

mission in view of the results to those who yield under temptation? In answer to these questions there can be adduced speculations, and no more. The existence of evil, the origin of evil, the soul of man has vexed itself in every age with travailing to push this problem to a solution, but the solution comes not yet, and where the dread shadow falls we do but grope in darkness after those who lost their way here long ago. But let the existence of evil and of the Arch-propagandist of evil be once admitted, and the perplexities that follow from this admission put for the present on one side, the question may be fairly asked, Is it better to be obliged to think that Satan can assail us as he pleases, whenever he likes, and as often as he likes, or to be able to think rather, that, like Pilate, he can have no power at all against us except it be given him from above? Surely the latter is best, if it thus comes to what is apparently but a choice of evils, since "God is faithful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it." And as it is most reassuring to think this, so it seems to be what Scripture teaches. Against Job, for instance, Satan could do nothing till God gave him power, nor could he at any stage of his malicious machinations do more than God permitted. And if God gave permission, so bringing His servant into sore temptation, it was with no wish that he should fall. Even to entertain such a thought were blasphemy. No, it was because God had confidence in the man's integrity that He suffered his faithfulness to be brought to such a crucial test. Within certain limits the great enemy was allowed to do his worst, and the fact remains that thereby Job gained an approximation which he could not otherwise have gained towards God's best.

Or take the case of St. Peter. "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you (*ἐξήτήσατο ὑμᾶς*), that he may sift you as wheat." The form of the Greek word implies that the desire was granted. Confining ourselves to the case of this one Apostle, it is clear that Satan was to do what he could against St. Peter's faith. So far, then, he was led into