

interested themselves in the criticism of the Bible, that a great deal of labor has been expended over the external form of the narratives in which the temptation of Christ and the temptation of Adam are told. I shall not take up our time with any discussion upon mere critical questions as to the external form of those temptations. Goethe has said, in the "mystical chorus," which closes the greatest of his works,

"All that is fleeting
Is but a symbol."

That is to say, everything that is transitory in human history finds its value, not in its transitory form; it finds its value only when we break through the shell of fleeting incident, and reach the kernel of imperishable truth of which it is the temporal symbol. Now, whenever we throw aside questions of mere criticism, we find that not only the story of Christ's temptation, but that of Adam's temptation also, has a meaning that is eternal. Let destructive critics do their very worst on the external form of these stories, we shall still find that they represent to us just such transactions as may take place any day in the lives of men. Have any of us escaped from the tragedy of Adam's temptation and fall? Have any of us gone through life without being brought into the presence of forbidden fruit? Have we not all heard an evil spirit, with the subtlety of a serpent, suggesting to us too, "Surely God cannot have forbidden you—it cannot be so very bad—to take just a little taste of that fruit. See what a delight it is to the eyes, how desirable it is for the purpose of making one wise. Don't be a milkop in your innocent ignorance of the world. Go on! and see something of life, that you may get an insight into its evil as well as its good." Have we not all listened to such subtle suggestions of an evil spirit, and taken a taste of the forbidden fruit, just like Adam and Eve? Nay, have we not sometimes felt a certain glory in our daring adventure, exulting as if we had become like gods, knowing both good and evil. But, ah me! who would not willingly give up all the insight into life, which he