

THE PERSON AND KINGDOM OF SATAN.

If the reading of this paper contributes in any degree to the removal of error and the firmer confirmation of faith in the doctrines of which it treats, the writer feels that this effort will not have been in vain. I purpose therefore to consider this subject, viz; The Person and Kingdom of Satan, under two aspects :

I. The influence of Materialistic Philosophy.

II. Christ's teaching with regard to evil and the evil one.

We find that hostility to formulated doctrine is one of the marked features of popular religious sentiment: especially has this been the case with the ancient and almost universally accepted doctrine of Diabolic personality. Assailed by materialistic philosophy on the one hand, unnumbered attempts have been made to explain away, by resorting to metaphor or personification, what hitherto had been accepted as actual truth; and overwhelmed on the other by sarcasm and ridicule, the whole subject of Diabolic personality has been summarily thrust aside as unworthy of serious consideration. That such should have been the case is by no means surprising when we consider the undue prominence which has been given to it, and the baneful consequences which have flowed from exaggerations and perversions during centuries of gross superstition. During the middle ages and onwards, until near the close of the seventeenth century Satanic personality was a prominent factor in the popular faith. Among all classes and stations Satan and his Kingdom possessed the vividness, certainty, and influence of tangible realities. To Anthony in the third, as to Luther in the sixteenth century, an overwrought imagination vouched for his immediate presence. Clad in a hair shirt amid the loneliness of his forest cave, the former supposed himself called upon to wage a ceaseless warfare with the Evil One.

From such exaggerated and materialistic conceptions of Satanic personality a rebound was certain. Truth, however, is rarely if ever to be found in one extreme more than in its opposite, and so we are not surprised to find a later period distinguished for laxity in upholding this form of doctrinal truth. But we must not forget that