improbably supposed, that some of these  
dæmoniacs may have arrived at their  
dreadful state through various progressive  
degrees of guilt and sensual abandonment.  
‘Lavish sin, and especially indulgence in  
sensual lusts, superinducing, as it would  
often, a weakness in the nervous system,

which is the especial band between body  
and soul, may have laid open these un-  
happy ones to the fearful incursions of  
the powers of darkness.’ (Trench on the  
Miracles, p.160.) (5) The frequently urged  
objection, How comes it that this malady  
is not *now* among us? admits of an easy  
answer, even if the assumption be granted.  
The period of our Lord’s being on earth  
was certainly more than any other in the  
history of the world under the dominion  
of evil. The foundations of man’s moral  
being were broken up, and the ‘hour and  
power of darkness’ prevailing. Trench  
excellently remarks, ‘It was exactly the  
crisis for such soul-maladies as these, in  
which the spiritual and bodily should be  
thus strangely interlinked, and it is nothing wonderful that they should have  
abounded at that time; for the predominance of certain spiritual maladies at  
certain epochs of the world’s history which  
were specially fitted for their generation,  
with their gradual decline and disappearance in others less congenial to them, is  
a fact itself admitting no manner of question’ (pp. 162, 163). Besides, as the  
same writer goes on to observe, there can  
be no doubt that the coming of the Son  
of God in the flesh, and the continual  
testimony of Jeeus borne by the Church in  
her preaching and ordinances, have broken  
and kept down, in some measure, the  
grosser manifestations of the power of  
Satan. (See Luke x. 18.) But (6) the  
assumption contained in the objection  
above must not be thus unreservedly  
granted. We cannot tell in how many  
cases of insanity the malady may not even  
now be traced to direct dæmoniacal possession. And, finally, (7) the above view,  
which I am persuaded is the only one  
honestly consistent with any kind of belief  
in the truth of the Gospel narratives, will  
offend none but those who deny the existence of the world of spirits altogether, and  
who are continually striving to narrow the  
limits of our belief in that which is invisible; a view which at every step involves difficulties far more serious than  
those from which it attempts to escape.  
But (II.) a fresh difficulty is here found in  
the latter part of the narrative, in which  
the devils *enter into the swine*, and *their  
destruction follows*. (1) Of the *reason* of  
this permission, we surely are not competent judges. Of this however we are  
sure, that ‘if this granting of the request  
of the evil spirits helped in any way the  
cure of the man, caused them to resign  
their hold on him more easily, mitigated  
the paroxysm of their going forth (see  
Mark ix. 26), this would have been motive  
enough. Or still more probably, it may  
have been necessary, for the permanent  
healing of the man, that he should have  
an outward evidence and testimony that  
the hellish powers which held him in  
bondage had quitted him.’ (Trench, p. 172.)  
(2) The destruction of the swine is not for  
a moment to be thought of in the matter,  
as if that were an act repugnant to the  
merciful character of our Lord’s miracles.  
It finds its parallel in the cursing of the  
fig-tree (ch. xxi. 18–22); and we may  
well think that, if God has appointed so  
many animals daily to be slaughtered for  
the sustenance of men’s bodies, He may  
also be pleased to destroy animal life when  
He sees fit for the liberation or instruction  
of their souls. Besides, if the confessedly  
far greater evil of the possession of *men* by  
evil spirits, and all the misery thereupon  
attendant, was permitted in God’s inscrutable purposes, surely much more this  
lesser one. Whether there may have been  
special reasons in this case, such as the  
contempt of the Mosaic law by the keepers  
of the swine, we have no means of judging: but it is at least possible. (3) The  
fact itself related raises a question in our  
minds, which, though we cannot wholly  
answer, we may yet approximate to the  
solution of. How can we imagine the  
bestial nature capable of the reception of  
dæmoniac influence? If what has been  
cited above be true, and the unchecked  
indulgence of sensual appetite afforded an  
inlet for the powers of evil to possess the  
human demoniac, then we have their influence joined to that part of man’s nature  
which he has in common with the brutes  
that perish, the *animal and sensual soul*.