

the extravagances of personal torture have worn the garb of seraphic piety :—the Fanaticism of intolerance has shone in combination with great qualities ; and the zeal of military proselytism has made alliance with substantial virtues. There is nothing, then, to wonder at, if even genuine piety and the brightest personal excellence are found to exist under a state of things which owes its origin to an impulse essentially fanatical. The question is always, not whether accomplishments and virtues and piety exist within this or that system ; but simply—whether the system itself be good or evil.

The Fanaticism of the Symbol—or a malign and turbulent zeal for the honour of a creed, supposes of course, the possession of a written and authoritative canon of faith. But then this rule has to be interpreted ; and the interpretation, in each instance, insensibly draws to itself those profound emotions which the sacred importance of the canon calls into play.

It does not appear that sectarian rancour, in any distinct form, had shewn itself before the time when the Jewish prophetic economy having been sealed, and the written Testimony of God consigned, in a defunct dialect, to INTERPRETERS, a field was opened to diversities of opinion, each of which challenged to itself entire, the prerogatives that attach of right to the original document. From the period when Exposition of Scripture became the business of a class of men, the Jewish community parted into sects which, in an exasperated condition, were the main causes of the ruin of the state, the destruction of the city, and the dispersion of the race.

In this instance what we assume to have been *new* in the history of human nature, was not the existence or the breaking forth of the diversities of opinion ; for these have disturbed all countries in all ages ; nor was it the alliance of certain modes of thinking on abstract subjects with temporary and political interests ; for nothing has been more common than such associations. But the novelty was precisely this—That the tremendous weight of God's sanction—truly believed to belong to the Canon of Faith, was claimed by each party in behalf of its special exposition of the rule. So fatal an assumption effected a firm coalescence of every religious sentiment with the passionate workings of self-love, pride, jealousy, and the sense of personal and corporate welfare.

Within the circle of these feelings every proper element of Fanaticism finds room, and no species of Fanaticism has been altogether so compact or so permanent. The other kinds (as we have seen) have had their hour and have vanished ; this has settled down upon Religion—documentary religion, as well in Europe as in Asia, and now in America, and has become the inseparable condition of all forms of Worship.

We say every proper element of Fanaticism displays itself in the Fanaticism of the Symbol.—As for example :—The Divine Being, when so outraged as to be made the patron of a virulent faction, appears to the votary altogether under a malign aspect, and can no