

manifestations of God's irresistible power in delivering souls from the bondage of sin, he might still hope to maintain his own interest in the world at large to the dishonor of God. He knew that the empire he had gained would not be retained without a conflict. But it would be hard for him to believe that he would sustain defeat at the hand of the "seed of the woman," or that a descendant of the woman, whom his cowardly craft had overcome, would be the author of his overthrow and of the extinction of his interest in a world in which he had secured almost universal sway. It would be to fall into the common error of ascribing divine attributes to Satan to think that he knew beforehand what we now know, of the union of deity with humanity in the person of his predicted conqueror and destroyer, and of the way in which his rule of the world was to be overthrown and extinguished. We cannot doubt that he was in a state of uncertainty and suspense in relation to a coming conflict, in which he still hoped that his power and subtility, though taxed to the uttermost, might prevail.

The long period of uncertainty and suspense was now drawing to a close. The promised Saviour had been born. Satan knowing of his birth, his first effort was to have Him destroyed immediately, by the jealousy of a wicked and cruel king; because however hopeful he might be of success in a conflict with Him, he would, we may be sure, much prefer to *evade* a conflict, as he always does (James iv. 7), *courage* being *conspicuously absent* in his mode of warfare. In this effort, he was defeated by the special providence of God, Matt. ii., and, under the same watchful providence, the child had now grown to maturity. During the whole period of His growth, Satan doubtless had his eye upon Him, and, as he was permitted, did his part in the temptations by which the childhood and youth of Jesus were assailed, in common with the childhood and youth of other men. But, we are sure, no temptation by which He was assailed issued, at any time, *in sin*. There was nothing in Him of that universal human depravity that makes exposure to temptation so dangerous, and so fatal often to childhood and youth. And as to peculiar temptations, not only was He largely secured against exposure to them by His perfect holiness of heart, but, we may be sure, Satan was restrained from making any extraordinary assault upon Him, until the proper time should arrive for his being permitted to put