they had asked permission to take up their abode, excepting to plunge them into the sea, be found to be characteristic of the mode of action of evil spirits in general.

or subjects self-will, but based upon force and fear, and upon their common opposition to God and his kingdom. And in this community the selfishness which fills all their souls, may, to a certain degree, find its advantage in being strengthened by the coöperation of numbers; and that, too, without any one of the body ceasing to make himself the centre of all his efforts, or to believe himself impeded and injured by every other one. Thus each member of the community will envy and hate every other one as a rival and a foe.

The devil is usually conceived of as a being who, before his fall, had a high rank, if not the highest, in the angelic orders; and who fell together with the whole body of angels that was under his authority; or, after his fall, enticed them to follow him.<sup>1</sup> But since this conception has no direct warrant from Scripture, one might be led to see in it a deduction from or an allusion to an opinion that was perhaps only dimly conceived, that an organized society of evil spirits had something in its very idea inconsistent with supreme evil and selfishness, and on this account was only to be derived from their earlier condition, was to be considered only as the remains or effect of their primitive relations. True, however, as it is, that no upright and enduring association can be conceived of among those that are only evil; because such a fellowship presupposes that the strife of individual interests is harmonized, either subjectively by love, or objectively by subordination to a higher law; yet an external and limited union, as experience teaches, may, to a degree, promote the interests of selfishness itself. But the general rule, that a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand (Matt. 12: 25, 26), must hold good in respect of the realm of evil spirits.

Everything in this world that is opposed to the divine holiness and goodness, all sin and death, evil and misery, is connected with this kingdom of darkness, and is referred to the agency of the devil. This agency reaches its highest grade in bodily and spiritual possessions (*obsessio corporalis et spiritualis*); the former manifests itself in those disturbed states of the mind and that perverted use of the bodily organs, which are well known from the

<sup>1</sup> Comp. *Thomas Aquinas*, *Summ. I. qu. 63. art. 7*—"Since the sin of the angel must have proceeded from freedom of will, it is agreeable to reason, that the chief angel among the sinners should have been chief among all angels;" and in art. 8—"The sin of the first angel was, to the others, the cause of their sinning; not indeed compelling, but inducing, in the way of persuasion." *Hollaz*, *De Angelis malis*, qu. 26—"It is probable that the evil angels fell under some leader or chief."



biblical narratives; the latter shows itself in such a fearful predominance of evil, that all holiness and goodness are voluntarily renounced, and the man abandons himself wholly to the power of the devil, as did Judas when he betrayed his Master (John 13: 27). In reference to the kingdom of Christ, the agency of the devil is especially shown in Antichrist, (1 John 2: 18. 2 Thess. 2: 4 seq. Rev. xii. seq.) In many other ways are Christians exhorted to contend against him and his fatal influences, (1 Pet. 5: 8. Ephes. 5: 11 seq.) For although the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3: 8), and though he is actually said to have broken this power (John 12: 31); yet this can only be understood to mean, that through Him victory is certain to us, and that that wicked one cannot touch him that is begotten of God, (1 John 5: 18); but the position that all agency or influence of the devil has thus come to an end, is by no means the doctrine of the Scriptures.

But how are we to define this agency? How important this question is; and how necessary in answering it to rely only upon the express declarations of the Bible; and how dangerous it is, instead of holding fast to what can be strictly proved, to look upon what is only not impossible as being credible;<sup>1</sup> of all this, the

<sup>1</sup> Even a *Buddens*, (Institt. L. II. cp. II. § 31) could defend the vulgar belief in witches in such wise as the following! "Since spirit is an immaterial substance, endowed with intellect and will, and also with the power of moving bodies and performing various operations, *there is nothing at all to prevent us from supposing*, that spirits of this kind can manifest themselves to men in some way, can appear to them in a bodily form, speak with them, make compacts, promise, and out of favor to them perform what were otherwise beyond human powers. I do not indeed assert that all magicians enter into an explicit compact with a malign spirit, *but yet I do not see what hinders*, two spiritual substances, of whom the one that is invisible may manifest himself to the other in some way, of being somehow able to declare mutual consent, and to make mutual promises. It is indeed foolish and absurd to enter into compacts with spirits of this sort, with whom men can have no righteous fellowship; it is foolish to trust to their agreements and promises; yea, it is impious to desire the aid of malign spirits; *but all these things do not prevent* the possibility of men's making compacts with spirits manifesting themselves in a certain way, and using their assistance." He does indeed find it necessary to go on and show that what is not impossible has sometimes occurred, and for that purpose he appeals to the Egyptian sorcerers (Exod. 7: 12), to the prohibition in Deut. 18: 10, to the familiar spirit of the witch of Endor (1 Sam. 28: 7), to the slave at Philippi (Acts 16: 16), to the signs of the false prophets (Deut. 13: 1. Matt. 24: 24), and to the accusations of the Pharisees (Matt. 9: 34. 12: 24). But he does not seem to have remembered, that it is nowhere taught that such arts were obtained by means of a compact concluded with the devil, or how this was done; but that,

church has had most sad experience, in the frightful consequences of the superstitious belief, that men could personally come into contact and compact with the devil, and thus become possessed of his supernatural powers. It excites horror to reckon up the number of sacrifices that have fallen in the seventeenth century alone, to a theory like that contained in Debrío's *Disquisitiones Magicae*.<sup>1</sup> All honor, therefore, to a Friederich Spee, who among the Catholics opposed that terrible superficiality with which the accusations of witchcraft were conducted; and to a Balthasar Becker and a Thomasius, among the Protestants, who fought against the superstition on which the trials were based! And although the argument against this superstition, especially in Becker's work,<sup>2</sup> was not always conducted on the most tenable grounds, nor with a careful limitation to what was decidedly false and exceptionable, yet should we never forget the thankfulness due to those who have dissipated so hurtful, and we may say, so disgraceful an error. But after the old demonological notions were undermined, and room made for a more unprejudiced judgment of these subjects, a judgment that should not, without necessity, undervalue the principles of an intelligible philosophy of physical causes, it could not long fail, but that the doubts raised against the continuance of satanic agency, and especially of diabolic possessions, should likewise be applied to the narratives of Holy Scripture. Among the German theologians, it was espe-

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on the contrary, a veil is thrown over these manifestations, which the Bible has not lifted up, and probably would not have us remove; and that it is better to acknowledge our ignorance, than to fill out the gaps with the possibilities of an arbitrary fancy, or of mere prejudice.

<sup>1</sup> Extracts from this, as well as from Friederich Spee's *Cautio Criminalis*, s. de processibus contra sages ab magistratus Germaniae, are given by Semler, in the third volume of his instructive *Extracts from Church History*, p. 417 seq.

<sup>2</sup> Becker, in his "Enchanted World," denied to the devil all operations upon the world of sense. For this position he relied in part upon the Cartesian notion of spirit, as a *substantia cogitans*, which, according to the system of Occasionalism, could only act upon bodies through God's intervention, which in this case unquestionably could not be assumed. He likewise, from the passages in 2 Pet. 2: 4, and Jude 6 (referred to above, *Bib. Sacra*, Vol. I. p. 793) made the inference, that the evil spirits incarcerated in Tartarus could not possibly act upon the world. But he allowed himself to make a most violent interpretation of all the passages of Scripture that appeared to attribute to them such an agency. Comp. *Brucker's Histor. crit. Philosophiae*, tom. IV. P. II. p. 712 seq. *Walch's Religionsstreit ausserhalb der Luth. Kirche*, Th. III. p. 930 seq.

cially Semler, not uninfluenced by new abuses,<sup>1</sup> who effected the introduction of the view, which since his time has been widely diffused, that the demoniacs of the New Testament were only persons suffering under peculiar maladies, as frenzy, convulsions, and epilepsy; and that such disordered states in ancient times, and especially by the superstition of the contemporaries of Jesus, were explained by the supposition of demoniacal possessions. And indeed when we perceive that all the symptoms manifested in these demoniacs, as well as the names usually given to them in the New Testament, are not essentially different from those which we unhesitatingly attribute to disordered states of the body or the soul, when occurring in other authors or in our own experience; we might find it difficult, when they are mentioned in the Holy Scriptures, to determine to assume wholly different causes to account for the same effects. But the question would still remain, whether we are not restrained from doing this by the way in which not only the people and the demoniacs, and not only the Evangelists, but also our Saviour himself speaks respecting them. We might perhaps assume that this was only a way of speaking about them, of which one might make use without intending to allude to or participate in the notions from which the phrases were originally derived, if the name demoniacs (*δαμονιζόμενος*) occurred in as isolated a manner as, for example, the name lunatics (*σαλασναζόμενος*); but this is inconsistent with the repeated and emphatic way in which the demons themselves (*δαμονίος*), and their connection with the sufferers, with Christ and with their own chief (Luke 11: 15), are spoken of in the New Testament. And we might perhaps adopt the theory that Jesus only accommodated his language to the prevalent views of the people, although aware of their utter groundlessness, in order perhaps to heal the diseases more certainly, without giving any offence to the people, or in order not to expend the time and powers, which should be dedicated to their religious instruction, in the correction of mere physiological errors, which had no strict connection with

<sup>1</sup> By the experiences of one Lohman, said to be possessed, published by G. Møller, which gave occasion to Semler to write his "*Abfertigung der neuen Geister und allen Irrthümer in der Lohmannischen Begeisterung zu Kemberg*," 1760. After this followed his famous dissertation, *De daemoneis quorum in evang. sit mentio*, 1760, and the defence of it in his "*Umständliche Untersuchung der dämonischen Leute*," 1762. By Semler, too, the work of the Englishman, Farmer, on the Demoniacs of the New Testament (translated by v. Cölln), was introduced to the German public, as also a new translation of Becker's "*Enchanted World*."

his appointed work, if the question were about a very harmless opinion in physics, wholly foreign to religious considerations, and liable to no perverted application. But this view cannot be maintained in respect to a superstition which, as all admit, is anything but harmless, and which our Saviour would, on prudential grounds, have had less reason to spare, since he was certain of the applause of the school of the Sadducees, if he attacked it. In other matters, through mere fear of giving offence, even where the interests of true religion might seem to be threatened, (for example, in respect to the observance of the Sabbath!), we do not find him so forbearing towards errors and prejudices; but of the demons he discourses to his disciples as he does to the people (Matt. 17: 21), and expressly connects the power which he and they exercise over them, with his Messianic functions, (Matt. 12: 28, 29. Luke 10: 17—19). Accordingly, we cannot believe that those views were absolutely false and opposed to the true religion; for then we should be compelled to ascribe to Jesus an error in religious matters. The times, and the people in the midst of whom Jesus lived and discoursed, may have had a determining influence upon the form and drapery of expression; but some essential truths must have lain at the foundation. Are we then, it may be objected, compelled to give up all the results of that more free and unembarrassed observation of nature and of physical effects and changes, which the scientific spirit and culture of our times are said to have produced, and which are to be considered as on the whole a real gain, although some of its fruits seem to many to be objectionable? But why this? Do, then, these two propositions logically exclude one another, viz., that such phenomena were diseases—and that in them was also manifested a satanic influence, as Göthe says, “a part of that power which is ever willing evil, yet ever creating good?”<sup>1</sup> Is it irrational to regard disease in general, or certain species of it, although on the one hand to be considered as something natural and proceeding according to well known physical laws, yet, on

<sup>1</sup> Mephistopheles in Göthe's Faust—Whether what is here in an abstract way called a *part of a certain power*, be not, perhaps, in the notion of demons personified in a popular way, and whether the mode in which our Saviour spoke of them be not an example of that merely formal accommodation, which we may attribute to Jesus, and which was occasioned by his speaking to men in such a stage of culture that the abstract expression was strange and unintelligible, while the personification was natural;—this is a question worthy of discussion, and it may serve as an example of the difference we have alluded to between the drapery of the expression, and the truth lying at the foundation.

the other hand, as an effect of that evil principle which has brought even into nature the seeds of disorder and destruction, in consequence of which we see the very powers of physical life conflicting with and grating against one another? This view would be most readily suggested wherever, and in proportion as, the natural causes are hidden from us; or where nature seems to be under the dominion of an overwhelming power which drives it, as it were, out of its regular course; and where the soul seems to be violently hurried away to words, deeds and thoughts, that correspond with another (be it real or fancied), and not with its own personality. It is now chiefly such cases as these, that are referred to demoniacal influences, and in healing them Christ is recognized as the Conqueror of the devil and his works. But this does not prevent us from also considering them as natural occurrences, in the same sense as sickness, although unnatural, can be and is called natural.

The Scriptures appear to confirm this view. It has been justly remarked that not only does the expression, "to have a devil," mean the same as to rave, to be crazy (Matt. 11: 18. John 7: 20. 10: 20); but that it is also said of one from whom the devils have departed, that he had become rational, was in his right mind (Mark 5: 15. Luke 8: 35); that, as the demoniacs are included among the sick, and their deliverance from the demon is described as a healing (Matt. 6: 24. Acts 10: 38); so, likewise, a spirit of infirmity is ascribed to a woman who was merely bowed down, and the word of the Lord, Be loosed from thine infirmity! is exhibited as a loosing of the bonds with which Satan had bound her (Luke 13: 11—16). It was not an error to conclude from this that demoniacs were sick people; only, on the other hand, it should not have been forgotten, that according to Scripture, there must have existed a connection of the disease, or at least of certain kinds of disease, with the realm of darkness to which the demons belong.

And this is true not merely in respect to possessions, but wherever any impediment or disturbance, any evil or suffering, is derived from the agency of the devil, this could no more annul the action of natural causes, than would the consciousness of connection of such evils with natural causes, which in many cases must have been very clear, exclude a reference to satanic agency. When Paul writes to the Thessalonian Christians (1 Thes. 2: 18), that he had twice wished to come to them, but had been hindered by Satan, we can hardly think of anything different

from what is meant by the entirely corresponding words in the epistle to the Romans (15: 22), where he does not allude to Satan; that is, natural hindrances in which he recognizes the agency of a power opposed to the kingdom of God. The messenger of Satan who buffeted Paul (2 Cor. 12: 7), is manifestly the same with the thorn in the flesh, whatever this may have been; and when the prince of this world is said to come against Jesus (John 14: 30), this must be the same with the assault made by the priests and pharisees, which Jesus, in order to manifest his love and obedience to the Father, will not avoid. The same likewise holds good of the agency of the devil in moral matters. John lets us very clearly know (John 12: 6), whence came the thought which the devil put into the mind of Judas; and even after the devil had entered into him, it was he himself who did what he did (John 13: 27). When Satan filled the heart of Ananias (Acts 5: 3), it was only by means of his own evil lust that the entrance was effected (James 1: 14); and hence the apostle warns the married people in Corinth (1 Cor. 7: 5), to prevent the beginnings of incontinent desires, for only through these desires could the devil tempt them. And although he reminds us that we have to wrestle not merely against flesh and blood (Eph. 6: 12), yet the spiritual weapons which he recommends to us against the arts and wiles of Satan, are only such as are needed to withstand those enticements to lust, fear, doubt and unbelief which proceed from flesh and blood. And it is such a contest as this to which James refers when he exhorts us (James 4: 7), to resist the devil and he will flee from you! The temptations of the devil are not to be distinguished from the natural internal and external incitements and occasions to sin; the fellowship of Satan is none other than that which arises from the desire to do his lusts, and like him to give one's self up to hatred and a lie (John 8: 44); the power of the devil over our will is that which we concede to him when we make ourselves his ministers; the evil which Satan effects through us is our own voluntary transgression. In short, the agency of the devil and of the evil spirits should never be represented in such a way as would annul the physical and moral laws, in accordance with which we must consider sin and evil as the workings of nature and of freedom. Satanic influences are manifested in and through the same physical and moral evils which we recognize as resulting from the sin of man and its consequences, or from those operations of nature which with all their anomalies still reveal the highest conformity to law; and these again point us to

a deeper and more general ruin into which a part of the world of spirits was plunged, previous to the fall of man. The devil is the enemy who while men sleep, in darkness sows the tares (Matt. 13: 25 seq.); no one is witness of his perverse work; when we wonder to see tares growing among the wheat, it is the Lord that tells us who has sowed the seed; the tares germinate, grow, bear fruit like any other seed; if we did not find that they impeded the growth of the grain or mingled noxious elements with it, we could scarcely imagine that they had a different origin; and then, too, the Lord must at the harvest send his angels to separate the tares from the wheat, since it might easily happen that we should root out the one with the other, or should let the noxious weeds grow rank that we might spare the good seed. Without figure: *the devil's agency in the world exists under the condition, that he (directly or indirectly) enters into the series of the causes here at work, so that he acts by means of these causes or in the same mode with them;*<sup>1</sup> and when we state, that he has been any-where at work, this proposition refers rather to the prime source of the action, than to its specific mode and characteristics. For example, that blinding of the mind, by which the unbelieving are hindered from seeing the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ (2 Cor. 4: 4), is, morally and psychologically considered, just the same thing, whether it be referred to the god of this world or not; only, by being thus referred, it is brought into connection with a wider realm of ruin and corruption.

We have no experience of an immediate, direct, or, if we may so say, original entering of the devil into the series of causes that are visibly at work around us. There are only three cases in which the Scripture refers to such a direct agency; the temptation of our first parents,<sup>2</sup> the temptation of our Saviour, and the last conflict of the kingdom of God with the realm of darkness (Rev. 12: 9—17. 20: 1—3, 7—10). The second and third of these as is well known, are of doubtful interpretation, whether we take them literally, symbolically, or as parables. The first case, although in its details not without some obscurity, has left behind it moral and physical effects which are a matter of daily experience. These effects do not consist in powers or beings in their very na-

<sup>1</sup> See the canons 3—5 laid down above—Bibl. Sacra, Vol. I. pp. 774, 5.

<sup>2</sup> According to my view, in the sense of the New Testament, it can hardly be doubted (Rev. 12: 9), who is meant by the Serpent that tempted Eve (1 Tim. 2: 14).

ture evil and corrupt, which the devil has produced as by a creative act; but in the corruption of rational beings whom God created good and for good, and who were therefore free, and hence had the possibility of sinning; and in consequence of their fall, since the ethical and the physical are necessarily connected, there is also a partial corruption of the powers of nature. After this corruption had once forced itself into the world, it must pursue in its propagation and development, in coming to a crisis and in being expelled from the system, a regular course, in accordance with the natural and moral laws by which the world is governed. Yet we refer it back as a whole and in the details of its manifestation, to the agency of Satan; not only because his first and direct action is propagated in it, but also because the devil incontestably continues to look upon it as his work, and sees in it the bond or snare by which we are held captive to his will (2 Tim. 2: 26), and which would have made us the subjects of his kingdom had not a stronger hand broken them. Whether these bonds in some cases, as, for example, where evil absorbs the whole man which many think to have been the case with Judas, might not draw the captive into an immediate proximity with Satan as is expressed by the definition of spiritual possession which De Wette<sup>1</sup> gives (*propinquier substantiae diaboli ad animam impii adessentia et efficax ad quaevis flagitia propellens ἐνέργεια*), is a question which we dare not decide. The conception is so horrible, that we cannot accede to it without more decisive declarations than the Scripture contains; and it would not change any of the principles which we have above developed.

The definition of bodily possessions which the same author gives is one with which we can still less agree—*ipsius satanae non tantum κατ' ἐνέργειαν sed et κατ' οὐσίαν in corpore humano inhabitatio*. The demons (*δαιμόνια*) that dwell in the possessed are not Satan himself; and as to the position, that the former really, in their very substance, dwell in the human body, even if we were inclined to give a literal interpretation to the passages of Scripture that refer to it, yet the mode in which we are to conceive of such a possession would ever remain very problematical in consequence of the difficulty in defining the relations of spiritual beings to space; of showing how their not being restricted by space (*illoclalitas*), is consistent with attributing to them an existence in some particular place, (some *νοῦ*).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dogmatik der Luther. Kirche, § 48.

<sup>2</sup> Vide Bibl. S. Vol. 1. p. 770.



In the investigation of these topics we shall be satisfied if we have in any degree succeeded in reconciling the assurance of Scripture, that evil spirits are at work in bringing about the ruin and corruption of man, with our convictions of the permanency and regularity of the laws of nature, both physical and moral, and with our duty so to present the doctrine that it shall not run the hazard of superstitious perversion. Other questions, which might arise, can only be fully considered in connection with the doctrine of the fall and depravity of the human race.

‡ 5. *Objections to the Existence of Angels considered.*

According to our proposed plan,<sup>1</sup> we have occupied ourselves with definitions and statements respecting the nature, the states and the employment of good and evil spirits, as these were developed, on the basis of Holy Scripture and under the influence of certain leading ideas, in our older doctrinal systems; and we have also made some modifications in these statements in reference to points which in the present state of scientific culture, demand a more careful attention than our forefathers bestowed upon them. But we have reserved for discussion the important questions,—what general worth and authority are to be attributed to the views thus defined? In what relation do they stand to religious experience, to what has been called the Christian consciousness; to our faith as Christians? Are we to assume that angels and devils in the assigned sense actually exist? In proceeding to discuss this point, we would premise, that the question does not involve every single statement that has been made, so much as the conception that lies at the foundation of all of them. In respect of individual statements, our systems of theology have always shown themselves to be flexible. For example, although the angels are, strictly speaking, generally regarded as purely spiritual and bodiless beings, yet some of our divines have not hesitated to depart from this view, in the interest of certain philosophical systems (as that of Leibnitz), which maintained that the existence of a finite spirit was inconceivable without a body, be it very fine or ethereal, attached to it. Hence objections raised against single positions cannot be held as decisive in respect to the whole doctrine. And it is neither necessary nor advisable to decide beforehand either what features may be abandoned with-

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<sup>1</sup> *Bibl. Sacra*, Vol. 1. p. 769.

out prejudice to the doctrine, or what must in any case be retained.

It is the judgment of De Wette, that the whole doctrine has been falsely drawn within the sphere of Christian doctrinal theology; that it had its origin in pious longings and symbolical fancies, enriched by mythological metaphysics from foreign (not Jewish) sources; that the question whether we can be so convinced of the truth of this doctrine as to make it an object of faith is to be decided by an investigation of the nature of the soul and of the spiritual world; and that the result of such an investigation is, that the doctrine respecting the holy angels has only a problematical value, and that the doctrine respecting the evil angels is to be wholly repudiated.

Among the points here brought forward on which we are to base our judgment, there is one to which more weight is generally attributed, than we can concede to it; we mean that the Jewish Angelology had in part a foreign origin. The fact itself especially as De Wette has expressed it, that the Jewish conceptions of the spiritual world were very much *enriched* from foreign sources, is not to be denied. But this would be of importance only in a doctrinal system, that proposed to exhibit solely the Jewish articles of faith; to such a system no element could be said to be essential which was not originally contained in the revelation given to Moses, or organically derived from it, but which had been attached to it in an external manner from a foreign scheme. But if Christianity be something more than a mere development of Judaism; if its destination in part was to unite in itself in a new and peculiar manner whatever had been previously prepared in all the different spheres of religious life; then it cannot be brought as an objection to a doctrine held by Christ and the apostles, that God had preliminarily committed to another than the Jewish people the office of producing to some extent a reception of this truth.

On the other hand, if we define Christian Doctrinal Theology to be an exhibition of the facts of Christian experience or consciousness in the form of reflection or of distinct conceptions, then the doctrine respecting angels would not come within its province, if to the angels themselves no importance could be attributed either for Christian experience or reflection, if they were for the former a matter of entire indifference, and if we could not form any definite conceptions concerning them in connection with the Christian scheme, and if the utmost they can claim is, to be con-

sidered as figurative, symbolical or mythical existences. Whether this be so, we will first inquire in respect to the good angels, and then in respect to the devil and the evil spirits. In regard to the other point,—whether we can be so far convinced of the truth of this doctrine as to make it a matter of faith (so far as this question can be distinguished from the above), we must take the position, that we cannot make it dependent upon merely philosophical principles. The essential, philosophical basis of the Angelology we have represented to be the idea of spirit and of the spiritual or "*intelligible*" world. If this idea, now, would not lead us any further than to give us a probability that such beings as angels might exist, yet the doctrine of Christ and the apostles is perfectly adequate to transform the probability into fact, the problematical judgment into a positive assertion; which is no more than what observation and credible testimony do in other departments of science. If on philosophical grounds we find a purely spiritual being to be conceivable, then the assertion of Him who testifieth only what He hath seen (John 3: 11, 32), must convince us of the actual existence of such beings. This position, however, depends on the authority which is conceded to the declarations of Holy Scripture, and will therefore be a dividing line between rationalists and supernaturalists.

Supposing, now, that the Bible said nothing about angels (using the word here in the restricted sense of good angels); it could hardly be maintained that in our religious experience or consciousness there is anything which necessarily leads us to the assumption of their existence. For what facts, of inward or outward experience, are there, that would be the occasion of our assuming a third kind of causes, in addition, on the one hand, to natural causes, and on the other to the divine causality? We might, indeed, conceive, that when the intellect was immature and the fancy predominant, there might be felt an impulse or necessity to give a high coloring to the idea of the divine glory by a figurative representation of angels hovering around him; or to embody the doctrine that all things depend upon God, which we comprise in our ideas of providence and of a government of the world, in the representation of ministering spirits. But when the powers of reflection were more developed, there would be found no difficulty in grasping this dependence of all things upon God in a direct manner, without the use of figurative language; and then the angels, far from helping us to bring this truth directly before the mind, might rather become an impediment to our thoughts,

which, in rising above the finite, at once seek the infinite. What was intended to be merely the drapery of the divine majesty might easily appear to have a too independent existence, when judged by the intellect rather than the fancy. And consequently our intellects, left to themselves, would find no sufficient grounds for representing the angels as actually existing beings; or to adopt the view that they existed, if we found it current.

But now, the Holy Scripture speaks of angels, of the appearing of angels, of the deeds of angels. Can this be interpreted in the way we have hinted at? that is, can we say that in the Bible the angels are a mere picturing forth and embodiment of the glory or providence of God? There are, unquestionably, some passages in which this interpretation would be sufficient (e. g. John 1: 52. Rev. 5: 11, 12.) And if this could be carried through the whole Bible, then the doctrine respecting angels would necessarily make a chapter in a book on biblical symbolism or rhetoric, instead of appearing in a system of doctrinal theology. But there are other passages, not only in the Old, but also in the New Testament, historical as well as didactic (e. g. John 20: 12. Acts 12: 7. 27: 23, 24. Matt. 22: 30. Luke 15: 10. Eph. 1: 10, 21, and many others), with which this theory is utterly inconsistent. In view of the positive statements contained in such passages, nothing can prevent us from coming to the result, that they are intended to assert that angels actually exist and act and have an important connection with the kingdom of God, excepting the hypotheses and artifices of a violent and arbitrary system of interpretation, which is entirely at variance with an honest faith in the higher knowledge of Christ and the apostles, and with our natural regard for truth; or, unless they are set aside by begging the question in some such way as this, that all passages which speak of angels are therefore to be understood as mythical and figurative.<sup>1</sup> But why such hypotheses and arts, why this violence and arbitrariness, which undermine all the laws of exegesis, if the conception of angels be

<sup>1</sup> When Schleiermacher (*Glaubenslehre*, § 42 of the second edition) declares, that Christ and the apostles might have said everything they did say about the angels without having an actual conviction of their own that such beings existed, just as we can speak of fays and spectres, without explaining what our own views are as to their reality, he gives a standard of judgment which I readily adopt. I ask, then, whether any one would find it possible, in such passages as Acts 12: 7. Eph. 1: [3?] 10, I will not say to substitute directly fays and elfs for the word angels, but, by any change he may please to make, to set aside the absolute contradiction that would arise from mixing up such fabulous or problematical notions, with the evident intention of the writers to relate an actual fact or announce a truth?

not in itself contradictory, and, when rightly applied, has in it nothing objectionable or hurtful?

It is, perhaps, said—there is nothing in the doctrine contradictory or hurtful, but also nothing that has any value in connection with Christian experience; and therefore nothing that should induce us to decide rather for than against the existence of angels. The question respecting their existence has then, for us Christians, no greater interest than questions about the existence of any other species of beings, which we give over to the researches of other sciences, but do not reserve for our systems of doctrinal theology.

One might, indeed, be a pious Christian without having come to any definite conclusions about the nature and the existence of angels. But yet such questions are by no means a matter of indifference in connection with religious experience; and this position, according to the canon that the Bible contains nothing superfluous, must hold good of every scriptural doctrine and idea. In an especial manner does the conception of angelic agency enlarge our ideas of the kingdom of God, of which we are a part. It vivifies our consciousness that we are the citizens of two worlds, not only of the visible but also of the invisible, that we belong to a fellowship of higher spirits (Heb. 12: 22), who take an interest in our welfare (Luke 15: 10), who are united with us under one head (Eph. 1: 10). Thus we shall be more mindful that our conversation is in heaven (Phil. 3: 20), and that we should live as those who are to be equal with the angels (Luke 20: 36). Consequently we judge, that although the doctrine respecting the holy angels be not directly deducible from the facts of religious experience, yet, that when we accept it on the testimony of Holy Scripture, it is by no means a matter of indifference for our experience; and although it may not be reckoned among the fundamental articles of the Christian faith, yet that its right to a place in a system of Christian doctrine is not to be disputed.

We must come to very similar results in regard to the doctrine respecting the devil and the evil spirits. If we were restricted to the results and facts of our religious experience or consciousness, we could hardly show any real necessity for assuming the existence of the devil and his angels; but if we believe the declarations of Holy Scripture, we may find much in our own experience which goes to confirm, or is connected with, the doctrine. In respect to the matter itself, however, on the one hand it is undeniable that the grounds for believing in the existence of the devil are much more decisive than those in favor of the existence of the

holy angels. In respect to the latter, we find nothing in our experience which could lead us to presuppose any other spiritual source of our emotions than God himself; but in regard to the devil we may find something of this kind in us, and that is, sin itself, so far as this reveals itself to us not merely as something subjective, accidentally clinging to us, but as something objective, as a power ruling over us. The Bible, too, speaks of the devil, his work and his kingdom, much more frequently, much more distinctly, much more directly, than of the holy angels; it brings what it says about them into much closer connection with Christ, his work and his kingdom; and it allows much less opportunity for the notion of a designed or unconscious accommodation to traditional opinions or modes of speech.<sup>1</sup> But in spite of all this, on the other hand, the opposition, on the part of recent theologians, to the doctrine respecting the devil, has been much more violent. It is maintained, that the very idea is philosophically untenable; and that a belief in his real existence is inconsistent with other doctrinal positions which belong to the substance of the Christian faith. De Wette, even while he declares the idea of holy angels to be only a matter of probability, maintains that the conception of a purely spiritual and at the same time sinful being, is contradictory, and that it should be entirely discarded. If he be right in this, if the idea of fallen angels be absolutely contradictory, if it cannot be brought into harmony and connection with indubitable truths; then, indeed, we might be forced to explain away the positions of Christ and the apostles as well as we could, and to banish the whole discussion from our doctrinal systems into a Biblical Mythology or Symbolism.

<sup>1</sup> Almost every page of the New Testament confirms this statement. Schleiermacher (*Glaubenslehre* § 57 of the first, and § 45 of the second edition), and after him v. Cölln (*Bibl. Theologie* II. p. 73), raise an objection to which I cannot concede any great weight—that Christ did not reveal anything new or original in the way of rectifying or perfecting the current notions upon this subject, although, if he had believed in the existence of angels at all, he would have done so, since the popular views about them could not be perfectly true, and might easily have been amended; and therefore, because Christ did not amend them, he did not believe in the doctrine. To say nothing of the want of logic in such an inference—how infrequently do we find, in the New Testament, that turn of expression in the Sermon on the Mount: “Ye have heard—but I say unto you.” Can a man be in earnest in laying down the rule, that Christ and the apostles believed in nothing to which they did not add something new and original? If so, then it would follow, that Christ and his apostles were not really convinced of the truth of the doctrines of creation and providence, of God’s power and wisdom, of the resurrection and judgment, and even of the doctrine respecting the Messiah and his kingdom.

Schleiermacher<sup>1</sup> has stated as distinctly as any one the grounds on which it is held that the conception of the actual existence of such a being as the devil is wholly untenable. We will go through with them in the order in which he has advanced them. (1) No motives can be conceived that would occasion the fall of an angel but such as take for granted that he is already a fallen being, e. g. pride and envy. This objection has no weight with one who believes in an entire freedom of the will, a "*transcendental*" freedom, as the Germans call it. A truly free act cannot be understood by the principle, that what is contained in the effect must have already existed in the cause; it does not take for granted that the moral nature is so constituted that it may not be changed; but a free act of the will is the beginning of a series of effects, it originates them, and it may give a new moral character to the nature of the being. (2) It is inconceivable that a being should always persist in sinning who is endowed with the highest degree of knowledge. In order to avoid the objection drawn from our own experience, that intellect is different from virtue and that vice is something more than folly, he adds: that sin produces a transient pleasure only when all its consequences are not clearly seen, but that one who perfectly knows that all contest against God must be utterly abortive, would never involve himself in it, since it would be the same thing as voluntarily and consciously determining to be and to remain ever miserable. This position would be undeniable in respect to true and perfect wisdom, but such wisdom exists only in union with virtue and piety; and we are not warranted in saying that the fallen angels were originally endowed with this wisdom, but only with the power of attaining unto it. But a being that revolts from God either loses or attains not full insight into the fact, that happiness is to be found only in his Creator, and that it is a vain undertaking to seek it out of Him and in one's self, or to deify himself. Luther therefore rightly said, that in and by the fall, the devil lost the best of understandings.—But, continues Schleiermacher, (3) Such a loss of understanding is inconceivable as a consequence of an error of the will, and is incongruous with the great danger we ascribe to the hostility of the devil. The last would certainly hold good, if it was asserted that Satan had entirely lost his understanding; but as we have above said, an evil spirit, like a bad man, may be very acute and cunning in all things pertaining to his own purposes and interests, and still fail of having

<sup>1</sup> Glaubenslehre, § 55 of the first, and § 44 of the second edition.

a right and true understanding ; for this exists only where all things are seen in their true relations to God and his will. In reference, however, to the connection between an error of the will and the blinding of the understanding, this can hardly admit of doubt as a general truth. The question whether it was only one error which produced a sudden darkening of the mind, or a connected series of errors that brought about a gradually accumulating blindness, is irrelevant in respect to the main point. We have previously expounded the philosophical basis of the views of our church in considering angels as existing in what we have called the "*intelligible*" or spiritual world ; and Schleiermacher's objection rests upon the assumption that angels are subject, like ourselves, to the conditions of time and of progress. (4) It is said to be inconceivable that some angels should have fallen and others not ; and Schleiermacher asks how this could have been the case if they all were originally created alike. The basis of this objection is that same denial of the true nature of freedom (of *transcendental* freedom), which we have already noticed. Whoever takes the position that a being does good or evil, not merely because he is already good or evil, but because he has a free will ; that one may become good or evil by a voluntary act, by means of a good or evil will, feels not the force of this difficulty.—In essentially the same way as we replied to the second objection would we meet the next question which is suggested, (5) how the devil, already oppressed by great evils and expecting still greater, could hope to relieve the feeling of his misery by continued opposition to God, why he would not rather remain in a state of entire inactivity ? If Satan had the knowledge of an angel of light, he would indeed give up his opposition, he would not even be content with a state of inactivity, but would act like an angel of light ; but just because he does not so will and act, therefore he has not the same kind or degree of knowledge. He may not indeed cherish the confident hope, but yet he may imagine the possibility of a result, by which he might maintain his power in his own kingdom, or at least for a long time prevent what at last will be unavoidable, and perhaps in the meantime he may hope in some way to avenge himself on God, whom he regards only as his mighty foe, or may have in mind many other objects which he may fancy to be attainable.—(6) In regard to the objection against a kingdom, an organized community of evil spirits, we refer to what has been already advanced. Only we would add, that when Schleiermacher asserts that in proportion as the em-



pire of holiness is extended in the world and becomes firmly established in the minds and hearts of men, in the same proportion will the counter-workings of evil be dispersed and dissipated, until the devil and his angels will no longer be thought of; we cannot see how this corresponds with the scriptural representation, that along with the progress of the kingdom of God there will be an increasing opposition on the part of its foes, which will rise to its highest intensity before the re-appearance of Christ.

In returning now to our main discussion as to the actual existence of the devil, we remark, that everything depends upon the conception we form upon the nature and the ground of evil. The idea of an evil being must assuredly seem contradictory, to one who seeks the ground of evil either in matter—for the devil is immaterial; or in the sensuous nature—for he is conceived of as without a body; or in the notion of a finite nature as being necessarily subject to ignorance, weakness and imperfection—for although we do not represent the devil as infinite, yet he is endowed with a high degree of moral and intellectual power; or in the law of progress and development—for we think of the devil as a being at once and forever and entirely sinful;—in short, if evil be a mere negation, have no positive existence, then is the devil a mere abstraction, a mere nonentity. But he that conceives sin to be something more than a lower stage of development in goodness, than a mere abstract conception of one condition of becoming righteous; as something more than imperfection or unequal development of our powers and our knowledge; he that acknowledges a deeper ground for it than the union of the spirit with the body and so with matter and nature; he that finds its origin even in the soul, the spiritual part, in the choice which freedom makes; he that sees, that in relation to freedom of choice, great powers and knowledge are merely the means and instruments of which freedom makes use in its different acts, and do not necessarily produce the determinations of the will, and that the impulses of selfishness are a more dangerous temptation than the seductions of sensuality; in short, whoever regards sin as we shall find that it must in truth be regarded according to the testimony of Christian experience; for him there is no reason to deny the conceivability of the existence of Satan. And under this point of view, the idea that one forms of the devil may be looked upon as an exponent of his idea of sin.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In this sense, Erhard, in the first volume of the *Philosophical Journal of Niethammer*, wrote his "*Apology of the Devil*;" not that he cared so much

Since a deep consciousness of sinfulness is one necessary element or condition of Christian experience, it might from this be inferred, that the assumption or denial of the existence of the devil is anything but a matter of indifference. Those religions which represent the antagonism between good and evil as absolute and primitive, always come to the result, that together with God there exists another being, evil in his very nature, as independent and uncreated as God himself; and when the distinction between good and evil is looked upon as something merely relative, subjective, a difference only in degree, then will every representation be avoided, which is even remotely allied to the above dualistic view. But the Christian conception is different from both of these. It does not make the antagonism between good and evil to be one which originally existed in the very constitution of the universe—for then were a restitution impossible; nor does it look upon it as a difference in degree alone, and still less as something merely subjective—for to what purpose then the plan of redemption? Then had Christ died in vain; or the true Saviour would be the philosopher who made the fortunate discovery that we had been giving ourselves so much trouble and care about a mere semblance or figment. Christianity does not teach the existence of a being sinful in his primitive nature, but of an evil power which originated from the perversion of freedom, and which demands a severe contest in order to be subdued, a contest which cannot be undertaken or terminated without higher aid. And when we consider the depth of the corruption and disorder which do not merely infect this and that emotion and volition, but have laid hold of the very roots of our whole being; and the extent of the ruin, since it does not embrace man alone, but seems to have penetrated into nature itself; and the relation of this corruption to ourselves, since we feel it to be in some respects foreign to our true nature, and never cease to long after the lost Paradise,

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about Satan, but in order to bring to a decision the question that must arise in connection with the idea of the devil—whether sin be in its nature something positive or negative. This treatise is besides worthy of being read in another respect, because it contends against the opinion that the idea of the existence of such a being as Satan is contradictory and impossible. As Erhard there sketches an outline of the practical maxims on which Satan acts, (the devil's moral system), so there might be made out a delineation of his theoretical principles, so to speak of the devil's philosophy, as the fundamental principle of diabolical action; under the former head would be, in religious phraseology, the aim to make himself to be God; so his theoretical position could not be any other than that he himself is God. (Comp. 2 Thess. 2: 4).

even when entangled by evil, we are ever going further from it ; if we consider these points, in all their weight, we might not indeed be led to the conclusion, that from them alone the personal existence of the devil could with certainty be inferred ; but when, in addition to this, revelation teaches, that there is a prince of this world and a kingdom of darkness, which Christ came to destroy (1 John 3: 8)—and that we are called upon to wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, (Eph. 6: 12) ; this scriptural doctrine is so intimately connected with the results of our own experience, and accords so well with the whole economy of redemption, that we cannot see why violence should be done to all such passages of the Bible, and the doctrine expelled from it, cost what it may. To this it is perhaps replied, that the doctrine is in opposition to other well-known principles, and that it threatens to disturb and undermine morality and religion. It may be said, that it undermines our firm faith in the omnipotence and universal agency of God ; that it destroys our conviction of the perfect regularity and connection of natural causes ; that it is detrimental to our moral judgment, since it gives man an excuse for ascribing his own sin and guilt to another being ; that it thus stands in the way of earnest self-examination ; or that it torments us with fears and apprehensions that cannot exist in connection with a joyful trust in God's grace, and the certainty of having been redeemed from the bondage of sin and death.

In reply to these objections we observe, in the first place, that in proportion as we are convinced of the danger, or even of the suspiciousness of this doctrine, in the same proportion will those passages of the Bible in which it is distinctly taught, excite our wonder, and rise in importance. Is it supposable that Christ and the apostles could have *accommodated* their teachings to so hurtful and fatal an illusion ? Had they but kept silence respecting it, they would have been the occasion, not only that those of the circumcision who believed in their teachings should persist in the alarming error, but also that the Gentiles, who until now were almost strangers to this doctrine, should receive, together with the Christian faith, a superstition which, it is alleged, paralyzes its most essential benefits. Can it be believed that they were so wanting in foresight and knowledge, that they did not remark the contradiction, if it really exist, of such views with the doctrines they most earnestly enforced ; or that they had so little courage and skill in teaching, that they could not lay the axe quick and

sharp to the root of the tree which bore such poisonous fruit, and cast it into the fire? Could they have foolishly believed that this was reserved for the devil and his angels themselves; instead of perceiving that the question concerned only the wood and straw of a popular superstition, by which the temple of the pure worship of God was disfigured, and even brought near to its ruin, and which was introduced not by Moses and the prophets, but by importation from foreign sources?

Even from this view of the case we may, in the second place, draw the inference, that the alleged contradictions and dangers should not be attributed to the doctrine itself, but only to a perversion and misunderstanding of it. But against such abuse we might be insured by the simple consideration, that the relation in which the agency of Satan stands, both to God and to ourselves, cannot be different in kind from that of a man who is wholly abandoned to sin, and who pursues corrupt purposes with great energy and skill. For the devil is also a mere created being, in every respect dependent upon God. He has no power but what he receives from God, he cannot accomplish anything but what God permits. God in his providence and sovereignty rules over his acts, prescribes to them bounds and a goal, conducts them in conformity with the divine purposes, and has from eternity so ordered all things, that the kingdom of light must at last attain the victory. In short, the same views, which give us composure and trust in considering the evil and sin which men effect, should produce a like result when we think of the agency of the devil. If man's sinful deeds do not disturb our confidence in God's power and love, why should we be terrified at the evil acts of Satan? Only the sin which we freely choose or do not repel can injure, really injure our souls and endanger our salvation. If the devil should smite us with disease like Job, what matters it, so long as we preserve patience and faith? If he should tempt us with evil thoughts as he did Christ, what injury could it do us, as long as we repelled them by the word of God? And what difference can it make whether the disease come from the devil or from the infection of a sick person, whether the evil thoughts come from Satan or from a corrupt man? If the love of God and Christ dwell in us as in Paul (Rom. 8: 35—39), how will the devil be able to separate us therefrom? If we really stand on the firm basis of the Gospel, armed with the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6: 14—17), how can we lose ground even before our great enemy? Or what in fact

is perfectly analogous, if the fellowship with sin and death by which we were united with our race before our regeneration, is superseded by our being adopted into fellowship with Christ, so that we ought never to allow our joyful consciousness of redemption and justification to be disturbed, even by the contest from which we are never exempt against the remains and after effects of our original sin, why should this consciousness be disturbed, when we think of those powers of darkness from which we have been saved and transferred into the kingdom of the Son of God? Although the darkness has not wholly passed away, although a constant warfare is necessary, yet this warfare is not different from that which we wage against the world, and we should be of good cheer because we know Him who has conquered the world and the prince of the world, (John 16: 33. 12: 31).

Besides this, we must call to mind the statements which have been made respecting the mode of action of angels in general, and especially of the devil and the evil spirits. Their mode of action does not annul the natural or moral laws, but is in analogy and harmony with them. There is no contradiction between the propositions, that a phenomenon may be explained as connected with the mechanism of physiological and psychological causes, (if we may use this most decisive expression and speak of the mechanism of living bodies), and that it may also be derived from diabolical agency. We may consider the same evils as in one point of view to be referred to the devil, and in another as originating with and conditioned by physical and ethical laws. These statements rest upon the position that the workings of Satan are not to be conceived of as isolated, accidental, coming in here and there in an arbitrary and lawless manner, but that they are to be regarded as the coherent consequences of an apostasy and of the disorder thence ensuing, which, though begun in the spiritual world, has also been communicated to the visible world. And even as bodily disease, although really at war with the whole organism of the system, has yet its regular course dependent upon the organization of the body, so the disorder which proceeds from the devil must shape and develop itself according to the natural and moral laws which prevail in the world, and is of such a nature that it can be removed and healed. With this view we must indeed renounce the argument for the existence and agency of the devil which is derived from our experience of the inexplicable intrusion of sinful thoughts and desires into our minds; but on the other hand, we do not incur the hazard, in consequence of res-

ting on such like proofs, of having them endangered or refuted by greater severity in self-examination and reflection; and thus at last of seeing the whole doctrine of the devil metamorphosed into a figure of speech; of having the devil himself become as it were but the ever-retreating boundary stone upon the confines of that obscure region of the soul into which clear perception and sound judgment have not yet penetrated.<sup>1</sup> What is most important in this connection is, that we avoid the superstition which believes itself justified by the notion of satanic agency in overleaping the sequence of natural causes, or in not at all inquiring what were possible or necessary according to the laws of nature; and that we set ourselves against that moral superficiality, which, in referring a sinful inclination to the devil, believes itself exempted from the trouble of searching out the latent springs and seeds of evil in one's self, of endeavoring to prevent its beginnings or of earnestly opposing its progress. If we hold fast what has been already remarked that the devil effects an entrance into man's soul only by means of man's own evil lusts, that there is no moral working of the devil upon us except through our own evil wills, that there is no fellowship with him excepting what we ourselves enter into with him, and that when we are tempted by the devil, it is always our own guilt and sin; and on the other hand, if we remember, that the devil inevitably flees from us when we oppose sin, that Christ has redeemed us from his bondage, and that although we must fight, yet that we may be certain of victory through faith in the Redeemer:—then we cannot see how it is possible that the doctrine respecting the devil can have a benumbing or dispiriting effect upon our moral and religious feelings and actions.

But another objection may be brought forward. If by referring evil and sin to the agency of the devil, we do not change anything in our way of examining or judging about the natural causes and enticements to sin, why is it necessary to suppose that he has any agency at all? For manifestly we explain nothing by it, and it is therefore entirely superfluous.

This objection were pertinent if we looked upon the doctrine respecting the devil as an hypothesis for explaining the origin of sin and evil. Then, in order to prove it, we should not have relied solely upon Scripture, but should have been obliged to deduce it directly from the facts of our own experience and conscious-

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<sup>1</sup> Comp. Schleiermacher's *Glaubenslehre* § 56.

ness. We readily grant that the question respecting the origin of evil is not solved, but only put back one stage further, by the doctrine of the devil. But to what purpose then the latter doctrine? It is a disclosure made by revelation of a fact that belongs to another world, and which consequently were otherwise inaccessible to our experience or reflection. And the fact is this—that each individual man does not stand alone in his sin, that he is implicated in the general sinfulness of the whole race; and, in like manner, that the human race does not stand alone in its sinfulness, but that its fall is connected with a more general and direr apostasy, in which a large part of the world of spirits is involved, and into which they drew the family of man.

But is not this fact a matter of entire indifference for us? Has it any value or significancy in connection with our religious experience?

We have already seen that this doctrine is not a matter of indifference in respect to our general views of the nature, depth and extent of the corruption in which we are involved, and we now add, that it is still less a matter of indifference in view of our relation to sin and its urgent and special enticements. Will not the recollection that our personal sin is connected with a kingdom of darkness which is opposed to the kingdom of God and which aims at our utter ruin; that we have to contend with an enemy, whose fearfulness we may not dare despise, even when he uses means to get possession of us that at first sight seem harmless and in their immediate results unimportant; will it not be thought that every deviation from the path of the divine precepts, every yielding to impure lust and desire, is a snare which we put around ourselves with the possibility that it will drag us down into the abyss of diabolical evil and misery; will not this impart an earnestness, force and constancy to our abhorrence of evil and opposition to it, to our watchfulness against every temptation, such as could hardly be produced by any other representation?<sup>1</sup> And on the other hand, what can so strongly excite our longing for and joy in redemption, what can so enhance our love to Christ and our thankfulness to divine grace, what could be so effectual a motive to seek the aid of the Holy Spirit and to apply with fidelity and constancy all the means and appointments of the Christian scheme of redemption, as a consciousness of the danger with which the devil threatens us, from which

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<sup>1</sup> Comp. 1 Peter 5: 8.

Christ has partly set us free, and from which we shall be entirely redeemed only through His aid?<sup>2</sup>

Yet it cannot be maintained that no person can have a deep and earnest consciousness of his guilt and sinfulness, that no one can with his whole heart feel the need of redemption and divine assistance without thinking of and believing in the devil. On this account this doctrine is not to be regarded as one of those which are absolutely essential to Christian experience, and is not to be treated as a fundamental doctrine. For myself, considering the present state of things in our own land, that many even pious and believing Christians share in the general dislike of this truth, I would not wholly disapprove of the course of one who should avoid presenting it, so far as this can be done without detriment to Scripture, if he believed that it would endanger the great end of Christian edification without bringing a gain proportionate to the disadvantage that he might fear would arise. In any case, it is far more important to make the power of sin in our own hearts deeply felt, than to picture forth the authority and sin of the devil in strong colors. Nor is this the way of the Bible; and thus far, there is ground for the position that it speaks of the devil and his works rather by the way and occasionally, than expressly and designedly. We even see that John in his Gospel does not mention the possessed, which are so often spoken of by the other evangelists; most probably out of regard to the readers and the circumstances for whom and among whom his Gospel was especially written. And in this respect we also cannot follow a better guide, than that highest rule of faith and doctrine which our church recognizes the Bible to be, with which our Confessions of faith are entirely accordant. But if any one reject the whole doctrine, then I do not see how he can justify himself in retaining the biblical expressions even for liturgical use, or in sacred poetry, that poetry, I mean, which is intended to express the actual feelings and experience of a Christian congregation.

When a doctrine is so strongly contested, as is the one we have been considering, it may conduce to the clearness of our convictions, if we compare the results to which we have come with those of other investigators in the same field; it being presupposed, that the premises are not so entirely different, that

<sup>2</sup> This is granted by Schleiermacher, so far as he in the conception of the devil finds a recognition of the truth, that man can obtain protection against evil only from the Spirit of God himself; because sin exercises over man a power which cannot be reached and vanquished by his own will, or understood by his own intellect. (*Glaubenslehre* § 58.)



that there cannot be any adjustment or reconciliation between them, for then would a comparison be empty and fruitless. And since we have made the question of the existence of the devil wholly dependent upon the declarations of Holy Scripture, without being able to go into an examination of particular passages, it may be of additional importance to compare our results with the positions of those theologians who have made it their special object to take all the passages of the Bible that refer to the doctrine, and develop their meaning with the greatest possible degree of historical impartiality and truth. Among such theologians v. Cölln, too early deceased, takes a very honorable rank. With all the difference of our theological views, I yet regard his Biblical Theology as an admirable legacy for every one who wishes to attain a thorough knowledge of the biblical basis of our faith. How stands, then, his view of the biblical doctrine respecting the devil and his kingdom in comparison with our own?

According to v. Cölln, Jesus was not convinced of the reality of demoniacal influences. It was otherwise in respect to Satan; but even Satan was not supposed by Jesus to be a distinct personal being, with definite traits and attributes of character, but only the personification of the general notion of a hostile power of evil.<sup>1</sup> Thus, too, it was with the apostle John; for him, Satan had only a general symbolical importance, but he did not think of him as a real personal being; he was only a sign or figure of the ungodly principle which is opposed to the ends of God's kingdom.<sup>2</sup> In the same way, Paul intends only to represent, in a sensible form, the principle of evil; he speaks of it, not in abstract phrases, but in a concrete manner, as Satan.<sup>3</sup>

Abstracting, now, from all which is unessential or of but secondary importance (to which belongs v. Cölln's view, that the evil principle for which the apostles used the word Satan as a symbol, is nothing but our earthly desires, or our vain sensual lusts), this theologian agrees with us in the view, that the idea of an evil power, hostile to the kingdom of God, lies at the basis of what Christ and the apostles have said respecting Satan. And according to our own views, this is the chief thing, although we should recollect that there must be something in the idea itself which led Jesus and the apostles to understand and represent it<sup>4</sup> in the pre-

<sup>1</sup> Von Cölln's *Biblische Theologie*, Th. II p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> The same, p. 234.

<sup>3</sup> The same, p. 237.

<sup>4</sup> If, for example, evil be nothing but a transitory manifestation of the fluctuations that necessarily result from the conflict between the sensual and rational

cise concrete way they did; and this, too, although this designation of the evil principle as Satan be nothing more than a mere personification. But here comes up the very point of contest, as to the personal existence of the devil and his angels.

In regard to this, there are two extreme opinions, both opposed to the doctrine of the church. The one is, that which v. Cölln maintains, that the doctrine rests upon a mere personification, and is therefore only the product of a mode of exhibiting and understanding the notion of an evil principle, corresponding with the culture of the times. The other extreme view would be, if it was conceived that in Satan evil itself had become personal, had come, if we may use the phrase, to a consciousness of itself, that in him evil was concentrated into a self-conscious personality; as, according to some physiological views, disease is not merely the cause of the deposit or discharge of peccant matter (*materia peccans*), but sometimes attains an independent existence in malignant ulcers, or in some unnatural forms of organization, which may have the semblance of health, but are wholly opposed to it. It is not to be denied that some such conception of it must have been in the minds of many who supposed they were talking about the devil in a very orthodox way; but it is not the doctrine of the church. According to the true view, the general evil power has indeed become a matter of conscious experience, and in this sense has attained to personality; but only in beings who were originally created good and for good, but who have voluntarily given themselves up to sin, or have let themselves become subject to this evil power. Von Cölln, and every body else, will concede the truth of the last statement in its application to the human race. The difference of the doctrine of the church is then only this, that it asserts that higher spirits have fallen, have fallen deeper than man, have fallen so deep that they exhibit in themselves personified evil itself. If the possibility of this (as we believe we have proved) cannot be denied, why will we rather force a personification into the words of Jesus and the apostles, than take the natural sense of the expressions as the true opinion of those that uttered them?

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nature (those two factors of our moral life), this mode of representing it would be inconceivable even as a symbolical one. Take the two propositions—Ananias has a diabolical thought—and, a diabolical thought has got hold of Ananias (Acts 5:3); only the second of these can be understood as meaning to give a figurative representation of the notion that it was put into him by a personal evil spirit distinct from himself, even though one might have a fancy very much inclined to personifications.