

and instead of praying that it may live, she resigns it into the hand of God who gave it, and would fondly pray him to take it away—just because it is a monster—an annoyance, and continual source of trouble and anxiety to those who gave it birth—a burden to itself—a burden to society—and as unseemly for the parent to look upon, as it is unpleasant for her to know that the monster is her own.

There are thus monsters in the vegetable kingdom, as well as in the irrational and rational kingdom—these *lusus naturæ*, are encumbrances at best; they are only tolerated, and their existence is a source of anxiety and distress to all concerned.

But there are MONSTERS also in the MORAL WORLD—a kind of thing that we very often meet in the shape and form in which Milton describes them—“Gorgons and Hydras and Chimeras dire;” and pray, what are these, *lusus Christiani* in the Church? Are they not—if we may be allowed to adopt technical language—*bicardia*, or *multi-cardia*—*bilinguae*, or *Polyglossæ*?

There are monsters in the moral world, and, truly, monstrous are they indeed. They are *double-hearted*—that is, they have a heart for the world, and a heart for God; or, rather, they have a mixed heart. “A double-minded man” is a monster in the moral world—that is, he is just in the Church what a monster is in the irrational world—a source of annoyance, and vexation, and trouble to all who know him and are concerned with him—he does no good—but much harm; he is also “*unstable in all his ways*,” so saith James—he occupies the room of a single-minded man, and while filling his room, he is doing mischief—for he is either grumbling or growling in the Church, or he is back-biting and devouring if out of it—so that he may truly be compared to Pharaoh's cattle, “always devouring, and always lean.” He never thrives in the Church—he never remains long enough in any Church to allow his soul to grow fat, for he is unstable in ALL his ways. His mind is double—he is, therefore, a monster—a dwarf—and he never reaches maturity—he never attains perfection, but is a source of perpetual trouble to the Church of Christ, and to every believer who knows him or has any intercourse with him.

There are, then, the *double-tongued* monsters—*bilingual bipeds*.—There is scarcely a “no” in all their vocabulary. If one man says “it rains,” their reply is—“yes;” another says “it's fair”—“yes;” another, “it snows”—“yes;” another, “it is sunshine”—“yes.” This class of moral monsters pray and blaspheme alternately—quote scripture and obscene books in succession—bless and curse with the same breath.—Their tongues are at this moment dipped in honey, and the next in gall—to-day they flatter, to-morrow they back-bite you—at this moment kiss you, the next they betray you—to-day they cry hail him, to-morrow crucify him. “Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.” Such is a sample of moral monstrosity. We may likely resume the subject, and point out the evils of the *double-eye*, &c., as such cases are not found in the world only, but also often in the Church. Z.

### IMPRECATORY PSALMS.

Commentators have been greatly perplexed with those Psalms in which David prays for curses on his enemies. This is evident from the numerous expositions that have been given of them, combined with the constant, ever-recurring feeling that the real difficulty has not been met. It has been contended, for instance, that the Imprecatory Psalms are not prayers but predictions, not the expression of a wish that vengeance may overtake the sinner, but a prophecy that it shall; and as if conscious that such an interpretation did not in many cases meet the difficulty, it has been further alledged, that if the Psalms in question are prayers, they belong to an inferior dispensation, under which the tolerant principles of the Gospel were not recognised and acted upon. But on investigation it will be found that such a broad distinction between the Old and New Testaments does not exist; that the essential principles of morality and religion are permanent and unchangeable; and that the present dispensation is the development as well as the fulfilling of the past. As an exemplification of this general principle, we find that the doctrine of divine retribution is the same through both dispensations, and that passages, exactly parallel with the imprecatory Psalms are found in the New Testament. Thus the Saviour pronounced the most fearful woes upon

Chorazin and Bethsaida, when it is manifest that our Lord is not merely uttering a *prediction*, but expressing a *wish*, that such calamities should come. Matt. xi. 20–21. Paul, moved by the Holy Spirit, under whose direction he wrote, prays that the most exemplary vengeance might descend on the head of one of his adversaries. “Alexander, the copersmith, did me much evil; the Lord reward him according to his works;” that is, let him be signally punished. 2 Tim. iv. 14. And in the book of Revelation: “the souls of them that were slain for the word of God,” and from whose bosoms every revengeful feeling is necessarily excluded, cry out from under the altar, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” Rev. vi. 10. These quotations show that the very same spirit as to retribution pervades both dispensations, and that consequently the principle on which we justify the inspired writers, in praying for vengeance on their enemies must be equally applicable to both the Old and New Testaments.

The Imprecatory Psalms must not be explained as if they sanctioned a spirit of revenge. Such a spirit is as completely opposed to the precepts and principles of the Old Testament, as it is to the New. “Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart.” Leviticus xix. 17, 18. And so far was David from cherishing a spirit of revenge, that when the Lord twice put Saul into his power, he spared the life of his inveterate and malignant foe; and so tender was his conscience on this point, that scarcely had he, on one occasion, cut off Saul's skirt, till his heart smote him: He even invokes the divine vengeance on his head, if he had at any time cherished a spirit of revenge. “If I have rendered evil to him that was at peace with me,” says he, “or spoiled him that without cause was mine enemy, let the enemy persecute my soul and take it, yea let him tread my life upon the earth, and lay mine honour in the dust.” The question then recurs, On what principle do we justify David in praying for vengeance, in almost every variety of form, to descend on the head of his enemies? He evidently does so—

1. Because he views his enemies as rebels against God; and every loyal subject must wish and pray that his sovereign should be victorious over his enemies. “Destroy, thou, them, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions, for they have rebelled against thee.” The sentiment which the Psalmist teaches in this Psalm is, that the laws of God necessarily execute themselves, and that every sin uniformly inflicts its own punishment. Hence the wicked fall by their own counsels; they are cast out in the multitude of their transgressions, and consequently their destruction necessarily flows from their own sinful action. It is not, therefore, necessary that God should inflict on them any positive punishment in order to their destruction; he has only to leave them under the influence of their transgressions, and the tendency that sin has to perpetuate itself, and the work is done. Hence the wicked could only be happy were God, by some special interposition, to cut the present connexion that subsists between sin and holiness, and work a continual miracle in favour of impiety and irreligion: and as such a mode of procedure would obliterate all the evidences of his moral government in this world, and give occasion to the injurious reflection that he is indifferent to the cause of truth and holiness, David prays that God would manifest his avenging justice. Those who are described in this Psalm are incurably wicked. “They have rebelled against thee.” They are regarded as the avowed enemies of Jehovah, and they have manifestly reached a point beyond which the mercy of God does not extend, and, therefore, David prays that God would justify his character as the righteous judge of all the earth, by making sin its own punishment. Those that persevere in their wickedness God must punish by leaving them under the influence of their transgressions, as well as by positive inflictions, and what God does and must do, that man not merely *may*, but *must* wish.

2. The punishment of the wicked is desirable when it involves the deliverance of the righteous. The Scripture speaks of the heathen either as benefactors of the Israelites, or as God's instruments in punishing them for their iniquities. With respect to the former relation, God said to his people, “I will bless them that bless thee,” and in reference to the latter, Assyria is styled the rod of God's anger. But when chastisement has