

*their* fears. Satan, therefore, too successfully, instead of appealing to their fears, sought to make them regardless of the consequences of disobedience, representing their probation as a needless and jealous encroachment on their liberty, the assertion of which, he said, could issue only in their advantage. But Jesus was now in a *wilderness*, meetly emblematic of the once blessed earth, now under the curse, yet as much exceeding it in desolation as the beauty of Eden exceeded that of the yet unblighted world ; and, instead of the prospect of an easy probation, there was before Him that of opposition violent and fierce as hell could make it. So that, without venturing to conjecture details, we think it will readily be granted that Satan would only show his characteristic subtility and craft by putting forth his utmost endeavors to turn Jesus aside from the work He had undertaken by working upon His fears of what was before Him. He had undertaken the work of overthrowing Satan's world-wide dominion of ignorance, error, and sin, and of establishing on its ruins His own kingdom of light and truth, and of peace and righteousness, and of thus re-establishing His Father's righteous authority on earth, or, as the apostle expresses it, delivering up the kingdom to the Father, having put down all opposing rule, authority, and power, I. Cor. xv. 24. Retiring to meditate and pray, in view of what was now immediately before Him, Satan is permitted to put forth all the power he has to act upon the human spirit, in presenting his work in its darkest aspects. And so terrible was the assault, and so steady the resolution with which it was met, and, therefore, so intense the spiritual strain that resulted, that, while it lasted, the wants of nature were entirely forgotten.

The issue of the conflict was the defeat of the assailant. The enemy was completely foiled. If his attempt was of the character we have supposed, we are sure that, during all that dark and dreadful period, Christ's resolution never wavered—that no unbelieving fear ever, for an instant, found a lodgment in His mind, and that no aspect of His work, however fearful to contemplate, had any effect upon Him, except to induce a firmer reliance on Him whose work He came to do. Satan could find no point at which any of his fiery darts could enter. All were promptly quenched by the shield of faith, wielded with a steady resolution and an unfailing skill which he had never before come