THE CHRISTIANS IN COMPLETE ARMOR

WILLIAM GURNALL

The Christians in Complete Armor

William Gurnall

A free edition from

Christian Reader

A reading & audiobook app for classic Christian literature

About this Book

A landmark of **Puritan spiritual theology**, this exhaustive treatise on Ephesians 6 equips believers for the **war against Satan, sin, and the world**. Gurnall methodically exposes the devil's subtlety and power, then furnishes the Christian with every piece of **the whole armor of God** — its nature, purpose, and practical use. Marked by pastoral warmth and theological precision, it remains one of the most thorough treatments of **spiritual warfare** in Christian literature, prized for its counsel on maintaining **courage, faith, and perseverance** under trial.

About Christian Reader

• • •

Christian Reader is a free reading and audiobook app for classic Christian literature, with high-quality narration available as a premium upgrade.

Available on iOS and Android.

https://apps.apple.com/us/app/christian-reader/id6755921023

https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.samfrisch.christian_reader

---

Contents

To My Dearly Beloved Friends and Neighbors, the Inh... 6
A Treatise of the Whole Armor of God 13
Chapter 1. Of Christian Courage and Resolution, Wher... 17
Chapter 2. Of the Saints' Strength, Where It Lies, and ... 29
Chapter 3. Of Acting Our Faith on the Almighty Power... 41
Chapter 4. Of Acting Our Faith on the Almighty Power... 48
Chapter 5. Wherein Is Answered a Grand Objection T... 66
Chapter 1. Showing the Christless and Graceless Soul t... 79
Chapter 2. Showing That the Armor We Use Against S... 88
Chapter 3. Showing That the Armor We Use for Our D... 96
Chapter 4. Of the Entireness of Our Furniture — It M... 103
Chapter 5. Of the Use of Our Spiritual Armor, or the E... 114
Chapter 1. Of Satan's Subtlety to Choose the Most Adv... 129
Chapter 2. Satan's Subtlety in Managing His Temptati... 135
Chapter 3. Of Satan's Subtlety in Choosing Instrumen... 142
Chapter 4. Wherein This Point of Satan's Subtlety, as ... 150
Chapter 5. Wherein Is Showed the Subtlety of Satan a... 156
Chapter 6. A Brief Application of the Second Branch o... 170
Chapter 7. Containing Some Directions Tending to En... 174
Chapter 8. Of the Saints' Victory Over Their Subtle En... 186
Chapter 9. An Account Is Given How the All-Wise Go... 191

Chapter 10. A Brief Application of the Point in Two Br... 204
Chapter 1. Showing the Christian's Life Here to Be a C... 210
Chapter 2. Wherein Is Showed What Is Meant by Fles... 228
Chapter 3. Wherein Is Shown What a Principality Sata... 241
Chapter 4. Of the Great Power Satan Has Not Only Ov... 259
Chapter 5. Of the Time When, the Place Where, and t... 275
Chapter 6. Of the Spirituality of the Devil's Nature an... 327
Chapter 7. Of Satan's Plot to Defile the Christian's Spi... 339
Chapter 8. How Satan Labors to Corrupt the Christian... 348
Chapter 9. Of Pride of Gifts and How Satan Tempts th... 356
Chapter 10. Of Pride of Grace 371
Chapter 11. The Third Kind of Spiritual Pride — Pride ... 388
Chapter 12. Showing What the Prize Is Which Believer... 397
Chapter 13. An Exhortation to the Pursuit of Heaven a... 415
Chapter 1. The Reason Why the Apostle Renews the S... 426
Chapter 2. The Best of Saints Subject to Decline in Th... 431
Chapter 3. A Cautionary Direction from What We Ma... 436
Chapter 4. A Word of Counsel for the Recovery of Dec... 443
Chapter 5. The Words Opened, and What Is Meant by ... 450
Chapter 6. Showing That the Day of Affliction Is Evil a... 454
Chapter 7. The Application of the Point 467
Chapter 8. The Second Argument with Which the Exh... 478

To My Dearly Beloved Friends and Neighbors, the Inhabitants of Lavenham

• • •

My Dear Friends,

SOlomon says, The desire of a man is his kindness, and a poor man is better than a liar, Proverbs 19:22. If you be of his minde, I dare promise these Notes, (which I here devote to your service) a kinde acceptance at your hands. You will finde me to be the poor man, by the mite I present you with; but the hearty desire of your eternal happiness from which it comes, will (I hope) clear me from being the liar. I never could be so serviceable to you, as many Ministers are to their people, having been with you in much weakness, and still it is the good pleasure of God, I should be staked down to a short tedder of strength and other abilities; I have reason therefore, (that I may, though not recompence that want, yet express my deep sense thereof) to croud the more love into the little I can do for you. And truly my heart is enlarged to you, and to God for you. If any thing makes me loath to be gone into another world, (which my dropping house bids me above many prepare for) it is not the least, to think I shall leave no more of you walking in the way to eternal life, and you who are on

your way there, in no closer Gospel-order for your mutual help and comfort in your journey: yea, while I am among you, little do you think how much of your poor Ministers life lies at your mercy. If I should measure my life by the joy of it, (as indeed who does not?) Then in some uprightnesse I can say with Paul, I live as I see any of you stand fast in the Lord, and die as I see others stand fast in their sins, not to be moved with all the entreaties of the Gospel which have wooed you. And why (my dear friends) should not the life of your souls be much more precious in your own sight then mine? But I forbear, I would not willingly be thought, as some husbands are, to be kinder to you abroad before strangers, then I am at home.

What I present you with in this Treatise, is a dish from your own table, and so (I hope) will go down the better. You cannot despise it (though the fare be mean) except you will blame your selves who chose the Cook. I cannot be earnest with others, to bestow so much time as to read over these plain Sermons, lest it should be to their losse; it were but to call them from gathering sheaves in the more fruitful labors of others, to glean a few eares, and those but thin also in mine; yet with you, my people, I may be a little bold. Physicians say, the mothers milk though not so weighty as anothers, if no noxious humor be tasted in it, because natural, is more proper for the child then a strangers. And, I think, it would not be an errour, if I should say it held in the milk which the Minister gives to his flock. A people conscienciously lying at the breasts of their own Minister, (if the milk he gives be wholesome) may expect the blessing of God for their nourishment, though it has not so much lusciousnesse to please the curious taster as some others. Well, whatever these Sermons were, some of

those few spirits which you found in hearing, will be missing in the reading of them. It is as easie to paint fire with the heat, as with pen and ink to commit that to paper, which occurres in preaching. There is as much difference between a Sermon in the Pulpit, and printed in a book, as between milk in the warme breast, and in a sucking bottle, yet what it loseth in the lively taste, is recompenced by the convenience of it. The book may be at hand when the Preacher cannot; and truly, that's the chief end of printing, that as the bottle and spoon is used when the mother is sick or out of the way; so the book, to quiet the Christian and stay his stomach in the absence of the Ordinance. He that reads Sermons and good bookes at home to save his paines of going to hear, is a thief to his soul in a religious habit: he consults for his ease, but not for his profit; he eats cold meat when he may have hot: He hazards the losing the benefit of both by contemning of one. If the Spouse could have had her beloved at home, she needed not to have coursed the streets and waited on the publick. O what need we offer sacriledge for sacrifice, rob God of one duty to pay him another? He has laid our work in better order, one wheele would not interfere with another, if we did more regularly. A chief part of Davids Arithmetick of numbring our days, lies in that which we call division, as to cast the account of this our short life so, as to divide the little whole summe thereof into the several portions of time due for the performing of every duty in. An Instrument is not in tune, except it have all the strings, and those will not make good musick, if the Musician has not wisdom to cause every string to speak in its due time; The Christian is not in tune, except he takes in all the duties of his place and calling, neither will the performance of them be harmonious in Gods eare, if every one be not done in its proper

season. O my friends, labor not only to do the duty of your place, but that duty in its own place also. Heare when you should hear. Know your rime for closet, and time for shop: and when your retiring hour comes, a few minutes now and then spent in taking a repetition of what formerly you heard, shall not (I hope) another day be reckoned with your lost time. The Subject of the Treatise is solemn, A War between the Saint and Satan, and that so bloody a one, that the cruellest which ever was fought by men, will be found but sport and childes play to this. Alas, what is the killing of bodies to destroying of souls? 'Tis a sad meditation indeed, to think how many thousands have been sent to the grave in a few late years among us by the sword of man; But far more astonishing, to consider how many of those may be sent to hell by the sword of Gods wrath. 'Tis a spiritual war you shall reade of, and that not a history of what was fought many ages past and is now over; but of what now is doing, the Tragedy is at present acting, and that not at the furthest end of the world, but what concernes you and every one that reades it. The stage whereon this war is fought, is every mans own soul. Here is no Neuter in this war, the whole world is engaged in the quarrel, either for God against Satan, or for Satan against God. It was a great question some years past, Who are you for? The not giving a good account to which has cost many a life. O my dear friends, think solemnly what answer you meane to give to God and conscience, when they in a dying hour shall ask every one of you, Who are you for? 'Tis an incomparable mercy, that you are yet where you may choose your side: It will not be ever so, may be not a day to an end. If once in another world, you must then stand to your colours, yet you may run from the Devils quarters, and be taken into Christs pay. The Drum beats in the Gospel for

Voluntiers. O, the Lord make you willing in the day of his power. I know you all would be on the surest side. O what can you be sure of, while under the devils Ensigne, but damnation? The curse of God cleavs to him and all that takes part with him O let not the little plunder & spoil of sinful pleasures and pelf, bewitch you still to follow his Camp. What is that souldier better for his booty he gets in a fight, who before he can get off with it, is himself slain upon the place? (so many have been served in these wars, if reports be true.) 'Tis that you must certainly look for. The piece is charg'd, and aime taken at your breast, which will be your eternal death if you persistest. Gods threatenings will go off at last and then where are you? where, but in hell, where your wedge of gold and Babylonish garment, your wages of unrighteousnesse will do you little stead? O Neighbors, I am loath to leave you in the way where Gods bullets flie; but I must have a word for you, my Christian friends, who have espoused Christs quarrel, and are in the field against Satan. My heart is towards you, who have thus willingly offered your selves among the Lords people to his help against the mighty. He can destroy him without you, but he takes your love as kindly as if he could not. God has sent me (as Jesse did David) with this little present to you and the rest of my Brethren that are in his Camp. May it be but to the strengthening of your hearts and hands in fighting the Lords battels, and I shall blesse God that put it into my heart thus to visit you. O hold on, dear friends, in your Christian warfare, let none take the crown from you. Whet your courage at the throne of grace, from whence all your recruits of soul-strength come. Send faith oft up the hill of the Promise, to see and bring you the certain newes of Christs coming to you, yea, for you, and assured victory with him. Reade the exploits, which

Christs Worthies by faith have done, and in their Conquests reade your own, for in them he spoke with us, as the Prophet of Jacob. Be thankful for every victory you get, and let not the houling wilderness, yet before you, put the song of your praises for temptations past out of tune, yet rejoyce with trembling, as those who are still in your enemies countrey, and must keep by the sword what you get by the sword: Be sure you stand in close order amongst your selves; These times give us too many sad examples of such, who first fell from communion with their Brethren, and then into the devourers hand; straglers are soon snap't; you will finde you are safest in a body. Take heed of a private spirit; let not only your particular safety, but of the whole Army of Saints be in your eye and care, especially that company in which you march, (Congregation I mean;) that souldier which can see an enemy in fight with his brethren, and not help them, he makes t but the more easie for the enemy to slay himself at last; Say not therefore, Am I my brothers Keeper? God would not keep him that cared not to keep his brother. Watch over one another, not to play the Criticks on your brothers failings, and triumph when he halts, but to help him up if he falls, or if possible, to keep him from falling by a timely rescue, as Abishai came to Davids succour. Keep your rank and file. We see what advantage Satan has got in these loose times, since we have learnt to fight him out of order, and the private souldier, (Christian I mean) has taken the officers work out of his hands. Harden your selves against the scandals, which the cowardize and treachery of false brethren has given you. He is the right souldier that is not discouraged by those that run from, or that are slain in the battel; but still presses on to victory, though he goes to it over the backs of others that are killed upon the place. In a word,

Disintangle your hearts what you can from the love of, and distracting cares for this present world. No man that warrs intangls himself with the affaires of this life,that he may please him who has chosen him to be a souldier, 2 Timothy 2:4. If it behoves any to have their Will ready made, and their worldly interests set at some stay, then surely the souldier: if any souldier, then the Christian. Get but once your hearts mortified to the world, and care rolled upon God, for name, estate, and relations here, and then you are fit to march whereever Christ will lead you. The want of this has made many run home to save their own private stake there, when they should have been in the field for Christ. And now, my Christian friends, march on, not in the confidence of your Armour, but in the power of his might, who has promised shortly to subdue Satan under your feet. I have done, only I must crave pardon of you, for rending this part of the Treatise from the other, which neither my little strength or leisure would suffer me to grasp at once.

But this having first put forth its hand in preaching, can make no great breach upon that, though it get the start a little in printing. Let me therefore, dear friends, (if God shall make this imperfect birth any way serviceable to your faith,) humbly desire, that you would as continue to strive at the throne of grace for a blessing on my poor Ministery among you, so also lift up a prayer, that strength may be given, to bring forth what of this yet is undeliver'd. I do not send you there where I intend not to meet you, but shall desire grace to be found faithful in striving with you, and for you, that amongst those who finde any spiritual advantage from my weak labors, you to whom they are chiefly devoted may not receive the least.

Lavenham, Jan. 1, 1655. So prays your affectionate, though unworthy Minister, WILLIAM GURNALL.

A Treatise of the Whole Armor of God

• • •

EPHESIANS 6.10._Finally, my Brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

PAul was now in bonds, yet not so close kept as to be denied pen and paper: God (it seemes) gave him some favor in the sight of his enemies: Paul was Nero's prisoner; Nero was much more Gods. And while God had work for Paul, he found him friends both in Court and prison. Let persecutors send the Saints to prison, God can provide a Keeper for their turn.

But how does this great Apostle spend his time in prison? not in publishing invectives against those, (though the worst of men) who had laid him in; a piece of zeal which the holy sufferers of those times were little acquainted with: Nor in politick counsels how he might winde himself out of his trouble, by sordid flattery of, or sinful compliance with the great ones of the times. Some would have used any pick-lock to have opened a passage to their liberty, and not scrupled, (so escape they might) whether they got out at the door or window: But this holy man was not so fond of liberty or life, as to purchase them with the least hazard to the Gospel. He knew too much of another world, to bid so high for the

enjoying of this, and therefore he is at a point what his enemies can do with him, well knowing he could go to heaven whether they would or no; No, the great care which lay upon him was for the Churches of Christ: as a faithful Steward he labors to set this House of God in order before his departure. We reade of no dispatches sent to Court to procure his liberty, but many to the Churches to help them to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free. There is no such way to be even with the devil and his instruments for all their spite against us, as by doing what good we can, wherever we become. The devil had as good have let Paul alone; for he no sooner comes into prison, but he falls a preaching, at which the gates of Satans prison flie open, and poor sinners come forth. Happy for Onesimus that Paul was sent to Jaile; God had an errand for Paul to do to him and others, which the devil never dream't of. Nay, he does not only preach in prison, but that he may do the devil all the mischief he can, he sends his Epistles to the Churches; that tasting his Spirit in his afflictions, and reading his faith, now ready to be offered up, they might much more be confirmed, amongst which Ephesus was not least in his thoughts, as you may perceive by his abode with them two years together, Acts 19:10. as also by his sending for the Elders of this Church as far as Miletus, in his last journey to Jerusalem, Acts 20:17. to take his farewel of them, as never to see their face in this world more. And surely the sad impression which that heart-breaking departure left upon the spirits of these Elders, yea, the whole Church, (by them acquainted with this mournful newes,) might stir up Paul, now in prison, to write unto this Church, that

having so much of his Spirit, yea, of the Spirit of the Gospel left in their hands to converse with, they might more patiently take the newes of his death.

In the former part of this Epistle, he soares high in the mysteries of faith. In the latter, according to his usual method, he descends to Application; where we finde him contracting all those truths, as beams together in a powerful exhortation, the more to enkindle their hearts, and powerfully perswade them to walk worthy of their vocation, chap. 4.1. which then is done, when the Christians life is transparent, that the grace of the Gospel shines forth in the power of holiness on every side, and from all his relations, as a candle in a Crystal glasse, not in a dark Lanthorn, lightsome one way, and dark another: and therefore he runs over the several relations of Husband, Wife, Parents, Children, Master and Servants, and presses the same in all these.

Now having set every one in his proper place, about his particular duty: as a wise General after he has ranged his Army, and drawn them forth into rank and file: he makes this following speech at the head of this Ephesian Camp, all in martial phrase, as best suiting the Christians calling, which is a continued warfare with the world, and the Prince of the world. The speech it self contains two parts;

First, a short, but sweet and powerful encouragement, ver. 10.

Secondly, the other part is spent in several directions, for their managing this war the more succesfully, with some motives here and there sprinkled among them. To begin with the first.

1. The word of encouragement to battel. With this he begins his speech; Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord: the best way indeed to prepare them for the following directions. A soul deeply possest with fear, and disspirited with strong impressions of danger, is in no posture for counsel. As we see in an Army when put to the run with some sudden alarm, and apprehensions of danger; 'tis hard rallying them into order while the scare and feare is over; therefore the Apostle first raiss up their spirits, Be strong in the Lord: as if he should say, perhaps some drooping souls finde their hearts faile them, while they see their enemies so strong, and they so weak; so numerous, and they so few; so well appointed, and they so naked and unarmed; so skilful and expert at armes, but they green and raw souldiers; Let not these or any other thoughts dismay you, but with undaunted courage march on, and be strong in the Lord; on whose performance lies the stresse of the battel, and not on your skill or strength: It is not the least of a Ministers care, and skill in dividing the Word, so to presse the Christians duty, as not to oppress his Spirit with the weight of it, by laying it on the creatures own shoulders, and not on the Lords strength, as here our Apostle teaches us.

In this verse; First, here is a familiar Compellation; My brethren.

Secondly, here is the exhortation; Be strong.

Thirdly, here is a cautionary direction annexed to the exhortation; In the Lord.

Fourthly, here is an encouraging amplification of the direction; And in the power of his might, or in his mighty power.

FINIS.

Chapter 1. Of Christian Courage and Resolution, Wherefore Necessary, and How Obtained

• • •

WE shall wave the Compellation, and begin with the Exhortation: Be strong, that is, be of good courage, so commonly used in Scripture-phrase; 2 Chronicles 32:7. Be strong and couragious. So, Isaiah 35:4. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong: or, unite all the powers of your souls, and muster up your whole force, you will have use of all you can make or get. From whence the Point is this.

The Christian of all men needs courage and resolution. Indeed there is nothing he does as a Christian, or can do, but is an act of valour: A cowardly spirit is beneath the lowest duty of a Christian: Joshua 1:7. Be you strong and very couragious, that you may: what? stand in battel against those warlike Nations? No, But that you may observe to do according to all the Law, which Moses my servant commanded you. It requires more prowesse and greatness of spirit to obey God faithfully, then to command an Army of men, to be a Christian then to be a Captain. What seems lesse, then for a Christian to pray? yet this cannot be performed aright, without a Princely Spirit; As Jacob is said to behave himself like a Prince,

when he did but pray: for which he came out of the field Gods Bannarite. Indeed if you call that prayer, which a carnal person performes, nothing more poor and dastard-like. Such a one is as great a stranger to this enterprise, as the craven souldier is to the exploits of a valiant Chieftain. The Christian in prayer comes up close to God, with an humble boldness of faith, and takes hold of him, wrestles with him, yea, will not let him go without a blessing, and all this in the face of his own sins, and divine justice, which let flie upon him from the fiery mouth of the Law; while the others boldness in prayer is but the child, either of ignorance in his minde, or hardness in his heart; whereby not feeling his sins, and not knowing his danger, he rushes upon duty with a blinde confidence, which soon quails, when conscience awakes and gives him the alarm, that his sins are upon him, as the Philistines on Samson; alas, then in a fright the poor-spirited wretch throwes down his weapon, flies the presence of God with guilty Adam, and dares not look him on the face. Indeed there is no duty in a Christians whole course of walking with God, or acting for God, but is lined with many difficulties, which shoot like enemies through the hedges at the Christian, whilest he is marching toward Heaven: so that he is put to dispute every inch of ground as he goes. They are only a few noble-spirited souls, (who dare take Heaven by force) that are fit for this calling. For the further proof of this Point, see some few pieces of service that every Christian engags in.

First, the Christian is to proclaim and prosecute an irreconcileable war against his bosome-sins; those sins which have layen nearest his heart, must now be trampled under his feet: So David, I have kept my self from my iniquity; Now what courage and resolu-

tion does this require? you think Abraham was tried to purpose, when called to take his son, his son Isaac,his only son whom he loved, and offer him up with his own hands, and no other, yet what was that to this? Soul, take your lust, your only lust, which is the child of your dearest love, your Isaac, the sin which has caused most joy and laughter; from which you have promised your self the greatest return of pleasure or profit: as ever you lookest to see my face with comfort, lay hands on it, and offer it up: pour out the blood of it before me, run the sacrificing knife of mortification into the very heart of it, and this freely, joyfully, (for it is no pleasing sacrifice that is offered with a countenance cast down,) and all this now, before you have one embrace more from it. Truly this is a hard chapter, flesh and blood cannot bear this saying; our lust will not lie so patiently on the Altar, as Isaac, or as a Lambe that is brought to the slaughter, which is dumb, but will roar and shreek, yea, even shake and rend the heart with their hideous out-cries. Who is able to express the conflicts, the wrestlings, the convulsions of Spirit the Christian feels, before he can bring his heart to this work? or who can fully set forth the Art, the Rhetorical insinuations, which such a lust will plead with for its life? one while Satan will extenuate and mince the matter, It is but a little one, O spare it, and your soul shall live for all that: Another while he flatters the soul with the secrecy of it, You may keep me and your credit also; I will not be seen abroad in your company to shame you among your neighbors: shut me up in the most retired room you have in your heart, from the hearing of others (if you will,) only let me now and then have the wanton embraces of your thoughts and affections in secret; if that cannot be granted, then Satan will seem only to desire execution may be stayed a while, as Jephtha's daughter of her

father; Let me alone a monthor two,and then do to me according to that which has proceeded out of your mouth: well knowing few such reprieved lusts, but at last obtain their full pardon; yea, recover their favor with the soul. Now what resolution does it require to break through such violence and importunity, and notwithstanding all this, to do present execution? Here the valiant Swordmen of the world, have showed themselves meer cowards, who have come out of the field with victorious banners, and then lived, yea, died slaves to a base lust at home. As one could say of a great Romane Captain, (who as he rode in his triumphant Chariot through Rome, had his eye never off a Courtizan that walk't along the street) Behold, how this goodly Captain that conquered such potent Armies, is himself conquered by one silly woman.

Secondly, the Christian is to walk singularly, not after the worlds guise. Romans 12:2. we are commanded not to be conformed to this world, that is, not to accommodate our selves to the corrupt customs of the world. The Christian must not be of such a complying nature, to cut the coat of his Profession according to the fashion of the times, or the humor of the company he falls into, like that Courtier, who being ask't how he could keep his preferment in such changing times, which one while had a Prince for Popery, another while against Popery? answered, he was Esalice, non ex quercu ortus: he was not a stubborn oake, but bending osier, that could yield to the winde: No, the Christian must stand fixt to his principles, and not change his habit, but freely show what Country-man he is by his holy constancy in the truth. Now, what an odium, what snares, what dangers does this singularity expose the Christian to? Some will hoot and mock him, as one in a Spanish fashion would be laugh't at in your streets. Thus Michal

flouted David. Indeed the world counts the Christian for his singularity of life the only foole; which I have thought gave the first occasion to that nick-name, whereby men commonly express a silly man or a fool: Such a one (say they) is a meer Abraham, that is, in the worlds account a foole. But why an Abraham? because Abraham did that which carnal reason (the worlds idol) laughs at as meere folly; he left a present estate in his fathers house, to go he know not where, to receive an inheritance he knew not when. And truly luch fooles all the Saints are branded for, by the wise world. You know the man and his communication, said Jehu to his companions, asking what that mad fellow came for, who was no other than a Prophet, 2 Kings 9:11. Now this requires courage to despise the shame, which the Christian must expect to meete withal for his singularity. Shame is that which proud nature most disdaines, to avoid which many durst not confesse Christ openly; many lose heaven, because they are ashamed to go in a fooles coat there. Again, as some will mock, so others will persecute to death, meerly for this non-conformity in the Christians principles and practices to them. This was the trap laid for the three children; they must dance after Nebuchadnezzars pipe, or burne. This was the plot laid to ensnare Daniel, who walk't so unblameably, that his very enemies gave him this testimony, that he had no fault, but his singularity in his Religion, Daniel 6:5. 'Tis a great honor to a Christian, yea, to Religion it selfe, when all their enemies can say is, they are precise, and will not do as we do. Now in such a case as this, when the Christian must turn or burne; leave praying, or become a prey to the cruel teeth of bloody men; how many politick retreats, and self-preserving distinctions would a cowardly unresolved heart in-

vent? The Christian, that has so great opposition had need be well lock't into the saddle of his Profession, or else he will be soon dismounted.

Thirdly, the Christian must keep on his way to heaven in the midst of all the scandals that are cast upon the ways of God, by the Apostasie and foul falls of false Professors. There were ever such in the Church, who by their sad miscarriages in judgement and practice, have laid a stone of offense in the way of Profession, at which weak Christians are ready to make a stand, (as they at the bloody body of Asahel,) not knowing whether they may venture any further in their Profession. Seeing such (whose gifts they so much admired) lie before them, wallowing in the blood of their slaine Profession: of zealous Professors to prove, perhaps, fiery persecutors; of strict Performers of religious duties, irreligious Atheists: no more like the men they were some years past, then the vale of Sodom, (now a bog and quagmire) is, to what it was, when for fruitfulnesse compared to the garden of the Lord. We had need have a holy resolution to bear up against such discouragements, and not to faint: as Joshuah, who lived to see the whole Camp of Israel (a very few excepted) revolting, and in their hearts turning back to Egypt, and yet with an undaunted Spirit maintained his integrity, yea, resolved though not a man beside would beare him company, yet he would serve the Lord.

Fourthly, the Christian must trust in a withdrawing God, Isaiah 50:10. Let him that walks in darkness, and sees no light, trust in the Name of the Lord, and stay upon his God. This requires a holy boldness of faith indeed to venture into Gods presence, as Esther into Ahashuerus, when no smile is to be seen on his face, no golden scepter of the promise perceived by the soul, as held forth

to embolden it to come near, then to presse in with this noble resolution; If I perish, I perish. Nay more, to trust not only in a withdrawing but a killing God; not when his love is hid, but when his wrath breakes forth: Now for a soul to make its approaches to God by a recumbency of faith, while God seemes to fire upon it, and shoot his frownes like envenomed arrowes into it. This is hard work, and will trie the Christians mettal to purpose. Yet such a masculine spirit we finde in that poore woman of Canaan, who takes up the bullets Christ shot at her, and with an humble boldness of faith sends them back again in her prayer.

Fifthly, the believer is to persevere in his Christian course to the end of his life, his work and his life must go off the stage together. This addes weight to every other difficulty of the Christians calling: We have known many who have gone into the field, and liked the work of a souldier for a battel or two, but soon have had enough, and come running home again, but few can bear it as a constant trade. Many are soon engaged in holy duties, easily perswaded to take up a Profession of Religion, and as easily perswaded to lay it down; like the new Moon, which shines a little in the first part of the night, but is down before half the night be gone; the lightsome Professors in their youth, whose old age is wrapt up in thick darkness of sin and wickedness; O this persevering is a hard word! this taking up the crosse daily, this praying alwayes, this watching night and day, and never laying aside our clothes and armour, I mean indulging our selves to remit and unbend in our holy waiting on God, and walking with God; this sends many sorrowful away from Christ, yet this is the Saints duty, to make Religion his every day work, without any vacation from one

end of the year to the other. These few instances are enough to show what need the Christian has of resolution. The application followes.

Use 1 This gives us then a reason why there are so many Professors, and so few Christians indeed; so many that run, and so few obtain; so many go into the field against Satan, and so few come out Conquerours; because all have a desire to be happy, but few have courage and resolution to grapple with the difficulties, that meet them in the way to their happiness. All Israel came joyfully out of Egypt under Moses his conduct, yea, and a mixed multitude with them, but when their bellies were a little pinched with hunger, and their greedy desires of a present Canaan deferred, yea, instead of peace and plenty, war and penury, they (like white-liver'd souldiers) are ready to flie from their colours, and make a dishonourable retreat into Egypt. Thus the greatest part of those who professe the Gospel, when they come to push of pike, to be tried what they will do, deny, endure for Christ, grow sick of their enterprise: alas, their hearts fail them, they are like the waters of Bethlehem; but if they must dispute their passage with so many enemies, they will even content themselves with their own Cistern, and leave heaven to others that will venture more for it. O how many part with Christ at this crosse-way! like Orpah they go a furlong or two with Christ, while he goes to take them off from their worldly hopes, and bids them prepare for hardship, and then they fairly kisse and leave him, loath indeed to lose heaven, but more loth to buy it at so dear a rate. Like some green heads, that childishly make choice of some sweet trade (such as is the Confectioners) from a liquorish tooth they have to the junkets it affords, but meeting with soure sauce of labor and toile that goes

with them, they give in, and are weary of their service; the sweet bait of Religion has drawn many to nibble at it, who are offended with the hard service it calls to; It requires another spirit then the world can give or receive to follow Christ fully.

Use 2 Let this then exhort you, Christians, to labor for this holy resolution and prowesse, which is so needful for your Christian Profession, that without it you cannot be what you professe. The fearful are in the forelorne of those that march for hell, Rev. 21. the violent and valiant are they, which take heaven by force: Cowards never wan heaven. Say not, you have royal blood running in your veins, and are begotten of God, except you can prove your pedigree by this heroick spirit, to dare to be holy in spite of men and devils. The Eagle tries her young ones by the Sun, Christ tries his children by their courage, that dare look on the face of death and danger for his sake, Mark 8:34, 35. O how uncomly a sight is it; a bold sinner and a fearful Saint; one resolved to be wicked, and a Christian wavering in his holy course; to see guilt put innocency to flight, and hell keep the field, impudently braving it with displayed banners of open profanenesse; and Saints to hide their colours for shame, or run from them for feare, who should rather wrap themselves in them, and die upon the place, then thus betray the glorious Name of God, which is called upon by them to the scorne of the uncircumcised. Take heart therefore, O ye Saints, and be strong: your cause is good, God himself espouss your quarrel, who has appointed you his own Son, General of the field, called The Captain of our salvation. He shall lead you on with courage, and bring you off with honor. He lived and died for you, he will live and die with you: for mercy and tenderness to his souldiers, none like him. Trajan, 'tis said, rent his clothes to binde up his souldiers wounds;

Christ poured out his blood as balm to heal his Saints wounds, teares of his flesh to binde them up. For prowesse, none to compare with him: he never turn'd his head from danger: no, not when hells malice and heavens justice appeared in field against him; Knowing all that should come upon him, went forth and said, Whom seek ye? John 18:4. For success insuperable; he never lost battel even when he lost his life: he wan the field, carrying the spoiles thereof in the triumphant chariot of his Ascension to heaven with him: where he makes an open show of them to the unspeakable joy of Saints and Angels. You march in the midst of gallant spirits, your fellow-souldiers, every one the Son of a Prince: Behold, some (enduring with you here below a great fight of afflictions and temptations,) take heaven by storme and force: Others you may see after many assaults, repulses and rallyings of their faith and patience, got upon the walls of heaven Conquerours; from whence they do, as it were, look down, and call you their fellow-brethren on earth, to march up the hill after them, crying aloud, Fall on, and the city is your own, as now it is ours; who for a few days conflict, are now crowned with heavens glory, one moments enjoyment of which has dried up all our teares, healed all our wounds, and made us forget the sharpness of the fight, with the joy of our present victory. In a word, Christians, God and Angels are Spectatours, observing how you quit your selves like children of the most High; every exploit your faith does against sin and Satan, causes a shout in heaven; while you valiantly prostrate this temptation, scale that difficulty, regain the other ground you even now lost, out of your enemies hands. Your deare Saviour, (who stands by with a reserve for your relief at a pinch) his very heart leaps within him for joy, to see the proof of your love to him,

and zeal for him in all your combates; and will not forget all the faithful service you have done in his wars on earth: but when you comest out of the field, will receive you with the like joy, as he was entertained himself at his return to heaven of his Father. Now, Christian, if you meanest thus couragiously to bear up against all opposition, in your march to heaven, as you shouldest do well, to raise your spirit with such generous and soul-ennobling thoughts, so in an especial manner look your principles be well fixt, or else your heart will be unstable, and an unstable heart is weak as water, it cannot excel in courage. Two things are required to fix our principles.

First, an established judgement in the truth of God. He that knows not well what or whom he fights for, may soon be perswaded to change his side, or at least stand Neuter: such may be found that go for Professours, that can hardly give an account what they hope for, or whom they hope in; yet Christians they must be thought, though they run before they know their errand: or if they have some principles they go upon, they are so unsetled, that every winde blowes them down, like loose tyles from the house top. Blinde zeale is soon put to a shameful retreat, while holy resolution, built on fast principles, lifts up its head, like a rock in the midst of the waves. Those that know their God shall be strong, and do exploits, Daniel 11:32. The Angel told Daniel who were the men that would stand to their tackling, and bear up for God in that hour, both of temptation and persecution, which should be brought upon them by Antiochus; not all the Jewes, some of them should be corrupt barely by flatteries, others scared by threats out of their Profession, only a few of fixed principles, who knew their

God whom they served, and were grounded in their Religion, these should be strong, and do exploits, that is, to flatteries they should be incorruptible, and to power and force unconquerable.

Secondly, a sincere aime at the right end in our Profession. Let a man be never so knowing in the things of Christ, if his aime be not right in his Profession, that mans principles will hang loose, he'll not venture much or far for Christ, no more, no further then he can save his own stake. A hypocrite may show some mettal at hand, some courage for a spurt in conquering some difficulties, but he'll show himself a jade at length. He that has a false end in his Profession, will soon come to an end of his Profession, when he is pinch't on that toe where his corn is: I meane, called to deny that his naughty heart aimed at all this while, now his heart sailes him, he can go no further. O take heed of this squint eye to our profit, pleasure, honor or any thing beneath Christ and heaven; for they will take away your heart, as the Prophet says of wine and women, that is, our love, and if our love be taken away, there will be little courage left for Christ. How couragious was Jehu at first, and he tells the world it is zeale for God: but why does his heart faile him then, before half his work be done? his heart was never right set, that very thing that stirr'd up hs zeal at first, at last quench't and cow'd it, and that was his ambition; his desire of a Kingdom made him zealous against Ahabs house, to cut off them (who might in time justle him besides the throne) which done, and he quietly setled, he dare not go through-stitch with Gods work, lest he should lose what he got by provoking the people with a thorough information. Like some souldiers, when once they meet with a rich booty at the sacking of some town, are spoil'd for fighting ever after.

Chapter 2. Of the Saints' Strength, Where It Lies, and Wherefore Laid Up in God

• • •

THe second Branch of the words follows, which contains a cautionary direction. Having exhorted the Saints at Ephesus, and in them all believers to a holy resolution and courage in their warfare; lest this should be mistaken, and beget in them an opinion of their own strength for the battel, the Apostle leads them out of themselves for this strength, even to the Lord; Be strong in the Lord. From whence observe,

That the Christians strength lies in the Lord, not in himself. The strength of the General in other hostes lies in his troops; he fles, as a great Commander once said to his souldiers, upon their wings; if their feathers be clipt, their power broken, he is lost; but in the Army of Saints, the strength of every Saint, yea, of the whole hoste of Saints lies in the Lord of hostes. God can overcome his enemies without their hands, but they cannot so much as defend themselves without his arme. It is one of Gods names, The strength of Israel, 1 Samuel 15:19. He was the strength of Davids heart, without him this valiant Worthy (that could, when held up in his armes, defie him that defied an whole Army) behaves him-

self strangely for feare, at a word or two that drop't from the Philistines mouth. He was the strength of his hands, He taught his fingers to fight, and so he is the strength of all his Saints in their war against sin and Satan. Some propound a question, whether there be a sin committed in the world, in which Satan has not a part? but if the question were, whether there be any holy action performed without the special assistance of God concurring? that is resolved, John. 15.5. Without me you can do nothing. Thinking strength of God, 2 Corinthians 3:5. Not that we are sufficient of our selves, to think any thing as of our selves, but our sufficiency is of God. We Apostles, we Saints that have habitual grace, yet this lies like water at the bottome of a Well, which will not ascend with all our pumping, till God pour in his exciting grace, and then it comes. To will is more than to think, to exert our will into action, more than both; these are of God, Philippians 2:13. It is God that works in you to will, and to do of his good pleasure. He makes the heart new, and having made it fit for heavenly motion, setting every wheele (as it were) in its right place, then he windes it up by his actuating grace, and sets it on going, the thoughts to stir, the will to move, and make towards the holy object presented; yet here the chariot is set, and cannot ascend the hill of action, till God puts his shoulder to the wheele, Rom. 7. To will is present with me, but how to performe that which is good I finde not. God is at the bottome of the ladder, and at the top also, the Author and Finisher, yea, helping and lifting the soul at every round, in his ascent to any holy action. Well, now the Christian is set on work, how long will he keep close to it? Alas, poor soul, no longer than he is held up by the same hand, that impowered him at first. He has soon wrought out the strength received, and therefore to maintain the tenure of a

holy course. there must be renewing strength from heaven every moment, which David knew, and therefore when his heart was in as holy a frame as ever he felt it, and his people by their free-will-offering declared the same: yet even then he prayes, that God would keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of his people, and establish their hearts to him, 1 Chronicles 29:18. He adored the mercy that made them willing, and then he implores his further grace to strengthen them, and tie a knot, that these precious pearles newly strung on their hearts, might not slip off. The Christian, when fullest of divine communications, is bu a glasse without a foot, he cannot stand, or hold what he has received any longer, then God holds him in his strong hand. Therefore Christ, when bound for heaven, and ready to take his leave of his children, bespeaks his Fathers care of them in his absence; Father, keep them; as if he had said, they must not be left alone, they are poor shiftlesse children, that can neither stand nor go without help; they will lose the grace I have given them, and fall into those temptations, which I kept them from while I was with them, if they be out of your eye or armes but one moment; and therefore, Father, keep them.

Again, Consider the Christian, as addressing himself to any duty of Gods worship, still his strength is in the Lord; Would he pray? where will he finde materials for his prayer? alas, he knows not what to pray for as he ought. Let him alone, and he will soon pray himself into some temptation or other, and cry for that which were cruelty in God to give; and therefore God puts words in our mouthes; Take words with you, and say, Hosea 14:2. Well, now he has words put into his mouth; alas, they will freeze in his very lips, if he has not some heart-heating affections to thaw the tap: and

where shall this fire be had? not a spark to be found on his own hearth; except it be some strange fire of natural desires, which will not serve: whence then must the fire come to thaw the icenesse of the heart, but from heaven? The Spirit, he must stretch himself upon the soul, (as the Prophet on the child) and then the soul will come to some kindly warmth, and heavenly heat in his affections; the Spirit must groane, and then the soul will groane, he helps us to these sighs and groans, which turne the sailes of prayer. He dissolves the heart, and then it bursts out of the heart by groans, of the lips by heavenly Rhethorick, out of the eyes as from a floodgate with teares: yet further now the creature is enabled to wrestle with God in prayer; what will he get by all this? suppose he be weak in grace, is he able to pray himself strong, or corruption weak? no, this is not to be found in prayer, as an act of the creature: this drops from heaven also. In the day that I cried,you answeredst me, and gavest me strength in my soul. David received it in duty, but had it not from his duty, but from his God. He did not pray himself strong, but God strengthened him in his prayer. Well, cast your eye once more upon the Christian, as engaging in another Ordinance of hearing the Word preach't. The souls strength to heare the Word is from God,he opens the heart to attend, yea, he opens the understanding of the Saint to receive the Word, so as to conceive what it meant. It is like Samsons riddle which we cannot unfold without his Heifer: He opens the wombe of the soul to conceive by it, as the understanding to conceive of it, that the barren soul becomes a joyful mother of children. David sate for halfe a year under the publick Lectures of the Law, and the wombe of his heart shut up, till Nathan comes and God with him, and now is the time of life, he conceives presently, yea, and brings forth in the same day, falls

presently into the bitter pangs of sorrow for his sins, which went not over till he had cast them forth in that sweet Psalm 51. Why should this one word work more, then all the former, but that God now struck in with his Word, which he did not before? He is therefore said to teach his people to profit; he sits in heaven that teaches hearts When Gods Spirit (who is the Head-master) shall call a soul from his Usher to himselfe, and say, Soul, you have not gone the way to thrive by hearing the Word, thus, and thus conceive of such a truth, improve such a promise, presently the eyes of his understanding open, and his heart burnes within him, while he speaks to him. Thus you see the truth of this Point, That the Christians strength is in the Lord. Now we shall give some demonstrations.

SECT. I.

Reason 1 The first Reason may be taken from the nature of the Saints and their grace, both are creatures, they and their grace also: now Inesse est de esse creaturae. 'Tis in the very nature of the creature, to depend on God its Maker, both for being and operation. Can you conceive an accident to be out of its subject, whitenesse out of the wall, or some other subject? 'tis as impossible that the creature should be, or act without strength from God: This, to be, act in and of himself, is so incommunicable a property of the Deity, that he cannot impart it to his creature: God is, and there is none besides him: when God made the world, it is said indeed he ended his work, that is, of Creation: he made no new species and kindes of creatures more; but to this day he has not ended his work of Providence; Hitherto my Father works, says Christ, John. 5.17. that is, in preserving and empowering what he has made with strength to be and act, and therefore he is said to hold our souls in

life. Works of Art, which man makes, when finish't may stand some time without the Workmans help, as the house, when the Carpenter that made it is dead; but Gods works both of nature and grace are never off his hand, and therefore as the Father is said to work hitherto for the preservation of the works of nature, so the Son, to whom is committed the work of Redemption, he tells us he works also. Neither ended he his work, when he rose again, any otherways then his Father did in the work of Creation. God made an end of making, so Christ made an end of purchasing mercy, grace and glory for believers by once dying; and as God rested at the end of the Creation, so he, when he had wrought eternal Redemption, and by himself purged our sins, sate down on the right hand of the Majesty on High, Hebrews 1:3. But he ceass not to work by his intercession with God for us, and by his Spirit in us for God, whereby he upholds his Saints, their graces, and comforts in life, without which they would run to ruine. Thus we see as grace is a creature, the Christian depends on God for his strength. But further,

Reason 2 Secondly, the Christians grace is not only a creature, but a weak creature, conflicting with enemies stronger than it selfe, and therefore cannot keep the field without an auxiliary strength from Heaven. The weakest goes to the wall, if no succour comes in. Grace in this life is but weak, like a King in the Cradle, which gives advantage to Satan to carry on his plots more strongly, to the disturbance of this young Kings reigne in the soul, yea, he would soon make an end of the war in the ruine of the believers grace, did not Heaven take the Christian into protection. 'Tis true indeed, grace whereever it is, has a principle in it selfe, that makes it desire and endeavour to preserve it self according to its strength, but being

over-powered must perish, except assisted by God, as fire in green wood, (which deads and damps the part kindled) will in time go out except blown up, or more fire put to that little; so will grace in the heart. God brings his grace into the heart by Conquest: now as in a conquered City, though some yield and become true subjects to the Conquerour; yet others plot how they may shake off this yoke; and therefore it requires the same power to keep, as was to win it at first. The Christian has an unregenerate part, that is discontented at this new change in the heart, and disdains as much to come under the sweet government of Christs Scepter, as the Sodomites that Lot should judge them. What, this fellow, a Stranger, controule us? And Satan heads this mutinous rout against the Christian: so that if God should not continually re-inforce this his new-planted Colony in the heart, the very natives (I mean corruptions) that are left, would come out of their dens and holes where they lie lurking, and eat up the little grace the holiest on earth has, it would be as bread to these devourers.

Reason 3 A third demonstration may be taken from the grand designe, which God propounds to himself in the Saints salvation; yea, in the transaction of it from first to last. And that is two-fold.

First, God would bring his Saints to heaven in such a way, as might be most expressive of his deare love and mercy to them.

Secondly, he would so express his mercy and love to them, as might rebound back to him, in the highest advance of his own glory possible: Now how becoming this is to both, that Saints should have all their ability for every step they take in the way to heaven, will soon appear.

First, this way of communicating strength to Saints gives a double accent to Gods love and mercy.

First, it distills a sweetnesse into all the believer has or does, when he findes any comfort in his bosome, any enlargement of heart in duty, any support under temptations: To consider whence came all these, what friend sends them in? they come not from my own cisterne, or any creatures? O 'tis my God that has been here, and left this sweet perfume of comfort behinde him in my bosome, my God, that has (unawares to me) fill'd my sailes with the gales of his Spirit, and brought me off the flats of my own deadnesse, where I lay a ground. O 'tis his sweet Spirit that held my head, stayed my heart in such an affliction and temptation, or else I had gone away in a fainting fit of unbelief. How can this choose but endear God to a gracious soul? his succours coming so immediately from heaven, which would, be lost, if the Christian had any strength to help himselfe, (though this stock of strength came at first from God) Which, think you, speaks more love and condescent; for a Prince to give a pension to a Favourite, on which he may live by his owne care, or for this Prince to take the chief care upon himself, and come from day to day to this mans house, and look into his Cupboard, and see what provision he has, what expence he is at, and so constantly to provide for the man from time to time? Possibly some proud spirit, that likes to be his own man, or loves his meanes better than his Prince, would prefer the former, but one that is ambitious to have the heart and love of his Prince, would be ravish't with the latter. Thus God does with his Saints, the great God comes and looks into their Cupboard, and sees how they are laid in, and sends in accordingly, as he findes them. Your

heavenly Father knowes you have need of these things, and you shall have them. He knows you need strength to pray, hear, suffer for him, and in ipsâ horâ dabitur.

Secondly, this way of Gods dealing with his Saints, addes to the fulnesse and stability of their strength. Were the stock in our own hands, we should soon prove broken Merchants. God knows we are but leaking vessels, when fullest, we could not hold it long; and therefore to make all sure, he sets us under the streamings forth of his strength, and a leaking vessel under a cock gets what it loseth. Thus we have our leakage supplied continually. This was the provision God made for Israel in. the wilderness; He clave the rock, and the rock followed them. They had not only a draught at present, but it ran in a streame after them; so that you hear no more of their complaints for water; This rock was Christ. Every believer has Christ at his back, following him with strength as he goes, for every condition and trial. One flower with the root is worth many in a posie, which though sweet yet do not grow, but wither as we wear them in our bosomes. Gods strength, as the root keeps our grace lively, without which though as orient as Adams was, it would die.

The second design God has in his Saints happiness is, that he may so express his mercy and love to them, as may rebound back to him in the highest advance of his own glory therein, Ephesians 1:4, 12. which is fully attained in this way of empowering Saints, by a strength not of their own, but of their God his sending, as they are put to expence. Had God given his Saints a stock of grace to have set up with, and left them to the improvement of it, he had been magnified indeed, because it was more than God did owe the creature, but he had not been omnified as now, when not only the

Christians first strength to close with Christ is from God, but he is beholden still to God for the exercise of that strength, in every action of his Christian course. As a child that travels in his fathers company, all is paid for, but his father carries the purse, not himself: so the Christians shot is discharged in every condition; but he cannot say this I did, or that I suffered, but God wrought all in me and for me. The very combe of pride is cut here, no room for any self exalting thoughts. The Christian cannot say, that I am a Saint is mercy, but being a Saint that my faith is strong, this is the child of my own care and watchfulnesse. Alas, poor Christian! who kept yours eye waking, and stirr'd up your care? was not this the offspring of God as well as your faith at first? No Saint shall say of Heaven when he comes there, This is Heaven which I have built by the power of my might. No, Jerusalem above is a City, whose builder and maker is God, Every grace, yea, degree of grace is a stone in that building, the topstone whereof is laid in glory, where Saints shall more plainly see, how God was not only Founder to begin, but Benefactour also to finish the same. The glory of the work shall not be crumbled, and piece-meal'd out, some to God, and some to the creature, but all entirely paid in to God, and he acknowledged all in all.

SECTION. 2.

Use 1 Is the Christians strength in the Lord, not in himself, Surely then the Christlesse person must needs be a poor impotent creature, void of all strength and ability of doing any thing of it self towards its own salvation. If the ship launch't, rigg'd, and with her sails spread cannot stir, till the winde come faire and fills them, much lesse can the timber that lies in the Carpenters yard, hew

and frame it self into a ship. If the living tree cannot grow, except the root communicate its sap, much lesse can a dead rotten stake in the hedge, which has no root, live of its own accord. In a word, if a Christian, that has this spiritual life of grace, cannot exercise this life, without strength from above; then surely, one void of this new life, dead in sins and trespasses, can never be able to beget this in himselfe, or concur to the production of it. The state of unregeneracy is a state of impotency, When we were without strength in due time Christ died for the ungodly, Romans 5:6. And as Christ found the lump of mankinde covered with the ruines of their lapsed estate, (no more able to raise themselves from under the weight of Gods wrath which lay upon them, then one buried under the rubbish of a fallen house, is to free himselfe of that weight without help) so the Spirit findes sinners in as helpless a condition, as unable to repent, or believe on Christ for salvation, as they were of themselves to purchase it. Confounded therefore for ever be the language of those sons of pride, who cry up the power of nature, as if man with his own brick and slime of natural abilities were able to reare up such a building, whose top may reach heaven it selfe. It is not of him that wills or runns,but God that shows mercy. God himself has scattered such Babel-builders in the imaginations of their hearts, who raiss this spiritual Temple in the souls of men, not by might, nor by a power of their own, but by his Spirit, that so grace, grace, might be proclaimed before it for ever. And therefore if any yet in their natural estate would become wise to salvation, let them first become fooles in their own eyes, and renounce their carnal wisdom, which perceives not the things of God, and beg

wisdom of God, who gives and upbraids not. If any man would have strength to believe, let them become weak, and die to their own, for by strength shall no man prevaile, 1 Samuel 2:9.

Use 2 Secondly, does the Christians strength lie in God, not in himselfe? this may for ever keep the Christian humble, when most enlarged in duty, most assisted in his Christian course. Remember, Christian, when you have your best suit on, who made it, who paid for it: Your grace, your comfort is neither the work of your own hands, nor the price of your own desert, be not for shame proud of anothers cost. That assistance will not long stay, which becomes a nurse to your pride; you are not Lord of that assistance you have. Your Father is wise, who when he allows you most for your spiritual maintenance, even then keeps the Law in his own hands, and can soon curb you, if you growest wanton with his grace. Walk humbly therefore before your God, and husband well that strength you have, remembring that it is borrowed strength. Nemo prodiget quod mendicat. Who will waste what he begs? or who will give that beggar that spends idly his almes? when you have most you can not be long from your God his door. And how can you look him on the face for more, who have imbezell'd what you have received?

Chapter 3. Of Acting Our Faith on the Almighty Power of God

• • •

THe third Branch follows, which contains an encouraging Amplification annexed to the exhortation in these words; And in the Power of his might, where a twofold enquiry is requisite for the explication of the phrase. First, what these words import, The Power of his might? Secondly, what it is to be strong in the Power of his might?

For the first, the Power of his might: It is an Hebraism, & imports nothing but his mighty Power; like that phrase, Ephesians 1:6. To the praise of the glory of his grace, that is, to the praise of his glorious grace. And his mighty Power imports no lesse then his Almighty Power; sometimes the Lord is stiled mighty and strong, as Psalms 24:8. sometimes most mighty, sometimes Almighty, no lesse is meant in all, then Gods infinite Almighty Power.

For the second, to be strong in the mighty Power, or Power of the Lords might, implies these two acts of faith.

First, a setled firme perswasion, that the Lord is Almighty in Power. Be strong in the Power of his might, that is, be strongly rooted in your faith, concerning this one foundation-truth, that God is Almighty.

Secondly, it implies a further act of faith, not only to believe, that God is Almighty, but also that this Almighty Power of God is engaged for its defense: so as to bear up in the midst of all trials and temptations undauntedly, leaning on the arme of God Almighty, as if it were his own strength; for that is the Apostles drift, as to beat us off from leaning on our own strength, so to encourage the Christian to make use of Gods Almighty Power, as freely as if it were his own; when ever assaulted by Satan in any kinde. As a man set upon by a thief, stirs up all the force and strength he has in his whole body to defend himself and offend his adversary; so the Apostle bids the Christian be strong in the Lord, and in the Power of his might, that is, Soul, away to your God, whose mighty Power is all intended and devoted by God himself for your succour and defense. Go strengthen and entrench your selfe in it by a stedfast faith, as that which shall be laid out to the utmost for your good. From whence these two Notes, I conceive, will draw out the fatnesse of the words.

1. That it should be the Christians great care and endeavour in all temptations and trials, to strengthen his faith on the Almighty Power of God.

2. The Christians duty and care is not only to believe that God is Almighty, but strongly by faith to rest on this Almighty Power of God, as engaged for his help and succour in all his trials and temptations.

First, it should be the Christians great care in all temptations and trials, to strengthen his faith on the Almighty Power of God. When God holds forth himselfe as an object of the souls trust and confidence in any great strait or undertaking; commonly this attribute of his Almighty power is presented in the promise, as the

surest hold fast for faith to lay hold on; as a Father in rugged way, gives his child his arme to lay hold by, so does God usually reach forth his Almighty power for his Saints, to exercise their faith on. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, whose faith God tried above most of his Saints before or since, for not one of those great things which were promised to them, did they live to see performed in their days; and how does God make known himself to them for their support, but by displaying this Attribute? Exodus 6:3. I appeared unto Abraham, Isaac and Jacob by the Name of God Almighty. This was all they had to keep house with all their days: with which they lived comfortably, and died triumphantly, bequeathing the promise to their children, not doubting (because God Almighty had promised) of the performance. Thus, Isa. 26. where great mercies are promised to Judah, and a Song penn'd before-hand to be sung on that gaudie day of their salvation: yet because there was a sharp Winter of Captivity to come between the Promise, and the Spring-time of the promise; therefore to keep their faith alive in this space, the Prophet calls them up to act their faith on God Almighty, v. 4. Trust ye in the Lord Jehovah, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. So when his Saints are going into the furnace of persecution, what now does he direct their faith to carry to prison, to stake with them but this Almighty power? 1 Peter 4:19. Let them that suffer, commit the keeping of their souls to him, as to a faithful Creatour Creatour is a name of Almighty Power, we shall now give some. Reasons of the Point.

Reas. 1 First, because it is no easie work to make use of this truth, (how plain and clear soever it now appears,) in great plunges of temptation, that God is Almighty; To vindicate this Name of God from those evil reports, which Satan and carnal Reason raise

against it, requires a strong faith indeed. I confesse this principle is a piece of natural divinity; That light which finds out a Deity, will evince (if followed close) this God to be Almighty; yet in a carnal heart, it is like a rusty sword, hardly drawn out of the scabbard, and so of little or no use. Such truths are so imprisoned in natural conscience, that they seldome get a faire hearing in the sinners bosome, till God gives them a Goal-delivery, and brings them out of their house of bondage, where they are shut up in unrighteousnesse with a high hand of his convincing Spirit. Then and not till then the soul will believe God is holy, merciful, Almighty; nay, some of Gods peculiar people, and not the meanest for grace amongst them, have had their faith for a time set in this slough, much ado to get over those difficulties and improbabilities, which sense and Reason have objected, so as to relie on the Almighty Power of God, with a notwithstanding. Moses himself, a starre of the first magnitude for grace, yet see how his faith blinks and twinkles, till he wades out of the temptation, Numb. 11.21. The people among whom I am are six hundred thousand, and you have said, I will give them flesh that they may eat a whole moneth, shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them to suffice them? This holy man had lost the sight for a time of the Almighty Power of God, and now he is projecting how this should be done; as if he had said in plain termes, How can this be accomplished? for so God interprets his reasoning, v. 23, And the Lord said unto Moses, Is the Lords hand waxed short? So Mary, John 11:32. Lord, if you had been here, my brother had not died. And her Sister Martha, v. 39. Lord, by this time he stinks. Both gracious women, yet both betrayed the weakness of their faith on the Almighty Power of Christ, one limiting him to place; If you had been here he had not died; as

if Christ could not have saved his life absent as well as present, sent his health to him as well as brought it with him. The other to time, Now he stinks. As if Christ had brought his Physick too late, and the grave would not deliver up its prisoner at Christs command; and have you such an high opinion of your self, Christian, that your faith needs not your utmost care and endeavour for further establishment on the Almighty Power of God, when you seest such as these dash their foot against this kinde of temptation?

The second Reason may be taken from the absolute necessity of this act of faith above others, to support the Christian in the hour of temptation. All the Christians strength and comfort is fetched without doors, and he has none to send of his errand but faith; This goes to heaven and knocks God up, as he in the parable, his neighbor at midnight for bread: Therefore when faith failes, and the soul has none to go to market for supplies, there must needs be a poor house kept in the meane time. Now faith is never quite laid up, till the soul denies, or at least questions the Power of God. Indeed, when the Christian disputes the Will of God, whispering within its own bosome, will he pardon? will he save? this may make faith go haltingly to the throne of grace, but not knock the soul off from seeking the face of God: even then faith on the Power of God, will bear it company there: If you will, you can make me clean; if you will, you can pardon, you can purge: But when the soul concludes he cannot pardon, cannot save, this shoots faith to the heart, so that the soul falls at the foot of Satan, not able more to resist. Now it growes listlesse to duty, indifferent whether it pray or not, as one that sees the Well dry, breaks or throwes away his Pitcher.

Reas. 3 Thirdly, because God is very tender of this flower of his Crown, this part of his Name: Indeed we cannot spell it right and leave out this letter; for that is Gods Name, whereby he is known from all his creatures. Now man may be called wise, merciful, mighty: God only all-wise, all-merciful, Almighty; so that when we leave out this syllable All, we nick-name God, and call him by his creatures name, which he will not answer to. Now the tenderness that God shows to this Prerogative of his, appears in three particulars.

First, in the strict command he layes on his people, to give him the glory of his power, Isa. 8. 12, 13. Feare ye not their feare, but sanctifie the Lord of hostes himself: that is, in this sad posture of your affaires, when your enemies associate, and you seem a lost people to the eye of Reason, not able to contest with such united Powers, which beset you on every side: Now I charge you sanctifie me in giving me the glory of my Almighty Power; believe that your God is able of himself, without any other, to defend you, and destroy them.

Secondly, in his severity to his dearest children, when they stagger in their faith, and come not off roundly (without reasoning and disputing the case) to relie on his Almighty Power: Zacharias did but ask the Angel, How shall I know this, because I am an old man, and my wife stricken in years; yet for bewraying therein his unbelief, had a signe indeed given him, but such a one as did not only strengthen his faith, but severely punish his unbelief, for he was struck dumb upon the place. God loves his children should believe his Word, not dispute his power; so true is that of Luther,

Deus amat curristas nonquaeristas. That which gave accent to Abrahams faith, Romans 4:21. was that he was fully perswaded, that what God had promised, he was able to performe.

Thirdly, in the way God takes of giving his choicest mercies, and greatest salvations to his people, wherein he layes the scene of his Providence so, that when he has done, it may be said Almighty Power was here. And therefore God commonly puts down those means and second causes, which if they stood about his work, would blinde and hinder the full prospect thereof in effecting the same, 2 Corinthians 1:9. We received the sentence of death in our selves, that we might not trust in our selves, but in God which raiss the dead. Christ stayed while Lazarus was dead, that he might draw the eyes of their faith more singly to look on his power, by raising his dead friend, rather than curing him being sick, which would not have carried so full a conviction of Almightinesse with it. Yea, he suffers a contrary power many times to arise in that very juncture of time, when he intends the mercy to his people, that he may reare up the more magnificent pillar of remembrance to his own power, in the ruine of that which contests with him. Had God brought Israel out of Egypt in the time of those Kings which knew Joseph, most likely they might have had a friendly departure and an easie deliverance, but God reserves this for the reigne of that proud Pharaoh, who shall cruelly oppress them, and venture his Kingdom, but he will satisfie his lust upon them. And why must this be the time? but that God would bring them forth with a stretched-out arme: The magnifying of his power was Gods great designe, Exodus 9:16. In very deed for this cause have I raised you up, to show in you my power, and that my Name may be declared throughout the earth.

Fourthly, in the prevalency which an argument that is pressed from his Almighty Power has with God. It was the last string Moses had to his bowe, when he begg'd the life of Israel, Numb, 14.16. The Nations which have heard the fame of you will speak, saying, Because the Lord was not able, &c. And, v. 17. Let the Power of my Lord be great; And with this he has their pardon thrown him,

The Application of this Point will fall in under the next, which is

Chapter 4. Of Acting Our Faith on the Almighty Power of God, as Engaged for Our Help

• • •

That it is the Saints duty, and should be their care, not only to believe God Almighty, but also strongly to believe that this Almighty Power of God is theirs, (that is, engaged for their defense and help) so as to make use of it in all straits and temptations.

SECT. I.

First, I shall prove that the Almighty Power of God is engaged for the Christians defense, with the grounds of it. Secondly, why the Christian should strongly act his faith on this.

First, the Almighty Power of God is engaged for the Saints defense; God brought Israel out of Egypt with an high hand, but did he set them down on the other side the Red-sea, to finde and force their way to Canaan, by their own policie or power? When he had opened the iron gate of their house of bondage, and brought them into the open fields, did he vanish as the Angel from Peter, when out of prison? No, as a man carries his son, so the Lord bare them

in all the way they went, Deuteronomy 1:31. This does lively set forth the Saints march to heaven: God brings a soul out of spiritual Egypt by his converting grace, that is the day of his power, wherein he makes the soul willing to come out of Satans clutches. Now when the Saint is upon his march, all the countrey riseth upon him. How shall this poore creature passe the pikes, and get safely by all his enemies borders? God himself infolds him in the arme of his everlasting strength. We are kept by the Power of God through faith unto salvation, 1 Peter 1:5. The Power of God is that shoulder, on which Christ carries his sheep home, rejoycing all the way he goes, Luke 15:5. These everlasting armes of his strength are those Eagles wings, upon which the Saints are both tenderly and securely conveyed to glory, Exodus 19:4. There is a five fold tie or engagement that lies upon Gods power, to be the Saints lifeguard.

First, the near relation he has to his Saints, they are his own dear children, every one takes care of his own, the silly Hen, how does she bussle and bestir her self to gather her brood under her wing when the Kite appears? No care like that which Nature teaches. How much more will God, who is the Father of such dispositions in his creature, stir up his whole strength to defend his children? He said, They are my people, so be became their Saviour, Isaiah 33:8. As if God had said, Shall I sit still with my hand in my bosome, while my own people are thus misused before my face: I cannot beare it. The Mother as she sits in her house heares one shreek, and knowes the voice, cries out, O 'tis my child, away she throws all, and runs to him. Thus God takes the alarm of his childrens cry; I heard Ephraim bemoaning himself, says the Lord, his cry pierced his eare, and his eare affected his bowels, and his bowels call'd up his power to the rescue of him.

Secondly, the dear love he bears to his Saints engags his power. He that has Gods heart, cannot want his arme. Love in the creature commands all the other affections, sets all the powers of the whole man on work; thus in God, love sets all his other attributes on work, when God once pitch't his thoughts of doing good to lost man, then wisdom fell on projecting the way, Almighty power that undertook to raise the fabrick according to wisdomes modell. All are ready to effect what God says he likes. Now the believing soul is an object of Gods choicest love, even the same, with which he loves his Son, John 17:26.

First, God loves the believer as the birth of his everlasting counsel, when a soul believes, then Gods eternal purpose and counsel concerning him, (whom he chose in Christ before the foundation of the world, and with whom his thoughts went so long big) brings forth. And how must God needs love that creature, whom he carried so long in the wombe of his eternal purpose? This goodly Fabrick of heaven and earth had not been built, but as a stage whereon he would in time act what he decreed in heaven of old, concerning the saving of you, and a few more his Elect; and therefore according to the same rate of delight, with which God pleased and entertained himself in the thoughts of this before the world was, must he needs rejoyce over the soul now believing, with love and complacency unconceivable; and God having brought his counsel thus far towards its issue, surely will raise all the power he has, rather than be disappointed of his glory, within a few steps of home; I mean, his whole design in the believers salvation; The Lord who has chosen his Saints, (as Christ prayes for Joshua their representative will rebuke Satan and all their enemies.

Secondly, God loves his Saints as the purchase of his Sons blood; they cost him dear, and that which is so hardly got, shall not be easily lost. He that was willing to expend his Sons blood to gain them, will not deny his power to keep them.

Thirdly, God loves the Saints for their likenesse to himselfe, so that if he loves himself, he cannot but love himself appearing in them; and as he loves himself in them, so he defends himself in defending them. What is it in a Saint that enrags hell, but the image of God, without which the war would soon be at an end? It is the hatred the Panther has to man that makes him flie at his picture; For your sake we are slain all the day long: and if the quarrel be Gods, surely the Saint shall not go forth to war at his own cost.

Thirdly, the Covenant engags Gods Almighty power, Genesis 17:1. I am the Almighty God, walk before me. There is a League offensive and defensive between God and his Saints, he gives it under his hand, that he will put forth the whole power of his Godhead for them, 1 Chronicles 17:24. The Lord of Hostes is the God of Israel, even a God to Israel. God does not parcel himself out by retaile; but gives his Saints leave to challenge whatever a God has as theirs, and let him whoever he is, sit in Gods throne, and take away his crown, that can fasten any untruth on the Holy One; as his Name is, so is his Nature, a God keeping Covenant for ever. The Promises stand as the mountains about Jerusalem, never to be removed; the weak as wel as the strong Christian is within this line of Communication. Were Saints to fight it out in open field by the strength of their own grace, then the strong were more likely to stand, and the weak to fall in battel, but both castled in the Covenant are alike safe.

Fourthly, the Saints dependance on God, and expectation from God in all their straits, oblige his power for their succour; where does a gracious soul flie in any want or danger from sin, Satan, or his instruments, but to his God? as naturally as the Coney to her burrough; Psalms 57:3. At what time I am afraid, says David, I will trust in you! He tells God he will make bold of his house to step into, when taken in any storme; and does not question his welcome. Thus when Saul hunted him, he left a city of gates and barres to trust God in open field. Indeed all the Saints are taught the same lesson, to renounce their own strength, and relie on the Power of God, their own policie, & cast themselves on the wisdom of God; their own righteousnesse; and expect all from the pure mercy of God in Christ which act of faith is so pleasing to God, that such a soul shall never be ashamed, Psalms 9:18. The expectation of the poor shall not perish. A Heathen could say, when a bird (scared by a Hawke) flew into his bosome, I will not betray you unto your enemy, seeing you comest for Sanctuary unto me. How much lesse will God yield up a soul unto its enemy, when it takes Sanctuary in his Name, saying, Lord, I am hunted with such a temptation, dogg'd with such a lust, either you must pardon it, or I am damned; mortifie it, or I shall be a slave to it; take me into the bosome of your love for Christs sake; castle me in the armes of your everlasting strength; it is in your power to save me from, or give me up into the hands of my enemie: I have no confidence in my self or any other: Into your hands I commit my cause, my life, and relie on you; This dependance of a soul undoubtedly will awaken the Almighty Power of God, for such a ones defense: he has sworn the greatest oath that can come out of his blessed lips, even by himself, that such as thus flie for refuge to hope in him

shall have strong consolation, Hebrews 6:17. This indeed may give the Saint the greater boldness of faith to expect kindly entertainment, when he repairs to God for refuge, because he cannot come before he is look't for, God having set up his Name and Promises as a strong Tower, both calls his people into these Chambers, and expects they should betake themselves there.

Sixthly, Christs presence and employment in heaven layes a strong engagement on God to bring his whole force and power into the field upon all occasions for his Saints defense; one special end of his journey to heaven▪ and abode there is, that he might (as the Saints Solicitour) be ever interceding for such supplies and succours of his Father, as their exigencies call for; and the more to assure us of the same before he went, he did (as it were) tell us, what heads he meant to go upon in his intercession, when he should come there; one of which was this, that his Father should keep his children while they were to stay in the world, from the evil thereof, John 17:15. Neither does Christ take upon him this work of his own head, but has the same appointment of his Father, for what he now prayes in heaven, as he had for what he suffered on earth: He that ordained him a Priest to die for sinners, did not then strip him of his Priestly garments (as Aaron,) but appoints him to ascend in them to heaven, where he sits a Priest for ever by Gods Oath. And this office of intercession, was erected purely in mercy to believers, that they might have full content given them for the performance of all that God had promised; so that Jesus Christ lies Lieger at Court as our Embassadour, to see all carried fairly between God and us according to agreement: And if Christ follows his businesse close, and be faithful in his place to believers, all is well; and does it not behove him to be so, who intercedes for such dear relations?

Suppose a Kings Son should get out of a besieged City, where he has left his wife and children; (whom he loves as his own soul,) and these all ready to die by sword or famine, if supply come not the sooner, could this Prince, when arrived at his fathers house please himself with the delights of the Court, and forget the distress of his family? or rather would he not come post to his father, (having their cries and groans alwayes in his eares) and before he eat or drink, do his errand to his father, and entreat him if ever he lov'd him, that he would send all the force of his Kingdom to raise the siege, rather than any of his dear relations should perish? Surely (Sirs) though Christ be in the top of his preferment, and out of the storme in regard of his own person, yet his children left behind in the midst of sins, Satans, and the worlds batteries are in his heart, and shall not be forgotten a moment by him. The care he takes in our businesse appeared in the speedy dispatch he made of his Spirit to his Apostles supply, when he ascended, which assoon almost as he was warme in his seat, at his Fathers right hand, he sent, to the incomparable comfort of his Apostles and us, that to this day, yea, to the end of the world do, or shall believe on him.

SECT. 2.

The second Branch of the point followes: that Saints should eye this Power of God as engaged for them, and presse it home upon their souls till they silence all doubts and feares about the matter; which is the importance of this exhortation: Be strong in the Lord, and in the Power of his might; Fortifie and entrench your souls within the breast-work of this attribute of Gods mighty Power made over to you by God himselfe.

First, it is the end as of all Promises to be security to our faith, so of those in particular where his Almighty Power is expresly engaged, that we may count this attribute our portion, and reap the comfort it yields as freely, as one may the crop of his own field: Walk before me, says God to Abraham, I am God Almighty; set on this as your portion, and live upon it; The Apostle, Hebrews 13:6. teaches us what use to make of promises, verse 5. I will never leave you nor forsake you, there is the promise, and the inference, which he teaches us to draw by faith from this, follows, ver. 6. So we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper. We, that is, every believer may boldly say, that is, we may conclude God will help: not sneakingly, timorously, perhaps he will; but we may boldly assert it in the face of men and devils, because he that is Almighty has said it. Now for a Christian not to strengthen his faith on this incomparably sweet attribute, but to sit down with a few weak unsetled hopes, when he may, yea, ought to be strong in the faith of such promises, what is it but to undervalue the blessing of such promises? as if one should promise another house and land, and bid him make them as sure to himself as the Law can binde, and he should take no care to effect this, would it not be interpreted as a sleighting of his friends kindness? Is it a small matter that God passs over his Almighty power by promise to us, and bids us make it as sure to our selves as we can by faith, and we neglect this, leaving the Writings of the promises unsealed on our hearts.

Secondly, our obedience and comfort are strong or weak as our faith is on this principle.

First, our obedience, that being a child of faith partakes of its Parents strength or weakness; Abraham being strong in faith, what an heroick act of obedience did he perform in offering up his Son?

his faith being well set on the Power of God, he carries that without staggering, which would have laid a weak faith on the ground. No act of faith more strengthens for duty, then that which eyes Gods Almighty power engaged for its assistance, Go in this your might, said God to Gideon, have not I call'd you? as if he had said, Can I not, will I not carry you through your work? Away goes Gideon in the faith of this and does wonders. This brought the righteous man from the East to Gods foot, though he knew not where he went, yet he knew with whom he went, God Almighty. But take a soul not perswaded of this how uneven and unstable is he in his obediential course? every threat. from man if mighty dismayes him, because his faith not fixt on the Almighty, and therefore sometimes he will shift off a duty to comply with man, and betray his trust into the hands of a sorry creature, because he has fleshly eyes to behold the power of man, but wants a spiritual eye to see God at his back, to protect him with his Almighty power; which were his eyes open to see, he would not be so routed in his thoughts at the approach of a weak creature: Should such a man as I flee? said good Nehemiah, Nehem. 6.11. He was newly come from the throne of grace, where he had called in the help of the Almighty, verse 9. O God, strengthen my hands. And truly now he will rather die upon the place, then disparage his God with a dishonourable retreat.

Secondly, the Christians comfort increass or waines, as the aspect of his faith is to the power of God. Let the soul question that or his interest in it, and his joy gushs out, even as blood out of a broken vein: It is true, a soul may scramble to heaven with much ado, by a faith of recumbency, relying on God as able to save, without this perswasion of its interest in God; but such a soul goes with a scant side-winde, or like a ship whose masts are laid by the

board, exposed to winde and weather, if others better appointed did not tow it along with them. Many feares like waves ever and anon cover such a soul, that it is more under water then above; whereas one that sees it selfe folded in the armes of Almighty power, O how such a soul goes mounting afore the winde, with her sailes fill'd with joy and peace! Let affliction come, stormes arise, this blessed soul knows where it shall land and be welcome. The Name of God is his harbour, where he puts in as boldly, as a man steps into his own house, when taken in a shower. He heares God calling him into this and other his attributes, as Chambers taken up for him, Isa. 26. Come my people, enter into your Chambers. God calls them his, and it were foolish modesty not to own what God gives, Isaiah 45:24. Surely shall a man say, in the Lord have I righteousnesse and strength, that is, I have righteousnesse in Gods righteousnesse, strength in his strength, so that in this respect Christ can no more say that his strength is his owne, and not the believers, then the husband can say my body is my own, and not my wives. A soul perswaded of this may sing merrily with the sharpest thorne at its breast; so David, Psalms 57:7. My heart is fixed, my heart is fixed, I will sing and give praise. What makes him so merry in so sad a place as the Cave where now he was? he will tell you, verse 1. where you have him nestling himselfe under the shadow of Gods wings, and now well may he sing care and fear away. A soul thus provided, may lie at ease on a hard bed. Do you not think they sleep as soundly who dwell on London-bridge as they who live at White-hall or Cheap-side, knowing the waves that roare under them cannot hurt them? Even so may the Saints rest quietly over the floods of death it selfe, and feare no ill.

SECT. 3.

Use 1 Is the Almighty power of God engaged for the Saints defense? surely then they will have a hard pull, (the Saints enemies I mean) who meddle with them that are so far above their match. The devil was so cunning, he would have Job out of his trench, his hedge down, before he would fall on; but so desperate are men, they will try the field with the Saints, though incircled with the Almighty power of God. What folly were it to attempt or sit down before such a City, which cannot be block't up so as no relief can get in: the way to heaven cannot. In the Churches straitest siege, there is a river which shall make glad this City of God, with seasonable succours from heaven. The Saints fresh-springs are all from God, and it is as feasible for sorry man to stop the water-courses of the clouds, as to dam up those streams, which invisibly glide like veins of water in the earth, from the fountain-head of his mercy into the bosome of his people: the Egyptians thought they had Israel in a trap, when they saw them march into such a nook by the sea-side; They are entangled, they are entangled; and truly so they had been irrecoverably, had not that Almighty power which led them on, engaged to bring them off with honor and safety; well, when they are out of this danger; behold, they are in a wilderness, where nothing is to be had for back and belly, and yet here they shall live fourty years, without trade or tillage, without begging or robbing of any of the Neighbor-nations, they shall not be beholden to them for a penny in their way; what cannot Almighty power do to provide for his people? what can it not do to protect them against the power and wrath of their enemies? Almighty power stood between the Israelites and the Egyptians, so that (poor creatures) they could not so much as come to see their enemie: God

sets up a dark cloud as a blinde before their eyes, and all the while, his eye through the cloud is looking them into disorder and confusion; And is the Almighty grown weaker now a days, or his enemies stronger, that they promise themselves better success? No, neither; but men are blinder then the Saints enemies of old, who sometimes have fled at the appearances of God among his people, crying out, Let us flee, for the Lord fights for them. Whereas there be many now a days will rather give the honor of their discomfitures to Satan himself, then acknowledge God in the businesse; more ready to say the devil fought against them, then God? O you that have not yet worne off the impressions which the Almighty power of God has at any time made upon your spirits, beware of having any thing to do with that generation of men, whoever they are. Come not near their Tabernacle, cast not your lot in amongst them, who are enemies to the Saints of the most High, for they are men devoted to destruction. God so loves his Saints, that he makes nothing to give whole Nations for their ransome. He rip't open the very wombe of Egypt, to save the life of Israel his child, Isaiah 43:3.

Use 2 Secondly, this shows the dismal, deplorable condition of all you, who are yet in a Christ lesse state, you have seen a rich mine open'd, but not a penny of this treasure comes to your share, a truth laden with incomparable comfort, but it is bound for another coast, it belongs to the Saints into whose bosome this truth unlades all her comfort: see God shutting the door upon you, when he sets his children to feast themselves with such dainties, Esay 65.13. My servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry; my servants shall drink; but ye shall be thirsty. God has his set number, which he provides for; He knows how many he has in his family: these

and no more shall sit down. One chief dish at the Saints board is the Almighty power of God; This was set before Abraham, and stands before all his Saints, that they may eate to fulnesse of comfort on it; But you shalt be hungry; He is Almighty to pardon, but he will not use it for you an impenitent sinner; you have not a friend on the bench, not an attribute in all Gods Name will speak for you: Mercy it self will sit and vote with the rest of its fellow-attributes for your damnation. God is able to save and help in a time of need, but upon what acquaintance is it that you are so bold with God, as to expect his saving arme to be stretcht forth for you? Though a man will rise at midnight to let in a child, that cryes and knocks at his doore, yet he will not take so much paines for a dog, that lies howling there. This presents your condition, sinner, sad enough, yet this is to tell your story fairest; for that Almighty power of God which is engaged for the beleevers salvation, is as deeply obliged to bring you to your execution, and damnation. What greater tie then an oath? God himself is under an oath to be the destruction of every impenitent soul. That oath which God swore in his wrath against the unbeleeving Israelites, that they should not enter into his rest, concernes every unbeleever to the end of the world. In the Name of God consider, were it but the oath of a man, or a company of men, that like those in the Acts, should sweare to be the death of such a one, and you wert the man, would it not fill you with feare and trembling night and day, and take away the quiet of your life, till they were made friends? What then are their pillows stuft with, who can sleep so soundly without any horrour or amazement, though they be told, that the Almighty God is under an oath of damning them body and soul, without timely repentance? O bethink your selves, sinners, is it wisdom, or valour

to refuse termes of mercy from Gods hands, whose Almighty power if rejected, will soone bring you into the hands of justice? and how fearful a thing that is, to fall into the hands of Almighty God, no tongue can express, no not they who feel the weight of it.

Use. 3 Thirdly, this speaks to you, that are Saints indeed, Be strong in the faith of this truth, make it an Article of your Creed: with the same faith that you believe there is a God, believe also this Gods Almighty power is your sure friend▪ and then improve it to your best advantage. As,

First, in agonies of conscience that arise from the greatness of your sins, flie for refuge into the Almighty power of God. Truly Sirs, when a mans sins are displayed in all their bloody colours, and spread forth in their klling aggravations, and the eye of conscience awakened to behold them through the multiplying, or magnifying glasse of a temptation, they must needs surprize the creature with horror and amazement; till the soul can say with the Prophet: for all this huge hoast, There is yet more with me then against me. One Almighty is more than many Mighties. All these mighty sins and devils, make not one Almighty sin, or an Almighty devil. Oppose to all the hideous charges brought against you by them this onely attribute. As the French Ambassadour once silenced the Spaniards pride in repeating his Masters many titles, with one that drowned them all. God himself, Hosea 11:9. when he had aggravated his peoples sins to the height, then to show what a God can do, breaks out into a sweet promise: I will not execute the fiercenesse of mine anger, and why not? I am God, and not man. I will show the Almightinesse of my mercy. Something like our usual phrase; when a child or a woman strikes us, I am a man, and not a child, or woman, therefore I will not strike again. The very consid-

ering God to be God, supposs him Almighty to pardon as well as to avenge, and this is some relief; But then to consider it is Almighty power in bond and Covenant to pardon, this is more; As none can binde God but himself, so none can break the bond himself makes: and are they not his own words, that he will abundantly pardon? Isa. 55. he will multiply to pardon, as if he had said, I'le drop mercy with your sin, and spend all I have, rather than let it be said my good is overcome of your evil. It fares with the gracious soul in this case as with a Captaine, that yields his Castle upon gracious termes of having his life spared, and he safely convey'd to his house, there to be setled peaceably in his estate and possessions, for all which he has the Generals hand and Seal, on which he marches forth; but the rude souldiers assault him, and put him in feare of his life, he appeals to the General, (whose honor now is engaged for him) and is presently releeved, and his enemies punisht: You may poore soul, when accused by Satan, mollested by his terrours, say, It is God that justifies; I have his hand to it, that I should have my life given me assoon as I laid down my armes and submitted to him, which I desire to do; behold, the gates of my heart are open to let the Prince of peace in, and is not the Almighty able to performe his promise? I commit my selfe to him as unto a faithful Creatour.

Secondly, improve this Almighty power of God, and your interest therein, in temptations to sin, when you are over-powered, and fliest before the face of your strong corruption, or fearest you shalt one day fall by it, make bold to take hold of this attribute, and reinforce your self from it again to resist, and in resisting, to believe a timely victory over it. The Almighty God stands in sight of you while you are in the valley fighting, and stayes but for a call from

you when distressed in battel, and then he will come to your rescue: Jehoshaphat cried, when in the throng of his enemies, and the Lord helped him, much more may you promise your self his succour in your soul-combates: Betake your self to the throne of grace with that promise; Sin shall not have dominion over you: and before you urgest it (the more to help your faith,) comfort your self with this, that though this word Almighty is not exprest, yet it is implied in this and every promise, and you may without adding a title to the Word of God read it in your soul; sin shall not have dominion over you, says the Almighty God, for this and all his attributes are the constant seale to all his promises. Now soul put the bond in suit, fear not the recovery, 'tis debt, and so due: He is able whom you suest, and so there is no feare of losing the charge of the suit, and he that was so gracious to binde himself when he was free, will be so faithful (being able) to perform now he is bound: only while you expectest the performance of the promise, and the assistance of this Almighty power against your corruptions, take heed that you keep under the shadow of this attribute, and condition of this promise. The shadow will not cool except in it; what good to have the shadow, though of a mighty rock, when we sit in the open Sun? To have Almighty power engaged for us, and we to throw our selves out of the protection thereof by bold salleys into the mouth of temptation? The Saints falls have been, when they run out of their trench and hold; for like the conies, they are a weak people in themselves, and their strength lies in the rock of Gods Almightinesse, which is their habitation.

Thirdly, Christian, improve this, when opprest with the weight of any duty and service, which in your place and calling lies upon you. Perhaps you findest the duty of your calling too heavy for your

weak shoulders, make bold by faith to lay the heaviest end of your burden on Gods shoulder, which is yours (if a believer) as sure as God can make it by promise. When at any time you are sick of your work, and ready to think with Jonas to run from it; encourage your selfe with that of God to Gideon, whom he call'd from the flaile to thresh the mountains, Go in this your might, has not God call'd you? fall to the work God sets you about, and you engagest his strength for you. The way of the Lord is strength. Run from your work, and you engagest Gods strength against you, he'll send some storme or other after you to bring home his runaway servant. How oft has the Coward been kill'd in a ditch, or under some hedge, when the valiant souldier that stood his ground and kept his place got off with safety and honor? Art you call'd to suffer? flinch not because you are afraid, you shalt never be able to bear the crosse; God can lay it so even, you shalt not feel it; though you shouldest finde no succour till you comest to the prison-door, yea, till you have one foot on the ladder, or your neck on the block, despair not. In the Mount will the Lord be seen. And in that hour he can give you such a look of his sweet face, as shall make the blood come in the gastly face of a cruel death, and appear lovely in your eye for his sake. He can give you so much comfort in hand, as you shalt acknowledge God is aforehand with you, for all your shame & pain you can endure for him; And if it should not amount to this, yet so much as will bear all your charges you can be put to in the way, lies ready told in that promise, 1 Corinthians 10:13. You shalt have it at sight, and this may satisfie a Christian, especially if he considers, though he does not carry so much of heavens joy about him to heaven as others, yet he shall meet it as soon as he comes to his Fathers house, where it is reserved for him. In a word, Christian,

relie upon your God, and make your daily applications to the throne of grace, for continual supplies of strength: you little think how kindly he takes it, that you will make use of him, the oftner the better, and the more you come for, the more welcome; else why would Christ have told his disciples, Hitherto ye have ask't nothing; but to express his large heart in giving, loath to put his hand to his purse for a little, and therefore by a familiar kind of Rhetorick puts them to rise higher in asking, as Naaman when Gehazi asks one talent, entreats him to take two; such a bountiful heart your God has, while you are asking a little peace and joy, he bids you open your mouth wide, and he'l fill it, Go and ransack your heart, Christian, from one end to the other, finde out your wants, acquaint your selfe with all your weaknesses, and set them before the Almighty, as the Widow her empty vessels before the Prophet, had you more than you can bring, you may have them all fill'd. God has strength enough to give, but he has no strength to deny, here the Almighty himselfe (with reverence be it spoken) is weak; even a child, the weakest in grace of his family, that can but say Father, is able to overcome him; and therefore let not the weakness of your faith encourage you. No greater motive to the bowels of mercy to stir up Almighty power to relieve you, then your weakness, when pleaded in the sense of it. The pale face and thin cheeks (I hope) move more with us, then the canting language of a stout sturdy beggar. Thus that soul that comes laden in the sense of his weak faith, love, patience, the very weakness of them carries an argument along with them for succour.

Chapter 5. Wherein Is Answered a Grand Objection That Some Disconsolate Souls May Raise Against the Former Discourse

• • •

Object. O But, says some disconsolate Christian, I have prayed again and again for strength against such a corruption, and to this day my hands are weak, and these sons of Zerviah are so strong, that I am ready to say, all the Preachers do but flatter me, that do pour their oyle of comfort upon my head, and tell me I shall at last get the Conquest of these mine enemies, and see that joyful day wherein with David, I shall sing to the Lord, for delivering me out of the hands of all mine enemies. I have prayed for strength for such a duty, and finde it come off as weakly and dead-heartedly as before. If God be with me by his mighty power to help me, why then is all this befailen me?

Answ. 1 First, look once again, poor heart, into your own bosom, and see whether you findest not some strength sent into you, which you did over-look before; this may be, yea, is very ordinary in this case, when God answers our prayer not in the letter, or when the thing itselfe is sent, but it comes in at the back door, while we are expecting it at the fore; and truly thus the friend you

are looking for, may be in yours house and you not know it. Is not this your case, poor soul? you have been praying for strength against such a lust, and now you wouldest have God presently put forth his power to knock it on the head, and lay it for dead, that it should never stir more in your bosome: is not this the doore you have stood looking for God to come in at, and no sight or newes of your God his coming that way? your corruption yet stirs, it may be is more troublesom then before; now you askest, where is the strength promised to your relief? let me intreat you before you layest down this sad Conclusion against your God or self, see whether he has not conveyed in some strength by another door: Perhaps you have not strength to conquer it so soon as you desirest, but has he not given further praying strength against it? You prayedst before, but now more earnestly, all the powers of your soul are up to plead with God; Before you were more favorable and moderate in your request, now you have a zeal, you can take no denial, yea, welcome any thing in the room of your corruption; Would God but take your sin and send a crosse, you wouldest blesse him: Now, poor soul, is this nothing, no strength? Had not your God re-inforced you, your sin would have weakened your spirit of prayer, and not increased it. David began to recover himself, when he began to recover his Spirit of prayer. The stronger the cry, the stronger the child, I warrant you. Jacob wrestled, and this is called his strength, Hos. 12. It appeared, there was much of God in him that he could take such hold of the Almighty, as to keep it, though God seemed to shake him off; If thus you are enabled, soul, to deal with the God of heaven, no feare but you shalt be much more able to deal with sin and Satan. If God has given you so much strength, to wrestle with him above and against denials, you

have prevailed with the stronger of the two: overcome God, and he'll overcome the other for you. Again, perhaps you have been praying for further strength to be communicated to you in duty, that you might be more spiritual, vigorous, united, sincere, and the like therein, and yet you findest your old distempers hanging about you, as if you had never acquainted God with your aile; Well, soul, look once again into your bosome with an unprejudiced eye, though you doest not find the assisting strength you prayedst for, yet have you no more self-abasing strength? perhaps the annoyance you have from these remaining distempers in duty, occasion you to have a meaner opinion of all your duties then ever, yea, they make you abhor your selfe in the sense of these, as if you had so many loathsom vermein about you. Jobs condition on the dunghil, with all his botches and running sores on his body, appears desirable to you, in comparison of yours, whose soul you complainest is worse then his body. O this afflicts your soul deeply, does it not? that you shouldest appear before the Lord with such a dead, divided heart, and do his work worst that deserves best at your hands, and is all this nothing? Surely, Christian, yours eyes are held as much as Hagars, or else you wouldest see the streamings forth of divine grace in this frame of your heart; surely others will think God has done a mighty work in your soul; What harder and more against the haire, then to bring our proud hearts to take shame for that, whereof they naturally boast and glory? And is it nothing for you to tread on the very neck of your duties, and count them matter of your humiliation and abasing, which others make the matter of their confidence and self-rejoycing? Good store of vertue has gone from Christ, to dry this issue of pride in your

heart, which sometimes in gracious ones runs through and through their duties, that it is seen or may be by those that have lesse grace then themselves.

Answ. 2 Secondly, Christian, candidly interpret Gods dealings with you. Suppose it be as you sayest, you have pleaded the promise, and waited on the means, and yet findest no strength from all these receits, either in your grace or comfort, now take heed of charging God foolishly, as if God were not what he promiss, this were to give that to Satan which he is all this while gaping for. It is more becoming the dutiful disposition of a child, when he has not presently what he writes for to his father, to say, my father is wiser than I, his wisdom will prompt him, what and when to send to me, and his fatherly affections to me his child, will neither suffer him to deny any thing that is good, or slip the time that is seasonable. Christian, your heavenly Father has gracious ends that hold his hand at present, or else you had ere this heard from him.

First, God may deny further degrees of strength to put you on the exercise of that you have more carefully. As a mother does by her child, that is learning to go, she sets it down, and stands some distance from it, and bids it come to her, the child feels its legs weak, and cries for the mothers help, but the mother steps back on purpose, that the child should put forth all its little strength in making after her: When a poor soul comes and prayes against such a sin, God seems to step back and stand at a distance; the temptation increass, and no visible succour appears, on purpose that the Christian, though weak, should exercise that strength he has. Indeed we shall finde the sense of a souls weakness, is an especial meanes to excite it into a further care and diligence: One that knowes his weakness, how prone he is in company to forget him-

self, in passion how apt he is to flie out, if there be a principle of true grace, this will excite him to be more fearful and watchful, then another that has obtained greater strength against such great temptations. As a child that writes for money to his father, none comes presently, this makes him husband that little he has the better, not a penny now shall be laid out idly; Thus when a Christian has prayed against such a sin again and again, and yet finds himself weak, prone to be worsted, O how careful will this, should this make such a one of every company, of every occasion? Such a one had not need give his enemie any advantage.

Secondly, God may deny the Christian such assisting strength in duty, or mortifying strength of corruption as he desires, purely on a gracious design, that he may thereby have an advantage of expressing his love in such a way, as shall most kindly work upon the ingenuity of the soul to love God again. Perhaps (Christian) you prayest for a mercy you wantest, or for deliverance out of some great affliction, and in the duty you findest not more assistance then ordinary, yea, many distractions of spirit in it, and mis-giving thoughts with unbelieving feares after it; Well, notwithstanding those defects in your duty, yet God heares your prayer, and sends in the mercy on purpose, that he may greaten his love in yours eye, and make it more luscious and sweet to your taste, from his accepting your weak services, and passing by the distempers of your spirit. Here is lesse strength for the duty, that you may have more love in the mercy, nothing will affect a gracious heart more than such a consideration. See it in David, Psalms 116:11, 12. I said in my haste, All men are liars. What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me? As if David had said, notwithstanding all the comfortable messages I had from God by his Prophets con-

cerning this matter, my own prayers, and those remarkable providences, which carried in them a partial answer to them, and performance of what was promised, yet I betray'd much unbelief, questioning the truth of the one, and the return of the other; and has God notwithstanding all my infirmities fulfill'd my desire, and performed his promise? O what shall I render unto the Lord? Thus David reades Gods mercy through the spectacles of his own weakness and infirmity, and it appears great, whereas if a mercy should come in, as an answer to a duty managed with such strength of faith, and height of other graces, as might free him and his duty from usual infirmities, this might prove a snare, and occasion some self-applauding, rather than mercy-admiring thoughts in the creature.

Thirdly, God may communicate the lesse of his assisting strength, that he may show the more of his supporting strength, in upholding weak grace: We do not wonder to see a man of strong constitution, that eats his bread heartily, and sleeps soundly, live: But for a crazie body, full of ailes and infirmities, to be so patcht and shored up by the Physicians Art that he stands to old age, this begets some wonder in the beholders. It may be you are a poor trembling soul, your faith is weak, and your assaults from Satan strong, your corruptions stirring and active, and your mortifying strength little, so that in your opinion they rather gain ground on your grace, then give ground to it, ever and anon you are ready to think, you shalt be cast as a wrack upon the devils shoare: and yet to this day your grace lives, though full of leaks; now is it not worth the stepping aside to see this strange sight? A broken ship with masts and hull rent and torne, thus towed along by Almighty power, through an angry sea, and Armadoes of sins and devils,

safely into its harbour. To see a poore dilling or rush candle in the face of the boisterous winde, and not blown out; In a word, to see a weak stripling in grace held up in Gods armes, till he beats the devil craven: This God is doing in upholding you: you are one of those babes, out of whose mouth God is perfecting his praise, by ordaining such strength for you, that you a babe in grace, shalt yet foile a giant in wrath and power.

Thirdly, if after long waiting for strength from God, it be as you complainest, enquire whether the [illegible], that which hinders, be not found in your self. The head is the seat of animal spirits, yet there may be such obstructions in the body, as the other members may for a time be deprived of them; till the passage be free between Christ your head and you, your strength will not come, and therefore be willing to enquire.

First, have you come indeed to God for strength to performe duty, to mortifie corruption and the like? perhaps you will say, Yes, I have waited on those Ordinances, which are the way in which he has promised to give out strength. But is this all? you may come to them, and not wait on God in them. Have you not carnally expected strength from them, and so put the Ordinance, as she her husband in Gods stead? Has not the frame of your spirit some affinity with theirs in James 4:13. We will go into such a city, and buy, and sell, and get gaine: Has not your heart said, I will go and hear such a man, and get comfort, get strength? and doest you wonder you are weak, barren and unfruitful? Are Ordinances God, that they should make you strong or comfortable? You may heare them answer you, poor soul, as the King to the woman in the siege of Samaria: Help, O prayer, sayest you, or, O Minister; How can they help except the Lord help: These are but Christs servants:

Christ keeps the Key of his wine-cellar, they cannot so much as make you drink, when you come to their Masters house; and therefore, poor soul, stay not short of Christ, but presse through all the croud of Ordinances, and ask to speak with Jesus, to see Jesus and touch him, and vertue will come forth.

Secondly, ask your soul whether you have been thankful for that little strength you have; though you are not of that strength in grace, to run with the foremost, and hold pace with the tallest of your brethren, yet are you thankful that you have any strength at all? though it be but to cry after them, whom you seest out-strip you in grace, this is worth your thanks. All in Davids army attained not to be equal with his few Worthies in prowesse and honor, and yet did not cashiere themselves: you have reason to be thankful for the meanest place in the army of Saints, the least communications of Gospel mercy and grace must not be over-look't. Assoon as ever Moses with his army was through the sea, they strike up before they stir from the bank-side, and acknowledge the wonderful appearance of Gods power and mercy for them, though this was but one step in their way; a howling wilderness presented it self to them, and they not able to subsist a few days with all their provision, for all their great victory, yet Moses, he will praise God for this handsel of mercy. This holy man knew the only way to keep credit with God, so as to have more, was to keep touch, and pay down his praise for what was received. If you wouldest have fuller communications of divine strength, owne God in what he has done. Art you weak? blesse God you have life. Doest you through feeblenesse often faile in duty, and fall into temptation? Mourne in the sense of these: yet blesse God, that you doest not live in a total neglect of duty, out of a prophane contempt thereof, and that in

stead of falling through weakness, you doest not lie in the mire of sin through the wickedness of your heart. The unthankful soul may thank it self, it thrives not better.

Thirdly, are you humble under the assistance and strength God has given you? pride stops the conduit; if the heart begin to swell, it is time for God to hold his hand and turne the cock, for all that is poured on such a soul runs over into self-applauding, and so is as water spilt in regard of any good it does the creature, or any glory it brings to God. A proud heart and a lofty mountain are never fruitful. Now beside the common ways that pride discovers it self, as by under-valuing others, and over-valuing it selfe, and such like, you shall observe two other symptomes of it. First, it appears in bold adventures, when a person runs into the mouth of temptation, bearing himself up on the confidence of his grace receiv'd. This was Peters sin, by which he was drawn to engage further then became an humble faith, running into the devils-quarters, and so became his prisoner for a while. The good man, when in his right temper, had thoughts low enough of himself, as when he ask't his Master, Is it I? but he that feared at one time, lest he might be the traitour, at another cannot think so ill of himself, as to suspect he should be the denyer of his Master. What he? No, though all the rest should forsake him, yet he would stand to his colours; Is this your case, Christian? Possibly God has given you much of his minde, you are skilful in the Word of life, and therefore you darest venture to breath in corrupt aire, as if only the weak spirits of lesse knowing Christians, exposed them to be infected with the contagion of errour and heresie; You have a large portion of grace, or at least you thinkest so, and venturest to go where an humble-minded Christian would fear his heels should slip under him. Truly

now you temptest God to suffer your lock to be cut, when you are so bold to lay your head in the lap of a temptation. Secondly, pride appears in the neglect of those means, whereby the Saints graces and comforts are to be fed when strongest. May be, Christian, when you are under feares and doubts then God has your company, you are oft with your pitcher at his door, but when you have got any measure of peace, there growes presently some strangenesse between God and you: your pitcher walks not as it was wont to these Wells of salvation. No wonder if you (though rich in grace and comfort) goest behinde-hand, seeing you spendest on the old stock, and drivest no trade at present to bring in more: Or if you doest not thus neglect duty, yet may be you doest not perform it with that humility, which formerly beautified the same: then you prayedst in the sense of your weakness to get strength, now you prayest to show your strength, that others may admire you. And if once (like Hezekiah) we call in Spectators to see our treasure, and applaud us for our gifts and comfort, then it is high time for God, if he indeed love us, to send some messengers to carry these away from us, which carry our hearts from him.

Fourthly, if your heart does not smite you from what has been said, but you have sincerely waited on God, and yet have not received the strength you desirest, yet let it be your resolution to live and die waiting on him. God does not tell us his time of coming, and it were boldness to set on of our own heads. Go, says Christ to his disciples, Luke 24:49. Stay ye in Jerusalem, until ye be endued with Power from on High. Thus he says to you, stay at Jerusalem, wait on him in the means he has appointed, till you beest endued with further power to mortifie your corruptions, &c. And for your comfort know

First, your thus persevering to wait on God, will be an evidence of strong grace in you: the lesse encouragement you have to duty, the more your faith and obedience to bear you up in duty. He that can trade when times are so dead, that all his ware lies upon his hand, and yet drawes not in his hand, but rather trades more and more, sure his stock is great. What, no comfort in hearing, no ease to your spirit in praying, and yet more greedy to heare, and more-frequent in prayer? O soul, great is your faith and patience.

Secondly, assure your self when you are at the greatest pinch strength shall come: They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength: when the last handful of meale was dressing, then is the Prophet sent to keep the Widows house. When temptation is strong, your little strength even spent, and you ready to yield into the hands of yours enemies, then expect succours from heaven to enable you to hold out under the temptation: Thus to Paul, My grace is sufficient, or power from heaven to raise the siege, and drive away the tempter; thus to Job, when Satan had him at an advantage, then God takes him off. Like a wise Moderatour, when the Respondent is hard put to it by a subtile Opponent, takes him off, when he would else run him down. James 5:11. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

_EPHESIANS 6.11._Put on the whole Armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

THis verse is a Key to the former, wherein the Apostle had exhorted believers to encourage, and bear up their fainting spirits on the Lord, and the power of his might. Now in these words he explains himself, and shewes how he would have them do this, not presumptuously come into the field without that armour, which

God has appointed to be worne by all his souldiers, and yet with a bravado to trust in the power of God to save them. That soul is sure to fall short of home, (heaven I mean) who has nothing but a carnal confidence on the Name of God, blowen up by the ignorance of God and himself: No, he that would have his confidence duly placed on the Power of God, must conscienciously use the means appointed for his defense, and not rush naked into the battel, like that fanatick spirit at Munster, who would needs go forth, and chase away the whole army, then besieging that city, with no other cannon, then a few words charged with the Name of The Lord of hostes, (which he blasphemously made bold to use) saying, In the Name of the Lord of hostes depart. But himself soon perished; to learne others wisdom by what he paid for his folly. What foolish braving language shall you hear drop from the lips of the most prophane and ignorant among us? they trust in God, hope in his mercy, defie the devil and all his works, and such like stuffe, who yet are poor naked creatures, without the least piece of Gods armour upon their souls. To cashiere such presumption from the Saints Camp, he annexs this Directory to his exhortation, Put on the whole armour of God, &c. So that the words fall into these two general parts.

First, a Direction annex't to the former Exhortation, showing how we may in a regular way come to be strong in the Lord, that is, by putting on the whole armour of God.

Secondly, a reason or argument strengthening this Direction, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. In the Direction observe,

First. the furniture he directs, and that is Armour.

Secondly, the kinde or quality of this Armour, Armour of God

Thirdly, the quantity or entirenesse of the Armour; The whole Armour of God.

Fourthly, the use of this Armour; Put on the whole Armour of God.

To begin with the first, the furniture which every one must get that would fight Christs battels. The question here will be, What is this Armour?

First, by armour is meant Christ; we reade of putting on the Lord Jesus, Romans 13:14. where Christ is set forth under the notion of Armour. The Apostle does not exhort them for rioting and drunkennesse, to put on sobriety and temperance; for chambering and wantonnesse, put on chastity; (as the Philosopher would have done) but bids, Put on the Lord Jesus Christ; implying thus much till Christ be put on, the creature is unarmed. 'Tis not a mans morality and Philosophical vertues, that will repel a temptation, sent with a full charge from Satans cannon, though possibly it may the pistol shot of some lesse solicitation; so that he is the man in Armour, that is in Christ. Again, the Graces of Christ these are Armour, as the Girdle of truth, the breast plate of righteousnesse, and the rest. Hence we are bid also put on the new man, Ephesians 4:24. which is made up of all the several graces, as its parts and members. And he is the unarm'd soul, that is the unregenerate soul. Not excluding those duties and means which God has appointed the Christian to use for his defense,

The phrase thus opened; the Point is,

Chapter 1. Showing the Christless and Graceless Soul to Be the Soul Without Armor, and Therein His Misery

• • •

That a person in a Christlesse, gracelesse state is naked and unarm'd, and so unfit to fight Christs battels against sin and Satan. Or thus, A soul out of Christ is naked and destitute of all armour to defend him against sin and Satan. God at first sent man forth in compleat armour, being created in righteousnesse and true holines; but by a wile the devil strip't him, and therefore assoon as the first sin was compleated, it is written, Genesis 3:7. They were naked, that is, poor weak creatures, at the will of Satan a subdued people, disarm'd by their proud Conquerour, and unable to make head against him. Indeed it cost Satan some dispute to make the first breach, but after that he had once the gates open'd to let him in as Conquerour into the heart of man, he playes Rex: behold, a troop of other sins croud in after him, without any stroak or strife, in stead of confessing their sins, they run their head in a bush, and by their good will would not come where God is, and when they cannot flie from him, how do they prevaricate before him? They peale one of another, shifting the sin rather than

suing for mercy. So quickly were their hearts hardened through the deceitfulnesse of sin. And this is the woful condition of every son and daughter of Adam, naked he findes us, and slaves he makes us, till God by his effectual call delivers us from the power of Satan into the Kingdom of his dear Son, which will further appear, if we consider this Christlesse state in a four-fold notion.

First, it is a state of alienation from God. Ephes. 2.12. Ye were without Christ, being aliens from the Common-wealth of Israel, strangers from the Covenant of Promise, &c. Such a one has no more to do with any Covenant-promise, then he that lives at Rome has to do with the Charter of London, which is the birth-right of its own Denisons, not Strangers. He is without God in the world, he can claim no more protection from God, then an out-law'd subject from his Prince; If any mischief befalls him, the mends is in his own hands, whereas God has his hedge of special providence about his Saints, and the devil, though his spite be most at them, dares not come upon Gods ground to touch any of them, without particular leave. Now what a deplored condition is that, wherein a soul is left to the wide world, in the midst of legions of lusts and devils, to be rent and torne lke a silly hare among a pack of hounds, and no God to call them off? Let God leave a people, though never so warlike, presently they lose their wits, cannot finde their hands; A company of children or wounded men may rise up, and chase them out of their fenced Cities, because God is not with them; which made Caleb and Joshuah pacifie the mutinous Israelites at the tidings of giants and walled cities with this; They are bread for us, their defense is departed from them. How much more must that soul be as bread to Satan, that has no defense from the Almighty? Take men of the greatest parts, natural or acquired accomplish-

ments, who only want an union with Christ, and renewing grace from Christ: O what fooles does the devil make of them, leading them at his pleasure, some to one lust, some to another; the proudest of them all is slave to one or other, though it be to the ruining of body and soul for ever, Where lies the mystery, that men of such parts and wisdom, should debase themselves to such drudgery work of hell? even here, they are in a state of alienation from God, and no more able of themselves to break the devils prison, then a slave ro run from his chain.

Secondly, the Christlesse state is a state of ignorance, and such must needs be naked and unarm'd. He that cannot see his enemie, how can he ward off the blow he sends? One seeing Prophet leads a whole army of blinde men where he pleass. The imperfect knowledge Saints have here, is Satans advantage against them; he often takes them on the blinde side, how easily then may he with a parcel of good words carry the blinde soul out of his way, who knowes not a step of the right? Now that the Christlesse state is a state of ignorance, See Ephesians 5:8. Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord. Ye were darkness, not in the dark, so one that has an eye may be. A child of light is often in the dark, concerning some truth or promise, but then has a spiritual eye, which the Christlesse person wants, and so is darkness. And this darkness cannot be enlightened, but by its union with Christ, which is exprest in the following phrase; But now are ye light in the Lord. As the eye of the body once put out, can never be restored by the creatures Art, so neither can the spiritual eye, lost by Adams sin, be restored by the teaching of men or Angels. It is one of the diseases which Christ came to cure, Luke 4:18. 'Tis true, there is a light of reason, which is imparted to every man by na-

ture, but this light is darkness, compared with the Saints. As the night is dark to the day, even when the moon is in its full glory. This night-light of Reason may save a person from some ditch or pond, great and broad sins, but it will never help him to escape the more secret corruptions, which the Saint sees like atomes in the beams of spiritual knowledge. There is such curious work the creature is to do, which cannot be wrought by candle-light of natural knowledge. Nay more, where the common illumination of the Spirit is superadded to this light of nature, yet that is darkness compar'd with the sanctifying knowledge of a renewed soul, which does both discover spiritual truths, and warme the heart at the same time with the love of truth, having like the Sun a prolifical and quickening vertue, which the other wants; so that the heart lies under such common illuminations cold and dead. He has no more strength to resist Satan, then if he knew not the command; whereas the Christians knowledge, even when taken Prisoner by a temptation, pursues and brings back the soul as Abraham his Nephew, out of the enemies hands; which hints the third

Thirdly, the Christlesse state is a state of impotency, Rom. 5. When we were without strength, Christ came to die for the ungodly. What can a disarm'd people that have not sword or gun do to shake off the yoke of a conquering enemie? Such a power has Satan over the soul, Luke 11:21. he is call'd the strong man that keeps the soul as his Palace: If he has no disturbance from heaven, he need feare no mutiny within; he keeps all in peace there. What the Spirit of God does in a Saint, that in a manner does Satan in a sinner. The Spirit fills the heart of his with love, joy, holy desires, feares; so Satan fills the sinners heart with pride, lust, lying: Why

has Satan filled your heart, says Peter? And thus fill'd with Satan (as the drunkard with wine) he is not his own man, but Satans slave.

Fourthly, the state of unregeneracy is a state of friendship with sin and Satan. If it be enmity against God, (as it is) then friendship with Satan. Now it will be hard to make that soul fight in earnest against his friend. Is Satan divided? will the devil within fight against the devil without? Satan in the heart shut out Satan at the door? sometimes indeed there appears a scuffle between Satan and a carnal heart, but it is a meer cheat, like the fighting of two fencers on a stage, you would think at first they were in earnest, but observing how wary they are, where they hit one another, you may soon know they do not mean to kill: and that which puts all out of doubt, when the prize is done, you shall see them making merry together, with what they have got of their Spectatours, which was all they fought for; when a carnal heart makes the greatest bussle against sin by complaining of it, or praying against it, follow him but off the stage of duty, (where he has gained the reputation of a Saint, the prize he fights for) and you shall see them sit as friendly together in a corner as ever.

Use 1 First, this takes away the wonder of Satans great Conquests in the world: when you look abroad, and see his vast Empire, and what a little spot of ground contains Christs subjects, what heaps of precious souls lie prostrate under this foot of pride, and what a little regiment of Saints march under Christs banner; perhaps the strangenesse of the thing may make you ask, Is hell stronger than heaven? the armes of Satan more victorious then the Crosse of Christ? No such matter: Consider but this one thing, and you will wonder that Christ has any to follow him, rather than that

he has so few. Satan findes the world unarm'd, when the Prince of the world comes, he findes nothing to oppose; the whole soul is in a disposition to yield at first summons; and if Conscience, Governour for God in the creature stands out a while, all the other powers, as will and affections are in a discontent, (like mutinous souldiers in a garrison) who never rest till they have brought over conscience to yield, or against its command set open the City gate to the enemie, and so deliver traiterously their conscience prisoner to their lusts: But when Christ comes to demand the soul, he meets a scornful answer: Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of the most High. We will not have this man to reign over us. With one consent they vote against him, and rise up as the Philistines against Samson whom they call'd the Destroyer of the countrey. Ye will not come, unto me, says Christ. O how true are poor sinners to the devils trust! They will not deliver the Castle they hold for Satan, till fired over their heads. Pharaoh opposs Moses on one hand, and Israel cry out upon him on the other. Such measure has Christ both at Satans hand, and the sinners. That which lessened Alexanders Conquests, was, he overcame a people buried in barbarisme, without armes or discipline of war; and that which heightened Cesars, (though not so many) he overcame a people more warlike and furnish't. Satans victories are of poor ignorant, gracelesse souls, who have neither armes, nor hands, nor hearts to oppose; but when he assaults a Saint, then he sits down before a city with gates and bars, and ever riseth with shame; unable to take the weakest hold, to pluck the weakest Saint out of Christs hands; but Christ brings souls out of his dominion with a high hand, in spite of all the force and fury of hell, which like Pharaoh and his hoste pursue them.

Use 2 Secondly, this gives us a reason why the devil has so great a spite against the Gospel. Why? because this opens a magazine of armes and furniture for the soul; the Word is that Tower of David, Cant. 4.4. built for an Armourie, wherein there hang a thousand bucklers; all the shields of mighty men. Hence the Saints have ever had their armour, and the preaching of the Gospel unlocks it. As Gospel-light ascends, so Satans shady Kingdom of darkness vanishs. Revelation 14:6. there one Angel comes forth to preach the everlasting Gospel, and another Angel followes at his back, verse 8. crying Victoria, Babylon is fallen, is fallen. The very first charge the Gospel gave to the Kingdom of darkness, shak't the foundations thereof, and put the legions of hell to the run. The seventy, whom Christ sent out, bring this speedy account of their ambassage; Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through your Name: and Christ answers, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. As if he had said, 'tis no newes you tell me, I beheld Satan falllng when I sent you: I knew the Gospel would make work where it came; and therefore no wonder Satan labors to dispossesse the Gospel, which dispossesss him; he knows that army is near lost, whose magazine is blowen up; 'Tis true indeed, under the very Gospel the devil rageth more in such swinish sinners, as are given over of God to be possest of that fiend, for rejecting of his grace; but he is cast out of others, who before the loving kindness of God to man appeared in the Gospel, were commanded by him, serving divers lusts and pleasures; But now by the light of the Gospel they see their folly, and by the grace it brings are enabled to renounce him. This, this is that which torments the foule spirit, to see himself forsaken of his old friends and servants, and this new Lord to come and take his subjects from him: and therefore he labors ei-

ther by persecution to drive the Gospel away, or by policy to perswade a people to send it away from their coasts, and was he ever more likely to effect it among us? What a low esteem has he brought the preaching of the Gospel unto? the price is fallen half in half to what it was some years past, even among those that have been counted the greatest Merchants upon the Saints Exchange. Some, that have thought it worth crossing the seas, even to the Indies (almost as far as others fetch their gold) to enjoy the Gospel, are loath now to crosse the street to hear it at so cheap a rate; And some that come, (who formerly trembled at it) make it most of their errand to mock at, or quarrel with it. Nay, it is come to such a passe, that the Word is so heavy a charge to the squeamish stomachs of many Professors, that it comes up again presently, and abundance of choler with it against the Preacher, especially if it fall foule of the sins and errours of the times, the very naming of which is enough to offend, though the Nation be sinking under their weight. What reproaches are the faithful Ministers of the Gospel laden withal? I call heaven and earth to witnesse, whether ever they suffered a hotter persecution of the tongue, then in this apostatizing age. A new generation of Professours are started up, that will not know them to be the Ministers of Christ, though those before them, (as well in grace as time, more able to derive their spiritual pedigree, then themselves) have to their death owned them for their spiritual fathers. And must not the Ark needs shake, when they that carry it are thus struck at, both in their person and office? what are these men doing? alas, they know not, Father, forgive them: They are cutting off their right hand with their left; they are making themselves and the Nation naked, by despising the Gospel, and those that bring it.

Use 3 Consider your deplored estate, who are wholly naked and unarm'd. Can you pity the begger at your door, (when you see such in a Winter-day, shivering with naked backs, exposed to the fury of the cold) and not pity your own far more dismal soul-nakednesse, by which you liest open to heavens wrath, and hells malice? Shall their nakednesse cover them with shame, fill them with feare of perishing, which makes them with pitiful moanes knock and cry for relief, (as it is reported of Russia, where their poor (through extreme necessity) have this desperate manner of begging in their streets; Give me and cut me, give me and kill me?) and can you let Satan come and cut your throat in your bed of sloth, rather than accept of clothes to cover, yea, Armour to defend you? (I mean Christ and his grace, which in the Gospel is tendered to you.) And do not lightly believe your own flattering hearts, if they shall tell you, you are provided of these already. I am afraid many a gaudy Professour will be found as naked in regard of Christ, and truth of grace, as drunkards and swearers themselves; Such there are, who content themselves with a Christ in Profession, in gifts, and in duties, but seek not a Christ in solid grace, and so perish; those indeed are an ornament to the Christian, as the scarfe and feather to the souldier, but these quench not the bullet in battel, 'tis Christ and his grace does that, therefore labor to be sound rather than brave Christians. Grace embellisht with gifts is the more beautiful, but these without grace only the richer spoile for Satan.

The second Branch of the first general part of the words followes; and that is, the quality or kinde of that Armour, the Christian is here directed to provide. It is not any trash will serve

the turn, better none then not Armour of proof, and none such, but Armour of God. In a twofold respect it must be of God. First, in institution and appointment. Secondly, in constitution.

Chapter 2. Showing That the Armor We Use Against Satan Must Be Divine in the Institution, Such Only as God Appoints

• • •

First, the Christians Armour which he weares must be of divine Institution and appointment. The souldier comes into the field with no armes, but what his General commands, 'tis not left to every ones fancie to bring what weapons he please, this will breed confusion. The Christian souldier is bound up to Gods order, though the army be on earth, yet the Councel of War fits in Heaven; This duty ye shall do, that means ye shall use; and to do more or use other than God commands, though with some seeming success against sin; such shall surely be call'd to account for this boldness. The discipline of war among men is strict in this case. Some have suffered death by a Councel of war, even when they have beaten the enemie, because out of their place, or beside their order. God is very precise in this point, he will say to such as invent ways to worship him of their own, coyne meanes to mortifie corruption, obtain comfort in their own mint; Who has required this at your hands? this is truly to be righteous over-much, (as

Solomon speaks) when we will pretend to correct Gods Law, and adde supplements of our own to his rule. Who will pay that man his wages that is not set on work by God? God tells Israel, the false Prophets shall do them no good, because they come not of his errand; so neither will those ways and meanes help, which are not of Gods appointing; Gods thoughts are not as mans, nor his ways as ours, which he useth to attain his ends by. If man had been to set forth the Israelitish army, now to march out of Egypt; surely his wisdom would have directed rather to have plundered the Egyptians of their horse and armes, (as more necessary for such an expedition) then to borrow their jewels and eare-rings, but God will have them come out naked and on foot; and Moses keeps close to his order; yea, when any horses were taken in battel, because God commanded they should be houghed, they obeyed, though to their seeming disadvantage. It was Gods war they waged, and therefore but reasonable they should be under his command, they encamp't and march't by his order; as the Ark moved or rested, they fought by his command, the number appointed by him, the means and weapons they should use, all prescribed by God, as in the assault of Jericho: and what is the Gospel of all this? (for surely God had an eye in that to our marching to heaven, and our fighting with these cursed spirits and lusts that stand in our way) but that we should fight lawfully, using those means, which we have from his mouth in his Word?

Use 1 This reprovs two sorts:

First, those that fight Satan in Armour, that has no divine Institution, as

First, the Papist. Look into his armoury, and hardly a piece that will be found Armour of God. They fight in the Popes armour: his authority is the shop, wherein their weapons are forged; It were a kinde of pennance to your patience, to repeat all the several pieces of armour, with which they load silly souls, too heavy indeed for the broadest shoulders among them to bear; yea, more than the wiser sort of them mean to use, their masses, mattens, vigils, pilgrimages, Lent-fasts, whippings, vowes of chastity, poverty, with a world of such trash; where is a Word of God for these? who has required these things at their hands? a thousand woes will one day fall upon those Impostors, who have strip't the people of the true Armour of God, and put these reeds and bulrushes in their hands. This may justifie us in the sight of God and men, for our departure from them, who will force us to venture the life of our souls in such, paper-armour, when God has provided better.

Secondly, the carnal Protestant, who fights in fleshly armour. 2 Corinthians 10:3. the Apostle speaks there of warring after the flesh, that is, with weapons or means, which mans carnal wisdom prompts to, and not God commands, and so are weak. How few are clad with other in the day of battel; First, when Satan tempts to sin, if he has not presently a peaceable entrance; yet the resistance commonly made is carnal; the strength carnal they rest on, their own, not Gods; the motives carnal, as the fear of man more than of God. Where one says, How shall I do this and sin against God? many in their hearts say, How shall I do this and anger man, displease my Master, provoke my Parents, and lose the good opinion of my Minister? Herod feared John, and did many things: had he fear'd God, he would have laboured to have done every thing. The like may be said of all other motives, which have their spring in the

creature, not in God; they are armour which will not out-stand shot. If your strength lie in a creature-lock, it may be soon cut off; if in God it will hold, as his command; It is written: I cannot do it, but I must set my foot on the Law of my Maker. Or the love of Christ; I cannot come at my lust, but I must go over my bleeding Saviour, and therefore away, foule Tempter, I hate you and your motion. This foundation is rock, and will stand; but if it be some carnal respect that balancs you, another more weighty may be found of the same kinde, which will cast the scales another way. She that likes not the man because of his dresse only, may soon be gain'd when he comes in another habit. Satan can change his suit, and then your mouth will be stop't when your carnal argument is taken off. Secondly, when the Word or Conscience rebuke for sin, what is the armour that men commonly cover their guilty souls withal? truly no other than carnal. If they cannot evade the charge that these bring, then they labor to mitigate it, by extenuating the fact. 'Tis true, will they say, I did (I confesse) commit such a fault, but I was drawen in; The woman gave me, and I did eate, was Adams fig-leaf armour: 'tis but once or twice, and I hope that breaks no such squares, was this such a great businesse? I know jolly Christians will do as much as this comes to; I thank God, I cannot be charged for whore or thief: This is the armour that must keep off the blow. But if Conscience will not be thus taken off, then they labor to divert their thoughts, by striking up the loud musick of carnal delights, that the noise of one may drown the other, or with Cain, they will go from the presence of the Lord, and come no more at those Ordinances which make their head ake, and hinder the rest of their raving consciences. If yet the ghost haunts them, then they labor to pacifie it, with some good work or other, which

they set against their bad; their almes and charity in their old age, must expiate the oppression and violence of their former days: as if this little frankincense were enough to aire and take away the plague of Gods curse, which is in their ill gotten goods. Thus poor creatures catch at any sorry covering, which will not so much as hide their shame, much lesse choak the bullet of Gods wrath, when God shall fire upon them; this must he Armour of Gods appointing. Adam was naked for all his fig-leaves, while God taught him to make coats of skins, covertly (as some think) shadowing out Christ the true Lambe of God, whose righteousnesse alone was appointed by him to cover our shame, and arme our naked souls from the sight and stroke of his justice.

Secondly, it reproves those who use the Armour of God, but not as God has appointed, which appears in three sorts.

First, when a person useth a duty appointed by God, not as Armour of defense against sin, but as a cover for sin. Who would think him an enemie that weares Christs colours in his hat, and marches after Christ in the exercise of all the duties of his worship? such a one may passe all the Courts of guard, without so much as being bid stand, all take him for a friend; and yet some such there are, who are fighting against Christ all the while. The hypocrite is the man, he learnes his postures, gets the Word, has his tongue tip'c with Scripture-language, and walks in the habit of a Christian, meerly on a design to drive his trade the more closely; Like some high-way men in our days, who rob in the habit of souldiers, that they may be the lesse suspected; this is desperate wickedness indeed, to take up Gods armes, and use them in the devils service; of all sinners such shall finde least mercy; false friends shall speed worse then open enemies.

Secondly, they use not the Armour of God, as God has appointed, who put a carnal confidence therein. We must not confide in the Armour of God, but in the God of this Armour, because all our weapons are only mighty through God, 2 Cor. 10. The Ark was the meanes of the Jewes safety, but carnally applauded and gloried in, hastened their overthrow: so duties and Ordinances, gifts and graces in their place, are means for the souls defense; Satan trembles as much as the Philistines at the Ark, to see a soul diligent in the use of duty, and exercise of grace; but when the creature confides in them, this is dangerous. As some, when they have prayed, think they please God for all day, though they take little heed to their steps. Others have so good an opinion of their faith, sincerity, knowledge, thut you may assoon make them believe they are dogs, as that they may ever be taken in such an errour or sinful practice. Others, when assisted in duty, are prone to stroak their own head with a Bene fecisti Bernarde, and so promise themselves to speed, because they have done their errand so well. What speak such passages in the hearts of men, but a carnal confidence in their armour to their ruine? Many souls (we may safely say) do not only perish praying, repenting and believing after a sort, but they perish by their praying and repenting &c. while they carnally trust in these. As it falls out sometimes, that the souldier in battel loseth his life by means of his own Armour, it is so heavy he cannot flie with it, and so close buckled to him, that he cannot get it off, to flie for his life without it. If we be saved, we must come naked to Christ for all our duties, we will not flie to Christ while confiding in them, and some are so lock't into them, that they cannot come without them, and so in a day of temptation are trampled under the feet of Gods wrath, and Satans fury. The poor Publican throwes down his

armes, (that is, all confidence in himself) cries for quarter at the hands of mercy; God be merciful unto me a sinner, and he comes off with his life, he went away justified: but the Pharisee, loaden with his righteousnesse, and conceited of it, stands to it, and is lost.

Thirdly, they do not use the Armour of God as such, who in the performing of divine duties, eye not God through them, and this makes them all weak and uneffectual. Then the Word is mighty, when read as the Word of God, then the Gospel preach't, powerful to convince the conscience, and revive the drooping spirit, when heard, as the appointment of the great God, and not the exercise of a mean creature. Now it will appear in three things, whether we eye divine appointment in the meanes.

First, when we engage in a duty, and look not up to God for his blessing. Didst you eye Gods appointment in the means, you wouldest say, Soul, if there come any good of your present service, it must drop from heaven, for it is Gods appointment, not mans: And can I profit whether God will or no? or think to finde and bring away any soul-enriching treasure from his Ordinance without his leave? had I not best look up to him, by whose blessing I live more than by my bread?

Again, Secondly, it appears we look not at Gods appointment, when we have low thoughts of the means. What is Jordan that I should wash in it? what is this preaching that I should attend on it, where I heare nothing but I knew before? what these beggarly elements of water, and bread, and wine? Are not these the reasonings of a soul that forgets who appoints these? Didst you remember who commands, you wouldest not question what the command is; what though it be clay, let Christ use it, and it shall open the eyes,

though in it self more like to put them out. Hadst you your eye on God, you wouldest silence your carnal reason with this; 'Tis God sends me to such a duty, whatsoever he says unto me I will do it, though he should send me (as Christ them) to draw wine out of pots fill'd with water.

Thirdly, when a soul leaves off a duty, because he has not in it what he expected from it. O, says the soul, I see it is in vain to follow the means as I have done; still Satan foiles me, I will even give over. Doest you remember, soul, 'tis Gods appointment? surely then you wouldest persevere in the midst of discouragements. He that bids you pray, bids you pray without ceasing. He that bids you hear, bids you wait at the posts of wisdom: you wouldest reason thus, God has set me on duty, and here I'le stand, till God takes me off and bids me leave praying.

Chapter 3. Showing That the Armor We Use for Our Defense Against Satan Must Not Only Be Divine by Institution, but Constitution Also

• • •

SEcondly, the Christians Armour must be Armour of God, in regard of its make and constitution. My meaning is, 'tis not only God, that must appoint the weapons and armes the Christian useth for his defense: but he must also be the efficient of them, he must work all their work in them and for them. Prayer is an appointment of God, yet this is not armour of proof, except it be a Prayer of God flowing from his Spirit. Hope, that is the helmet the Saint by command is to wear, but this hope must be Gods creature; who has begotten us to a lively hope. Faith that's another principal piece in the Christians furniture, but it must be the faith of Gods Elect. He is to take righteousnesse and holiness for his breast-plate: but it must be true holiness, Ephesians 4:24. Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousnesse and true holiness. Thus you see, it is not armour as armour, but as armour of God, that makes the soul impregnable. That which is

borne of God overcomes the world. A faith borne of God, a hope borne of God, but the spurious adulterous brood of duties and graces, being begot of mortal seed, cannot be immortal.

Must the souls armour be of Gods make? be exhorted then to look narrowly, whether the armour ye weare, be the workmanship of God or no. There is abundance of false ware put off now adayes: little good armour worne by the multitude of Professours: 'tis Satans after-game he playes, if he cannot please the sinner with his naked state of prophanenesse; then to put him off with something like grace, some slighty stuffe, that shall neither do him good, nor Satan hurt; thus many like children, that cry for a knife or dagger, and are pleas'd as well with a bone knife, and wooden dagger, as with the best of all? so they have some armour, it matters not what. Pray they must, but little care how it be performed: Believe in God? yes, they hope they are not infidels: but what it is, how they come by it, or whether it will hold in an evil-day, this never was put to the question in their hearts. Thus thousands perish with a vain conceit, they are arm'd against Satan, death and judgment, when they are miserable and naked, yea, worse on it then those who are more naked, (those I mean) who have not a rag of civility, to hide their shame from the worlds eye; and that in a double respect.

First, it is harder to work on such a soul savingly, because he has a forme, though not the power, and this affords him a plea. A soul purely naked, nothing like the wedding garment on, he is speechlesse; the drunkard has nothing to say for himself, when you ask him why he lives so swinishly; you may come up to him, and get within him, and turn the very mouth of his conscience upon him, which will shoot conviction into him: But come to deal

with one that prayes and heares, one that is a pretender to faith and hope in God, here is a man in glistering armour, he has his weapon in his hand, with which he will keep the Preacher, and the Word he chargs him with at armes length. Who can say, I am not a Saint? what duty do I neglect? here's a breast-work he lies under, which makes him not so faire a mark either to the observation or reproof of another, his chief defect being within, where mans eye comes not. Again, 'tis harder to work on him, because he has been tamper'd with already, and miscarried in the essay. How comes such a one to he acquainted with such duties, to make such a Profession? was it ever thus? No, the Word has been at work upon him his conscience has scared him from his trade of wickedness into a forme of Profession, but taking in short of Christ, for want of a through change, it is harder to remove him then the other: he is like a lock whose wards have been troubled; which makes it harder to turn the Key, then if never potter'd with. 'Tis better dealing with a wilde ragged cole, never back't, then one that in breaking has took a wrong stroak. A bone quite out of joynt then false set. In a word, such a one has more to deny then a profane person; the one has but his lusts, his whores, his swill and draffe; but the other has his duties, his seeming graces. O how hard is it to perswade such a one to light, and hold Christs stirrup, while he and his duties are made Christs foot-stool.

Secondly, such a one is deepest in condemnation. None sink so far into hell as those that come nearest heaven, because they fall from the greatest height. As it aggravates the torments of damned souls in this respect above devils, they had a cord of mercy thrown out to them, which devils had not: so by how much God by his Spirit waits on, pleads with, and by both gains on a soul more than

others by so much such a one (if he perish) will finde hell the hotter: these adde to his sin, and the rememberance of his sin in hell thus accented will adde to his torment. None will have such a sad parting from Christ, as those who went half-way with him, and then left him.

Therefore (I beseech you) look to your armour, David would not fight in armour, he had not tried though it was a Kings; perhaps some thought him too nice: What? is not the Kings armour good enough for David? Thus many will say, Art you so curious and precise? such a great man does thus and thus, and hopes to come to heaven at last, and darest not you venture your soul in his armour? No, Christian, follow not the example of the greatest on earth; 'tis your own soul you venturest in battel, therefore you can not be too choice of your armour. Bring your heart to the Word, as the only touch-stone of your grace and furniture; the Word (I told you) is the Tower of David, from whence your armour must be fetch't, if you can finde this Tower-stamp on it, then 'tis of God, else not. Try it therefore by this one Scripture-stamp. Those weapons are mighty, which God gives his Saints to fight his battels withal, 2 Corinthians 10:4. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God. The sword of the Spirit has its point and edge, whereby it makes its way into the heart and conscience, through the impenitency of the one, and stupidity of the other, (wherewith Satan, as with buffe and coat of male, armes the sinner against God) and there cuts and slashes, kills and mortifies lust in its own Castle, where Satan thinks himself impregnable. The Breast-plate which is of God, does not bend and break at every pat of temptation, but is of such a divine temperament, that it repels Satans motions with scorne on Satans teeth. Should such a

one as I sin, as Nehemiah in another case? and such are all the rest. Now try whether your weapons be mighty or weak: what can you do or suffer more for God, then an hypocrite that is clad in fleshly armour? I'le tell you what the world faith, and if you be Christians, clear your selves, and wipe off that dirt which they throw upon your glistering armour: they say, These Professors indeed have God more in their talk then we, they are oftner in the mount of duty then we, but when they come down into their shops, relations and worldly employments, then the best of them all is but like one of us; they can throw the Tables of Gods Commandments out of their hands as well as we, come from a Sermon, and be as covetous and griping, as peevish and passionate as the worst; they show as little love to Christ as others, when it is matter of cost, as to relieve a poor Saint, or maintain the Gospel, you may get more from a stranger, an enemie, then from a professing brother. O Christians, either vindicate the Name of Christ, whose Ensign you seem to march after, or throw away your seeming armour, by which you have drawn the eyes of the world upon you. If you will not, Christ himself will cashiere you, and that with shame enough ere long. Never call that Armour of God, which defends you not against the power of Satan. Take therefore the several pieces of your armour, and try them, as the souldier before he fights, will set his helmet or head-piece, as a mark at which he lets flie a brace of bullets, and as he findes them so will weare them or leave them; but be sure you shootest Scripture-bullets. You boastest of a breast-plate of righteousnesse, ask your soul, Didst you ever in your life perform a duty to please God, and not to accommodate your self? You have prayed often against your sin, a great noise of these pieces have been heard coming from you by others, as if

there were some hot fight between you and your corruption, but can you indeed show one sin you have slain by all your praying? Joseph was alive, though his coat was brought bloody to Jacob and so may your sin be for all your mortified look in duty, and out cry you makest against them. If you wouldest thus try every piece, your credulous heart would not so easily be cheated with Satans false ware.

Obj. But is all armour that is of God thus mighty? we reade of weak grace, little faith, how can this then be a trial of our armour, whether of God or not?

Answ. I answer, the weakness of grace is in respect of stronger grace, but that weak grace is strong and mighty in comparison of counterfeit grace: Now I do not bid you try the truth of your grace by such a power as is peculiar to stronger grace, but by that power which will distinguish it from false; true grace, when weakest, is stronger than false when strongest. There is a principle of divine life in it, which the other has not; Now life, as it gives excellency (a flea or fly by reason of its life is more excellent then the Sun in all its glory) so it gives strength. The slow motion of a living man (though so feeble that he cannot go a furlong in a day) yet coming from life, imports more strength then is in a ship, which (though it sailes swiftly) has its motion from without: Thus possibly an hypocrite may exceed the true Christian in the bulk and out-side of a duty, yet because his strength is not from life, but from some winde and tide abroad that carries him, and the Christians is from an inward principle, therefore the Christians weakness is stronger than the hypocrite in his greatest enlargements. I shall name but two acts of grace when weakest, whereby the Christian exceeds the hypocrite in all his best array. You will say, then grace is at a weak

stay indeed, when the Christian is perswaded to commit a sin, a great sin, such a one as possibly a carnal person would not have it said of him for a great matter, so low may the tide of grace fall, yet true grace at such an ebbe will appear of greater strength and force then the other.

First, this principle of grace will never leave till the soul weeps bitterly with Peter, that it has offended so good a God. Speak, O ye hypocrites, can ye show one tear that ever you shed in earnest for a wrong done to God? Possibly ye may weep to see the bed of sorrow which your sins are making for you in hell, but ye never loved God so well, as to mourne for the injury ye have done the Name of God. It is a good glosse Augustine has upon Esau's teares, Heb. 12. Flevit quòd perdidit, non quòd vendidit. He wept that he lost the blessing, not that he sold it. Thus we see an excellency of the Saints sorrow above the hypocrites. The Christian by his sorrow shows himself a Conquerour of that sin, which even now overcame him, while the hypocrite by his pride shows himself a slave to a worse lust, then that he resists. While the Christian commits a sin he hates it; whereas the other loves it while he forbears it.

Secondly, when true grace is under the foot of a temptation, yet then it will stir up in the heart a vehement desire of revenge; like a prisoner in his enemies hand, who is thinking and plotting how to get out, and what he will do when out, waiting and longing every moment for his delivery, that he may again take up armes; O God, remember me, says Samson, this once I pray you, and strengthen me, that I may be at once avenged on the Philistines, for my two eyes, Judges 16:27. Thus prays the gracious soul, that God would but spare him a little, and strengthen him but once before he dies, that he may be avenged on his pride, unbelief, and those sins

whereby he has most dishonoured his God; but a false heart is so far from studying revenge, that he rather swells, like the sea, against the Law which banks his lust in, and is angry with God who has made sin such a leap, that he must hazard his soul if he will have it.

Chapter 4. Of the Entireness of Our Furniture — It Must Be the Whole Armor of God

• • •

THe third Branch in the Saints furniture is, the entirenesse thereof, The whole Armour of God. The Christians Armour must be compleat, and that in a threefold respect.

SECT. 1.

First, he must be armed in every part cap-a-pe, soul and body, the powers of the one, and senses of the other, not any part left naked. A dart may flie in at a little hole, (like that which brought a message of death to Ahab, through the joynts of his harnesse) and Satan is such an Archer, who can shoot at a penny breadth. If all the man be armed, and only the eye lest without, Satan can soon shoot his fire-balls of lust in at that loophole, which shall set the whole house on flame. Eve look't but on the tree, and a poisonous dare struck her to the heart. If the eye be shut, and the ear be open to corrupt communication, Satan will soon wriggle in at this hole; If all the outward senses be guarded, and the heart not kept with all diligence, he will soon by his own thoughts be betrayed into Satans hands. Our enemies are on every side, and so must our ar-

mour be, on the right hand and on the left, 2 Corinthians 6:7. The Apostle calls sin [illegible], an enemy that surrounds us. If there be any part of the line unguarded or weakly provided, there Satan falls on; we see the enemy often enter the city at one side, while he is beat back on the other, for want of care to keep the whole line. Satan divides his temptations into several squadrons, one he employes to assault here, another to storme there. We reade of fleshly wickedness and spiritual wickedness; while you repellest Satan tempting you to fleshly wickedness, he may be entring your city at the other gate of spiritual wickedness. Perhaps you have kept your integrity in the practical part of your life; but what armour have you to defend your head, your judgement? If he surprise you here, corrupting that with some errour, then you will not long hold out in your practice. He that could not get you to profane the Sabbath among Sensualists and Atheists, will under the disguise of such a corrupt principle as Christian liberty prevail. Thus we see what need we have of universal armour, in regard of every part.

SECT. II.

Secondly, the Christian must be in compleat armour, in regard of the several pieces and weapons, that make up the whole Armour of God. Indeed there is a concatenation of graces, they hang together like links in a chain, stones in an arch, members in the body; prick one vein, and the blood of the whole body may run out at that sluce; neglect one duty, and no other will do us good. The Apostle Peter, in his second Epistle, chap. 1. ver. 5, 6, 7. presses the Christian to a joynt endeavour, to encrease the whole body of grace; indeed, that is health when the whole body thrives. Adde (says he) to your faith vertue; Faith is the file-leading grace. Well,

have you faith, adde vertue: True, faith is of a working stirring nature; without good works it is dead or dying. Fides pinguescit operibus, Luther. 'Tis kept in plight and heart by a holy life, as the flesh which plaisters over the frame of mans body, though it receives its heat from the vitals within, yet helps to preserve the very life of those vitals; thus good works and gracious actions have their life from faith, yet are necessary helps to preserve the life of faith; thus we see sometimes the child nursing the Parent that bare it, and therein performes but his duty. You are fruitful in good works, yet you are not out of the devils shot, except you addest to your vertue knowledge. This is the candle without which faith cannot see to do its work. Art you going to give an almes? if it be not oculata charitas, if charity has not this eye of knowledge to direct when, how, what, and to whom you are to give, you may at once wrong God, the person you relievest, and your self. Art you humbling your selfe for your sin? for want of knowledge in the tenour of the Gospel, Satan may play upon your ignorance, and either perswade you you are not humbled enough, when, God knowes, you are almost quackled with your teares, and even carried down by the impetuous torrent of your sorrow into despair, or else showing you your blubber'd face, may flatter you into a carnal confidence of your humiliation. Perhaps you seest the Name of God dishonoured in the place where you livest, and your spirit is stirred within you, (as Pauls at Athens) now if knowledge sits not in the saddle to reine and bridle in your zeal, you will be soon carried over hedge and ditch, till you fallest into some precipice or other by your irregular acting. Neither is knowledge enough, except you beest arm'd with Temperance, which here (I conceive) is that grace, whereby the Christian (as Master of his own house) so orders his affections

(like servants to reason and faith,) that they do not irregularly move, or inordinately lash out into desires of, cares for, or joy in the creature-comforts of this life, without which Satan will be too hard for you. The Historian tells us, that in one of the famous battels between the English and French, that which lost the French the day was a shower of English arrowes, which did so gall their horse, as put the whole army into disorder, their horse knowing no ranks, did tread down their own men: The affections are but as the horse to the Rider, on which knowledge should be mounted, if Satans barbed arrows light on them, so that your desires of the creature prove unruly, and justle with your desires of Christ, your care to keepe your credit or estate, put your care to keep a good conscience to disorder, and your carnal joy in wife and child trample down, or get before your joy in the Lord, judge on which side victory is like to fal. Well, suppose you marchest provided thus far in goodly array towards heaven, while you are swimming in prosperity; most you not also prepare for foule way and weather, I mean, an afflicted estate? Satan will line the hedges with a thousand temptations, when you comest into the narrow lanes of adversity, where you can not run from this sort of temptation, as in the Champaigne of prosperity: Possibly, you that did escape the snare of an alluring world, may be dismounted by the same when it frownes; though temperance kept you from being drunk with the sweet wines of those pleasures, yet for want of patience you may be drunk with the wine of astonishment, which is in afflictions hand: therefore, says the Apostle, to temperance adde patience; either possess your self in patience, or else some raving devil of discontent will possess you. An impatient soul in affliction is a bedlam in chains, yea, too like the devil in his chaines, that rageth against

God, while he is fettered by him. Well, have you patience? an excellent grace indeed, but not enough; you must be a pious man as well as a patient. Therefore says the Apostle, to patience? adde godliness. There is an atheistical stupid patience, and there is a godly Christian patience: Satan numbs the conscience of the one, and no wonder he complains not that feels not; but the Spirit of Christ sweetly calmes the other, not by taking away the sense of paine, but by overcoming it with the sense of his love. Now godliness comprehends the whole worship of God, inward and outward. If you beest never so exact in your morals, and not a worshipper of God, then you are an Atheist. If you doest worship God, and that devoutly, but not by Scripture-rule, you are an idolater. If according to the rule, but not in Spirit and truth, then you are an hypocrite, and so fallest into the devils mouth. Or if you doest give God one piece of his worship, and denyest another, still Satan comes to his market. Proverbs 28:9 He that turns back his eare from hearing the Law, his prayer is an abomination to the Lord. Yet (Christian) all your Armour is not on. Your godliness indeed would suffice, wert you to live in a world by your self, or had nothing to do but immediate communion with God; But (Christian) you must not always dwell on this mount of immediate worship, and when you descendest, you have many brethren and servants to your Father, who live with you in the same family; and you must comport your self becomingly, or else your Father will be angry. First, you have brethren, heires of the same promise with you, therefore you must adde to godliness brotherly kindness. If Satan can set you at odds, he gives a deep wound to your godliness. You will hardly joyne hearts in a duty, that cannot joyne hands in love. Secondly, there are not only brethren, but servants, a multitude of

profane carnal ones, who though they never had the names of sons and daughters, yet retain to Gods family, and your heavenly Father will have you walk unblameably, yea, winningly to those that are without, which that you may do, you must adde to brotherly kindness charity; by which grace you shalt be willing to do good to the worst of men; when they curse you, you must pray for them, yea, pray for no lesse then a Christ, a heaven for them. Father, forgive them, said Christ, while they were raking in his side for his heart-blood. And truly, I am perswaded the want of this last piece of armour, has given Satan great advantage in these our times. We are so afraid our charity should be too broad, whereas in this sense, if it be not as wide as the world, it is too strait for the command which bids us do good to all. May not we Ministers be charged with the want of this? when the straine of our preaching is solely directed to the Saints; and no paines taken in rescuing poor captived souls, yet uncall'd, out of the devils clutches, who may hale them to hell without any disturbance, while we are comforting the Saints, and preaching their priviledges; but in the mean time let the ignorant be ignorant still, and the profane profane still, for want of a compassionate charity to their souls, which would excite us to the reproving and exhorting of them, that they might also be brought in to the way of life, as well as the Saints encouraged, who are walking therein. We are stewards to provide bread for the Lords house; the greatest part of our hearers cannot, must not have the childrens bread, and shall we therefore give them no portion at all? Christs charity pitied the multitude, to whom in his publike preaching he made special application, as in that famous Sermon, most part of which is spent in rowsing up the sleepy consciences of the hypocritical Pharisees, by those thunderclaps of woes and

curses, so often denounced against them, Mat. 23. Again, how great advantage has Satan from the want of this charity in our families? Is it not observ'd, how little care is taken by professing Governours of such Societies, for the instructing their youth? Nay, 'tis a principle which some have drunk in, that 'tis not their duty. O where is their charity in the mean time, when they can see Satan come within their own walls, and let him drive a child, a servant in their ignorance and profanenesse to hell, and not so much as sally out upon this enemy by a word of reproof or instruction, to rescue these silly souls out of the murtherers hand? We must leave them to their liberty forsooth, and that is as faire play as we can give the devil; give but corrupt nature enough of this rope, and it will soon strangle the very principles of God and Religion in their tender years.

SECT. III.

Thirdly, the entirenesse of the Saints armour may be taken not only for every part and piece of the Saints furniture, but for the compleatnesse and perfection of every piece. As the Christian is to endeavour after every grace, so is he to presse after the advance and increase of every grace, even to perfection itself; as he is to adde to his faith vertue, so he is to adde faith to faith; he is ever to be compleating of his grace. It is that which is frequently prest upon believers, Matthew 5:48. Be ye perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. And purifie your selves, as God is pure. Where we have an exact copy set, not as if we could equallize that purity and perfection which is in God, but to make us strive the more, when we shall see how infinitely short we fall of our copy, when we write the fairest hand. So James 1:3. Let patience have its perfect work,

that you may be entire, wanting nothing, or wanting in nothing. You who makest a hard shift to carry a little burden with your little patience, wouldest sink under a greater, therefore there is need that patience should be ever perfecting, lest at last we meet a burden too heavy for our weak shoulders. Take a few reasons why the Christian should thus be compleating of his grace.

First, because grace is subject to decayes, and therefore ever needs compleating, as in an army especially which often engags in battel, their armes are batter'd and broken, one man has his helmet bent, another his sword gap't, a third his pistol unfix't; and therefore recruits are ever necessary. In one temptation the Christian has his helmet of hope beaten off his head, in another his patience hard put to it. The Christian had need have an Armourers shop at hand to make up his losse, and that speedily, for Satan is most like to fall on, when the Christian is least prepared to receive his charge; Simon, Simon, Satan has desired to sift you; he knew they were at that time weakly provided, (Christ their Captain now to be taken from the head of their troop, discontents among themselves, striving who should be greatest, and their recruits of stronger grace, which the Spirit was to bring, not yet come.) Now he has a design to surprise them: and therefore Christ carefully to prevent him, promiss speedily to dispatch his Spirit for their supply, and in the mean time sends them to Jerusalem, to stand as it were in a body in their joynt supplications, upon their guard, while he comes to their relief, showing us in the weakness of our graces what to do, and where to go for supply.

Secondly, because Satan is compleating his skill and wrath. 'Tis not for nought that he is call'd the old Serpent, subtil by nature, but more by experience; wrathful by nature, yet every day more

and more enraged; like a bull, the longer he is baited, the more fury he shewes. And therefore we who are to grapple with him, now his time is so short, had need come well appointed into the field.

Thirdly, it is the end of all Gods dispensations, to compleat his Saints in their graces and comforts. Wherefore does he lop and prune by afflictions, but to purge,that they may bring forth more fruit (that is, fuller and fairer?) Tribulation works patience; 'Tis Gods appointment for that end: It works, that is, it encreass the Saints patience, it enrags indeed the wicked, but meekens the Saints. 'Tis his design in the Gospel preached to carry on his Saints, from faith to faith, Romans 1:17. And accordingly he has furnished his Church with instruments, and those with gifts, for the perfecting of the Saints, and for the edifying of the body of Christ, Ephesians 4:14. Wherefore does the Scaffold stand, and the Workman on it, if the building go not up? For us not to advance under such means, is to make void the counsel of God: Therefore the Apostle blames the Christian Jewes, Hebrews 5:12. for their non-proficiency in the School of Christ. When for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again, which be the first principles of the Oracles of God.

O how few are there who endeavour thus to promove in their spiritual state, and labor to perfect what is yet lacking in their knowledge, patience, and the rest. First, tell some of adding faith to faith, one degree of grace to another, and you shall finde they have more minde to joyne house to house, and lay field to field; their souls are athirst, ever gaping for more, but of what? not of Christ, or Heaven: It is earth, earth they never think they have enough of, till death comes and stops their mouth with a shovel-

full, digg'd out of their own grave. What a tormenting life must they needs have, who are alwayes crying for more weight, and yet cannot presse their covetous desires to death? O Sirs, the only way, (if men would believe it) to quench this thirst to the creature, were to enkindle another after Christ and Heaven. Get but a large heart vehemently thirsting after these, and the other will die alone. As the Fevourish thirst does when nature comes to her temper. Secondly, others labor not thus to perfect grace, because they have a conceit they are perfect already, and upon this fancy throw away praying, hearing, and all other Ordinances, as strings for those babes in grace, to be carried by, who are not arrived to their high attainments. O what fooles does pride make men! Truly Heaven were no such desirable place, if we should be no more perfect, then, thus a sort of people that are too high for this world, and too low for another. The way by which God cures this phrensie of pride, we have in these days seen to be something like that of Nebuchadnezzar, To give them a heart of a beast, (I mean) for a time, suffer them to fall into beastly practices, by which he shewes them how far they are from that perfection they dreamed of so vainly. Thirdly, others who have true grace, and desire the advancement of it, yet are discouraged in their endeavour for more, from too deep a sense of their present penury. Bid some such labor to get more power of corruption, more faith on, and love to God, that they may be able to do the Will of God chearfully, and suffer it in the greatest afflictions patiently, yea, thankfully; and they will never believe, that they whose faith is so weak, love so chill, and stock so little in hand, should ever attain to any thing like such a pitch: You may as well perswade a beggar with one poor penny in his purse, that if he will go and trade with that, he shall come to be

Lord Major of London before he die: But why, poor hearts, should you thus despise the day of small things? Do you not see a little grain of mustard seed spread into a tree, and weak grace compar'd to it for its growth at last as well as littlenesse at first? Darest you say you have no grace at all? If you have but any, (though the least that ever any had to begin with) I dare tell you, that he has done more for you in that, then he should in making that which is now so weak, as perfect as the Saints grace is now in heaven. First, he has done more, considering it as an act of Power. There is a greater gulfe between no grace & grace, then between weak grace and strong, between a Chaos and nothing, then between a Chaos and this beautiful frame of heaven and earth. The first days work of both Creations is the greatest. Secondly, consider it as an act of grace, it is greater mercy to give the first grace of conversion, then to crown that with glory. It is more grace and condescent in a Prince to marry a poor Damosel, then having married her to cloth her like a Prince; he was free to do the first or not, but his relation to her pleads strongly for the other. God might have chose whether he would have given you grace or no, but having done this, your relation to him and his Covenant also do oblige him, to adde more and more till he has fitted you as a Bride for himself in glory.

Chapter 5. Of the Use of Our Spiritual Armor, or the Exercise of Grace

• • •

THe fourth and last branch in the Saints furniture is, the use they are to make thereof [illegible]: Put on the whole Armour of God. Briefly what is this duty, put on? These being Saints, (many of them at least) he writes to, 'tis not only putting on by Conversion, what some of them might not yet have; but also, he means they should exercise what they have. It is one thing to have armour in the house, and another thing to have it buckled on: to have grace in the principle, and grace in the act; so that the instruction will be,

It is not enough to have grace, but this grace must be kept in exercise. The Christians Armour is made to be worne; no laying down, or putting off our Armour, till we have done our warfare, and finished our course. Our Armour, and our garment of flesh go off together; then indeed will be no need of watch and ward, shield or helmet. Those military duties and field-graces, (as I may call faith, hope, and the rest) they shall be honourably discharged. In heaven we shall appear, not in armour, but in robes of glory; but here they are to be worne night and day: we must walk, work, and

sleep in them, or else we are not true souldiers of Christ: this Paul professs to endeavour, Acts 24:16 Herein do I exercise my self, to have alwayes a conscience void of offense towards God and towards man. Here we have this holy man at his armes, training and exercising himself in his postures, like some souldier by himself handling his pike, and inuring himself before the battel. Now the Reason of this is,

SECT. 1.

First, Christ commands us to have our Armour on, our grace in exercise, Luke 12:35. Let your loines be girded about, and your lights burning. Christ speaks, either in a martial phrase as to souldiers, or in a domestick as to servants: If as to souldiers, then let your loynes he girded, and your lights burning, is, that we should be ready for a march, having our armour on, (for the belt goes over all,) and our match light, ready to give fire at the first alarm of a temptation. If as to servants, which seems more natural, then he bids us (as our Master that is gone abroad) not through sloth or sleep put off our clothes, and put out our lights, but stand ready to open when he shall come, though at midnight. 'Tis not fit the Master should stand at the door knocking, and the servant within sleeping; indeed there is no duty the Christian has in charge, but implies this daily exercise;Pray, but how? without ceasing: Rejoyce, but when? evermore: Give thanks, for what? in every thing. The shield of faith, and helmet of hope, we must hold them to the end. The summe of all which is, that we should walk in the constant exercise of these duties and graces. Where the souldier is

plac't, there he stands, and must neither stir nor sleep, till he be brought off. When Christ comes, that soul shall only have his blessing, whom he findes so doing.

Secondly, Satans advantage is great when grace is not in exercise. When the devil found Christ so ready to receive his charge, and repel his temptation, he soon had enough, it is said, He departed for a season, as if in his shameful retreat he had comforted himself with hopes of surprising Christ unawares, at another season more advantagious to his designe; and we finde him coming again, in the most likely time indeed to have attained his end, had his enemy been man, and not God. Now if this bold fiend did thus watch and observe Christ from time to time, does it not behove you to look about you, lest he take your grace at one time or other napping? what he misss now by your watchfulnesse, he may gain anon by your negligence. Indeed he hopes you will be tired out with continual duty: Surely, says Satan, (when he sees the Christian up, and servent in duty) this will not hold long. When he findes him tender of conscience, and scrupulous of occasions to sin, This is but for a while, ere long I shall have him unbend his bowe, and unbuckle his armour, and then have at him. Satan knows what orders you keepest in your house and closet, and though he has not a key to your heart, yet he can stand in the next room to it, and lightly hear what is whispered there: He hunts the Christian by the sent of his own feet, and if once he does but smell which way your heart enclines, he knows how to take the him; if but one door be unbolted, one work unmann'd, one grace of its carriage here is advantage enough.

Thirdly, because it is so awky a businesse, and hard a work, to recover the activity of grace once lost, and to revive a duty in disuse: I have put off my coat, says the Spouse, Cant. 5.3. She had given way to a lazy distemper, was laid upon her bed of sloth, and how hard is it to raise her? her beloved is at the door, beseeching her by all the names of love, which might bring to her remembrance the near relation between them: My Sister, my Love, my Dove, open to me, and yet she riseth not; he tells her, his locks are filled with the drops of the night; yet she stirs not. What is the matter? her coat was off, and she is loath to put it on; she had given way to her sloth, and now she knows not how to shake it off, she could have been glad to have her Beloveds company, if himself would have opened the door; and he desired as much hers, if she would rise to let him in; and upon these termes they part. The longer a soul has neglected duty, the more ado there is to get it taken up: partly through shame, the soul having played the truant, now knows not how to look God on the face; and partly from the difficulty of the work, being double to what another findes, that walks in the exercise of his grace; here is all out of order. It requires more time and pains for him to tune his instrument, then for another to play the lesson. He goes to duty as to a new work, as a Scholar that has not look't on his book some while, his lesson is almost out of his head, whereas another that was but even now conning it over, has it ad unguem. Perhaps 'tis an affliction you are called to bear, and your patience unexercised, little or no thoughts you have had for such a time; (while you wert frisking in a full pasture) and now you kickest and flingest, eeven as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, Jeremiah 31:18. whereas another goes meekly and patiently under the like crosse, because he had been stirring

up his patience, and fitting the yoke to his neck. You know what a confusion there is in a town, at some sudden alarm in the dead of the night, the enemie at the gates, and they asleep within, O what a cry is there heard! one wants his clothes, another his sword, a third knows not what to do for powder; thus in a fright they run up and down, which would not be, if the enemie did finde them upon their guard, orderly waiting for his approath; Such a hubbub there is in a soul that keeps not his armour on, this piece and that will be to seek when he should use it.

Fourthly, we must keep grace in exercise in respect of others our fellow-souldiers. Paul had this in his eye when he was exercising himself to keep a good conscience, that he might not be a scandal to others. The Cowardise of one may make others run; the ignorance of one souldier that has not skill to handle his armes, may do mischief to his fellow-souldiers about him; some have shot their friends for their enemies; the unwise walking of one Professor makes many other faire the worse. But say, you doest not fall so far as to become a scandal, yet you can not be so helpful to your fellow-brethren as you shouldest; God commanded the Reubenites and Gadites to go before their brethren ready armed, until the land was conquered: Thus, Christian, you are to be helpful to your fellow-brethren, who have not (it may be) that settlement of Peace in their spirit as your self, not that measure of grace or comfort; You are to help such weak ones, and go before them (as it were) arm'd for their defense; now if your grace be not exercised, you are so far unserviceable to your weak brother. Perhaps you are a Master or a Parent who have a family under your wing, they fare as you thrivest; if your heart be in a holy frame they fare the better in the duties you performest, if your heart be dead and down, they are

losers by the hand. So that as the Nurse eats the more for the Babes sake she suckles, so shouldest you for their sake, who are under your tuition, be more careful to exercise your own grace, and cherish it.

SECT. 2.

Object. O but (may some say) this is hard work indeed, our armour never off, our grace alwayes in exercise. Did God ever mean Religion should be such a toilsome businesse as this would make it?

Answ. You speakest like one of the foolish world, and shewest your self a meer stranger to the Christians life that speakest thus: a burden to exercise grace? why? it is no burden to exercise the acts of nature, to eat, to drink, to walk, all delightful to us in our right temper, if any of these be otherwise, nature is opprest, as if stuff't, then dfficult to breath, if sick, then the meat offensive we eate; so take a Saint in his right temper, 'tis his joy to be employed in the exercise of his grace in this or that duty, Psalms 122:1. I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. His heart leap't at the motion. When any occasion diverts him from communion with God, though he likes it never so well, yet it is unwelcome and unpleasing to him, as you who are used to be in your shops from morning to night, how tedious is it for you to be abroad some days, though among good friends, because you are not where your work and calling lies? A Christian in duty is one in his calling, as it were in his shop where he should be; yea, where he would be, and therefore far from being tedious. Religion is burdensom to none, as to those who are infrequent in the exercise of it. Use makes heavy things light, we hardly feel the weight of our clothes,

because fitted to us, and worne daily by us, whereas the same weight on our shoulder would trouble us: thus the grievousnesse of religious duties to carnal ones, is taken away in the Saints, partly by the fitnesse of them to the Saints principles, as also by their daily exercise in them. The disciples, when newly entered into the ways of Christ, could not pray much or fast long; the bottles were new, and that wine too strong, but by that time they had walk't a few years, they grew mighty in both; doest you complain that heaven-way is rugged? be the oftner walking in it, and that will make it smooth.

But secondly, were this constant exercise of grace more troublesome to the flesh, (which is the only complainer) the sweet advantage that accrues by this to the Christian, will abundantly recompence all his labor and pains.

First, the exercise of your grace will encrease your grace; The diligent hand makes rich. A provident man counts that lost which might have been got, not only when his money is stole out of his chest, but when it lies there unimproved. Such a commodity (says the Tradesman) if I had bought with that money in my bags, would have brought me in so much gaine, which is now lost; so the Christian may say, My dawning knowledge, had I followed on to know the Lord, might have spread to broad day; I have more understanding, says David, then all my teachers. How came he by it? he'll tell you in the next words, for your testimonies are my meditation. He was more in the exercise of duty and grace. The best wits are not alwayes the greatest Scholars, because their study is not suitable to their parts; neither alwayes proves he the richest

man, that sets up with the greatest stock. A little grace well-husbanded by daily exercise will encrease, when greater neglected shall decay.

Secondly, as exercise encreass, so it evidencs grace. Would a man know whether he be lame or no, let him rise, he'll be sooner satisfied by one turn in a room, then by a long dispute, and he sit still. Wouldest you know whether you lovest God? be frequent in exerting acts of love; the more the fire is blown up, the sooner 'tis seen, and so of all other graces. Sometimes the soul is questioning whether it has any patience, any faith; till God comes and puts him into an afflicted estate, (where he must either exercise this grace or perish) and then it appeares like one that thinks he cannot swim, yet being thrown into the river, then uniting all his strength he makes a shift to swim to land, and sees what he can do. How oft have we heard Christians say, I thought I could never have endured such a pain, trusted God in such a strait, but now God has taught me what he can do for me, what he has wrought in me? and this you might have known before, if you wouldest have oftner stirred up and exercised your grace.

Thirdly, exercise of grace does invite God to communicate himself to such a soul. God sets the Christian at work, and then meets him in it. Up and be doing, and the Lord be with you. He sets a soul a reading as the Eunuch, and then joynes to his chariot a praying, and then comes the messenger from heaven, O Daniel greatly beloved. The Spouse, who lost her Beloved on her bed, findes him as she comes from the Sermon, Cant. 3.4. It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loved.

SECT. 3.

Use. 1 This falls heavy on their heads, who are so far from exercising grace, that they walk in the exercise of their lusts, their hearts are like a glasse-house, the fire is never out, the shop-windows never shut, they are alwayes at work, hammering some wicked project or other, upon the anvil of their hearts; there are some who give full scope to their lusts, what their wretched hearts will, they shall have; they cocker their lusts as some their children, deny them nothing, who (as it is recorded of David to Adonijah) do not so much as say to their souls, Why doest you so? why are you so proud, so covetous, so prophane? They spend their days in making provision for these guests: as at some Innes, the house never cooles, but as one guest goes out, another comes in, as one lust is served, another is calling for attendance; as some exercise grace more than others, so there are greater traders in sin, that set more a work then others, and return more wrath in a day then others in a moneth; Happy are such (in comparison of these) who are chain'd up by Gods restraint upon their outward man or inward, that they cannot drive on so furiously as these, who by health of body, power and greatness in place, riches and treasures in their coffers, numbnesse and dedolency in their consciences, are hurried on to fill up the measure of their sins. We reade of the Assyrian, that he enlarged his heart as hell, stretching out his desires as men do their bags that are thrack't full with money to hold more, Hab. 2.5. Thus the adulterer, as if his body were not quick enough to execute the commands of his lust, stirs it up by sending forth his amorous glances, which come home laden with adultery, blows up this fire with unchaste sonnets and belly-chear, proper fuel for the devils kitchin; and the malicious man, who that he may

lose no time from his lust, is a tearing his neighbor in pieces as he lies on his bed, cannot sleep unlesse some such bloody sacrifice be offered to his ravening lust. O how may this shame the Saints: how oft is your zeal so hot, that you cannot sleep till your hearts have been in heaven, as you are on your beds, and there pacified with the sight of your dear Saviour, and some embraces of love from him?

Use 2 It reproves those who flout and mock at the Saints, while exercising their graces. None jeer'd as the Saint in his calling. Men may work in their shops, and every one follow his calling as diligently as they please, and no wonder made of this by those that passe by in the streets; but let the Christian be seen at work for God, in the exercise of any duty or grace, and he is hooted at, despised, yea, hated. Few so bad indeed, but seem to like Religion in the notion; they can commend a Sermon of holiness like a discourse of God or Christ in the Pulpit, but when these are really set before their eyes, as they sparkle in a Saints conversation, they are very contemptible and hateful to them; this living and walking holiness bites; and though they liked the Preachers Art, in painting forth the same in his discourse, yet now they run from them, and spit at them; this exercise of grace offends the prophane heart, and stirs up the enmity that lies within: As Michal she could not but flout David to see him dancing before the Ark. He that commended the Preacher for making a learned discourse of zeal, will raise on a Saint, expressing an act of zeal in his place and calling; now grace comes too near him. A naughty heart must stand at some distance from holiness, that the beams thereof may not beat too strongly on his conscience, and so he likes it. Thus the Pharisees, the Prophets of old, these were holy men in their account, and they can lavish

out their money on their Tombes, in honor of them: but Christ, (who was more worth then all of them) he is scorn'd and hated: what's the mystery of this? the reason was, these Prophets are off the stage, and Christ on▪Pascitur in vivis livor, post fata quiescit.

Use 3 Try by this whether you have grace or no, do you walk in the exercise of your grace? He that has clothes, surely will wear them, and not be seen naked; men talk of their faith, repentance, love to God; these are precious graces, but why do they not let us see these walking abroad in their daily conversation? surely if such guests were in your soul, they would look out sometimes at the window, and be seen abroad in this duty, and that holy action; grace is of a stirring nature, and not such a dead thing, (like an image) which you may lock up in a chest, and none shall know what God you worship; no, grace will show it self, it will walk with you into all places and companies, it will buy with you, and sell for you, it will have a hand in all your enterprizes, it will comfort you when you are sincere and faithful for God, and it will complain and chide you when you are otherwise; go to, stop its mouth, and heaven shall hear its voice, it will groan, mourne and strive, even as a living man when you would smother him. I'le as soon believe the man to be alive, that lies peaceably as he is nail'd up in his Coffin, without strife or busle, as that you have grace, and never exercise it in any act of spiritual life. What man! have you grace, and carried so peaceably, as a fool to the stocks, by your lust? Why hang'st you there nail'd to your lust? if you have grace, come down and we will believe it, but if you beest such a tame slave, as to sit still under the command of lust, you deceivest your self: Have you grace, and show none of it in the condition you are plac't in? May be you are rich; doest you show your humility towards those that are beneath

you? doest you show a heavenly minde breathing after heaven more than earth? It may be your heart is puff't with your estate, that you lookest on the poor as creatures of some lower species then your self, and disdainest them, and as for heaven you thinkest not of it. Like that wicked Prince, that said, He would lose his part in Paradise rather than in Paris. Art you poor, why doest not exercise grace in that condition? Art you contented, diligent? may be in stead of contentation you repinest, can not see a faire lace on your rich brothers cloth, but grudgest it in stead of concurring with Providence by diligence to supply your wants, you are ready to break through the [⟨1 page duplicate⟩][⟨1 page duplicate⟩] hedge into your neighbors fat pasture, thus serving your owne turne by a sin, rather than waiting for Gods blessing on your honest diligence; if so, be not angry we call you by your right name, or at least question whether we may stile you Christian, whose carriage is so crosse to that sacred name, which is too holy to be written on a rotten post.

Use. 4 Be exhorted, O ye Saints of God, to walk in the exercise of grace. It is the Ministers duty with the continual breath of exhortation, and if need be, reproof, to keep this heavenly fire clean on the Saints Altar. Peter saw it necessary to have the bellowes alwayes in his hands, 2 Peter 1:12. I will not be negligent to put you alwayes in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth; (that shall not take him off) as long as he is in this Tabernacle, he says he will stir them up, and be putting them in remembrance, v. 13. There is a sleepy disease we are subject to in this life; Christ though he had roused up his disciples twice, yet takes them napping the third time. Either exercise your grace, or Satan will act your corruption, as one

bucket goes down, the other riseth; there is a body of sin within, which like a malignant party watches for such a time to step into the saddle, and 'tis easier to keep them down then to pull them down: Your time is short, and your way long, you had best put on, lest you meanest to be overtaken with night, before you gettest within sight of your Fathers house. How uncomfortable 'tis for a traveller in Heaven-road (above all other) to go potching in the dark, many can with aking hearts tell you. And what have you here to minde like this? Are they worldly cares and pleasures? Is it wisdom to lay out so much cost on your tenement, which you are leaving, and forget what you must carry with you? Before the fruit of these be ripe which you are now planting, your self may be rotting in the grave. Time is short, says the Apostle, 1 Corinthians 7:29, [illegible]. The world is near its Port, and therefore God has contracted the sailes of mans life but a while, and there will not be a point to chuse, whether we had wives or not, riches or not, but there will be a vast difference between those that had grace, and those that had not; yea, between those that did drive a quick trade in the exercise therof, and those that were more remisse; the one shall have an abundant entrance into glory, while the other shall suffer losse in much of his lading, which shall be cast over-board as merchandise that will bear no price in that heavenly countrey; yea, while you are here others shall fare the better by your lively graces. Your cheerfulnesse and activity in your heavenly course, will help others that travel with you; he is dull indeed that will not put on, when he sees so much metal for God in you who leadest the way. Yea, your grace will give a check to the sins of others, who never stand in such awe, as when grace comes forth and sits like a Ruler in the gate, to be seen of all that passe by. The Swearer knowes not

such Majesty is present, when the Christian is mealy-mouth'd, and so goes on and feares no colours, whose grace had it but her dagger of zeal ready, and courage to draw it forth in a wise reproof, would make sin quit the place, and with shame run into its hole. Job 29:8. The young men saw me and bid themselves, the Princes refrain'd talking, and laid their hand on their mouth. And does not God deserve the best service you can do him in your generation? Did he give you grace to lay it up in a dead stock, and none to be the better? or can you say that he is wanting to you in his love and mercy? are they not ever in exercise for your good? Is the eye of providence ever shut? No, he slumbers not that keeps you, or is it one moment off you? No, The eye of the Lord is upon the righteous; He has fixed it for ever, and with infinite delight pleass himself in the object. When was his eare shut, or his hand, either from receiving your cries, or supplying your wants? nay, does not your condition take up the thoughts of God, and are they any other than thoughts of peace, which he entertains? A few drops of this oyle will keep the wheel in motion.

That ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

THese words present us with the reason, why the Christian souldier is to be thus compleatly arm'd, That he may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. The strength of which argument lies in these two particulars.

First, the danger, if unarm'd, the enemy is no mean contemptible one, no lesse then the devil, set out as a cuning Engineer by his wiles and stratagems.

Secondly, the certainty of standing against all his wits and wiles, if we be thus arm'd, That ye may be able to stand. As no standing without armour, so no feare of falling into the fiends hands if arm'd.

To begin with the first, the Saints enemy, the devil described by his wiles [illegible], properly the methods of Satan, [illegible] of [illegible], which signifies, that Art and order one observes in handling a point; we say such a one is methodical; Now because it shows ingenuity and acutenesse of wit so to compose a discourse, therefore it is transferr'd to express the subtilty of Satan in laying of his plots and stratagems, in his warlike preparations against the Christian. Indeed, the expert souldier has his order as well as the scholar, there is method in forming of an army, as well as framing an argument. The Note which lies before us is,

The devil is a very subtile enemy. The Christian is endangered most by his policy and craft; he is call'd the old Serpent. The serpent? subtil above other creatures, an old Serpent above other serpents; Satan was too crafty for man in his perfection, much more now in his maimed estate, having never recovered that first crack he got in his understanding by the fall of Adam. And as man has lost, so Satan has gained more and more experience; he lost his wisdom indeed assoon as he became a devil, but ever since he has increast his craft; though he has not wisdom enough to do himself good, yet subtilty enough to do others hurt. God shewes us where his strength lies, when he promiss he will bruise the head of the Serpent; his head crush't and he dies presently. Now in handling this Point of Satans subtilty, we shall consider him in his two main designes, and therein show you his wiles and policies. His first

main design is to draw into sin. The second is to accuse, vex and trouble the Saint for sin. First, let us consider the devil as a tempter to sin, and there he shows his wily subtilty in three things.

First, in choosing the most advantagious season for tempting.

Secondly, in managing his temptations, laying them in such a method and forme, as shows his craft.

Thirdly, in pitching on fit instruments for his turne, to carry on his design.

Chapter 1. Of Satan's Subtlety to Choose the Most Advantageous Seasons for Tempting

• • •

First, he shows his subtilty in choosing the most proper and advantagious seasons for tempting. To every thing there is a season, Solomon says, Ecclesiastes 3:1. that is, a nick of time, which taken gives facility and speedy dispatch to a businesse; And therefore the same Wise man gives this reason why man miscarries so frequently, and is disappointed in his enterprizes, because he knowes not his time, Ecclesiastes 9:11. He comes when the bird is flowen. A hundred souldiers at one time may turn a battel, save an army, when thousands will not do at another: Satan knowes when to make his approaches, when (if at any time) he is most likely to be entertained. As Christ has the tongue of the learned to speak a word in season of counsel and comfort, to a doubting drooping soul, so Satan shows his black Art, and hellish skill, in speaking words of seduction and temptation in season, and a word in season is a word on its wheels. I shall give you a view of his subtilty in special seasons, which he chooss to tempt in.

The first season he takes to tempt in is, when newly converted. No sooner is this child of grace, the new creature borne, but this Dragon poures a flood of temptation after it. He learnt the Egyptians but some of his own craft, when he taught them that bloody and cruel baptisme, which they exercised upon the Israelitish babes, in throwing them into the river assoon as they were borne. The first cry of the new creature, gives all the legions of hell an alarm; they are as much troubled at it, as Herod and Jerusalem were, when Christ was borne; and now they sit in Councel to take away the life of this new born King. The Apostles met with more opposition and persecution in their latter days, when endued with larger portions of the Spirit, but with temptations from Satan in their former when young Converts; as you may observe in the several passages recorded of them. Satan knew grace within was but weak, and their supplies promised at the Spirits coming, not landed; and when is an enemy more like to carry the town then in such a low condition? and therefore he tries them all. Indeed the advantages are so many, that we may wonder how the young Convert escapes with his life; knowledge weak, and so soon led into an errour, especially in divided times, when many ways are held forth, one saying, Here is Christ; another, There is Christ, and the Christian ready to think every one means honestly, that comes with good words, as a little child who has lost his way to his fathers house, is prone to follow any that offer him their conduct. Experience of what he knows little; and if Adam whose knowledge so perfect, yet was soon cheated, (being assaulted before he was well warme in his new possessions,) how much more advantage has Satan of the new Convert? in whom he findes every grace in so great an indisposition to make resistance, both from its

own weakness, and the strength of the contrary corruption, (which commonly in such is much unmortified) which makes it act with more difficulty and mixture, as in a fire newly kindled where the smoke is more than the flame, or like beer newly tunn'd which runs thick; so that though there appear more strength of affection in such, that it works over into a greater abundance of duty then in others, yet with more dregs of carnal passions, which Satan knows, and therefore chooss to stir what he sees troubled already.

Secondly, when the Saint is beset with some great affliction, This is as some blinde lane or solitary place, fit for this thief to call for his purse in. An expert Captain first labors to make a breach in the wall, and then falls on instorming the City. Satan first got power from God to weaken Job in his estate, children, health and other comforts he had, and now tempts him to impatience, and what not? he lets Christ fast fourty days before he comes, and then he falls to his work; as an army stayes till a Castle be pinch't for provision within, and then sends a parley, never more likely to be embraced then in such a strait. A temptation comes strong when the way to relief seems to lie through the sin that Satan is wooing to; when one is poor and Satan comes, What will starve rather than step over the hedge and steal for your supply? this is enough to put flesh and blood to the stand.

Thirdly, when the Christian is about some notable enterprize for Gods glory, then Satan will lie like a Serpent in the way, an Adder in the path, that biteth his horse-heels, so that his Rider shall fall backward. Thus he stood at Joshua's right hand to resist him. The right hand is the working hand, and his standing there implies his desire to hinder him in his enterprize. Indeed the devil was never friend to Temple-work, and therefore that work is so

long a doing. What a handsom excuse does he help the Jews unto, The time is not come: Gods time was come, but not the devils, and therefore he helps them to this poor shift, perverting the sense of Providence as if it were not time, because they were so poor, whereas they thrive no better because they went no sooner about the work, as God tells them plainly. Paul and Barnabas had a holy design in their thoughts, to go visit the brethren in every City, and strengthen their faith; the devil knew what a blow this might give to his Kingdom, their visiting might hinder him in his Circuit, and he stirs up an unhappy difference between these two holy men, who grow so hot that they part in this storme, Acts 15:30. There were two remarkable periods of Christs life, his Intrat and Exit, his entrance into his publick Ministery at his Baptisme, and his finishing it at his passion, and at both we have the devil fiercely encountring him. The more publick your place, Christian, and the more eminent your service for God, the more you must look that the devil will have some more dangerous design or other against you, and therefore if every private souldier needs armour against Satans bullets of temptation, then the Commanders and Officers, who stand in the front of the battel, much more.

Fourthly, when he has the presence of some object to enforce his temptation. Thus he takes Eve when she is near the tree, and had it in her eye while he should make the motion, that assaulting two Ports at once, it might be the harder for her to hinder the landing of his temptation; and if Eves eye did so soon affect her heart with an inordinate desire, then much more now is it easie for him by the presence of the object, to excite and actuate that lust which lies dormant in the heart. As Naomi sent her daughter to lie at Boaz his feet, knowing well, if he endured her there, there were

hope he might take her into his bed at last; If the Christian can let the object come so near, Satan will promise himself his suit may in time be granted. Therefore it should be our care if we would not yield to the sin, not to walk by, or sit at the door of the occasion; Look not on that beauty with a wandring eye, by which you wouldest not be taken Prisoner; parley not with that in your thoughts, which you meanest not to let into your heart; conversation begets affection: some by this have been brought to marry those, whom at first they thought they could not have liked.

Fifthly, after great manifestations of Gods love, then the Tempter comes. Such is the weak constitution of grace, that it can neither well bear smiles or frowns from God without a snare: As one said of our English Nation, Totam nec pati potest libertatem nec servitutem; It cannot well bear liberty nor bondage in the height: So neither can the soul, if God smile and opens himself a little familiarly to us, then we are prone to grow high and wanton, if he frown, then we sink as much in our faith; thus the one like faire weather and warme gleams, bring up the weeds of corruption; and the other, lke sharp frosts, nip and even kill the flowers of grace; the Christian is in danger on both hands, therefore Satan takes this advantage, when the Christian is flush of comfort, even as a cheater, who strikes in with some young heire, when he has newly received his rents, and never leaves till he has eased him of his money: thus Satan lies upon the catch, then to inveigle a Saint into one sin or other, which he knows will soon leak out his joy. Had ever any a larger testimony from Heaven then Peter? Matth. 16.17. where Christ pronouncs him blessed, and puts a singular honor upon him, making him the Representative for all his Saints. No doubt this favor to Peter, stirred up the envious spirit the

sooner to fall upon him. If Josephs party-coloured coat made the Patriarchs to plot against him their brother, no wonder malice should prompt Satan to show his spite, where Christ had set such a mark of love and honor; and therefore we finde him soon at Peters elbowe, making him his instrument to tempt his Master, who soon espied his cloven foot, and rebukes Peter with a Get you behinde me Satan. He that seem'd a Rock even now, through Satans policy, is laid as a stone of offense for Christ to stumble at. So David, when he had received such wonderful mercies, setled in his throne with the ruine of his enemies, yea, pardoned for his bloody sin, now ready to lay down his head with peace in the dust: Satan chops in to cloud his clear evening, and tempts him to number the people; so ambitious is Satan, then chiefly to throw the Saint into the mire of sin, when his coat is cleanest.

Sixthly, at the hour of death, when the Saint is down and prostrate in his bodily strength, now this coward falls upon him: 'tis the last cast indeed he has for the game, now or never, overcome him now and ever; as they say of the natural serpent, Nunquam nisi moriens producitur in longum: he never is seen at his length till dying: so this mystical serpent never strains his wits and wiles more, then when his time is thus short. The Saint is even stepping into eternity, and now he treads upon his heele, which if he cannot trip up so as to hinder his arrival in heaven, yet at least to bruise it, that he may go with more pain there.

Chapter 2. Satan's Subtlety in Managing His Temptations, Where Several Stratagems Used by Him to Deceive the Christian Are Laid Down

• • •

THe second way wherein Satan shows his tempting subtilty, is in those stratagems he useth to deceive the Christian in the act of temptation.

First, he hangs out false colours, and comes up to the Christian in the disguise of a friend, so that the gates are opened to him, and his motions received with applause, before either be discovered; therefore he is said to transform himself into an Angel of light, 2 Corinthians 11:14. Of all plots 'tis most dangerous when he appears in Samuels mantle, and silvers his foul tongue with faire language. Thus in point of errour, he corrupts some in their judgements, by commending his notions for precious Gospel-truths, and like a cunning Chapman puts off his old ware, (errours I mean that have layen long upon his hand) only turkening them a little after the mode of the times, and they go for new light, under the skirt of Christian liberty; he conveys in Libertinisme, by crying up the Spirit; he decries and vilifies the Scripture by magnifying faith: he

labors to undermine repentance, and blow up good works; by bewailing the corruption of the Church in its administrations, he drawes unstable souls from it, and amuss them, till at last they fall into a vertigo, and can see no Church at all in being. And he prevails no lesse on the hearts and lives of men by this wile, then on their judgements. Under the notion of zeal, he kindles sometimes a dangerous flame of passion and wrath in the heart, which like a rash fire makes the Christians spirit boile over into unchristian desires of, and prayers for revenge where he should forgive; of which we have an instance in the disciples, Luke 9:55. where two holy men are desiring that fire may come down from heaven. Little did they think from whence they had their coal, that did so heat them, till Christ told them, Ye know not what Spirit you are of. Sometimes he pretends pity and natural affection, which in some cases may be good counsel, and all the while he desires to promote cowardise and sinful self-love; whereby the Christian may be brought to flie from his colours, shrink from the truth, or decline some necessary duty of his calling; this his wile Christ soon spied, when he got Peter to be his spokesman, saying, Master, pity your self: who stop't his mouth with that sharp rebuke, Get you behinde me, Satan. O what need have we to study the Scriptures, our hearts and Satans wiles, that we may not bid this enemy welcome, and all the while think it's Christ that is our guest.

A second policie he useth is to get intelligence of the Saints affairs. This is one great wheele in the Politicians clock, to have Spies in all places, by whom they are acquainted with the counsels and motions of their enemies, and this gives them advantage, as to disappoint their designes, so more safely to compasse their own. 'Tis no hard matter for him to play his game well, that sees his enemies

hand. David knew how the squares went at Court, Jonathans arrowes carried him the newes, and accordingly he removed his quarters, and was too hard for his great enemy Saul. Satan is the greatest Intelligencer in the world, he makes it his businesse to enquire into the inclinations, thoughts, affections, purposes of the creature, that finding which humor abounds, he may apply himself accordingly, which way the stream goes, that he may open the passage of temptation, and cut the channel to the fall of the creatures affections, and not force it against the torrent of nature. Now if we consider but the piercing apprehension of the Angelical nature, how quick he is to take the sent which way the game goes by a word drop't, the cast of an eye or such a small matter (signal enough to give him the alarm) his experience in heart-anatomy, having inspected, and (as it were) dissected so many in his long practice, whereby his knowledge is much perfected, as also his great diligence to adde to both these, being as close a Student as ever, considering the Saints, and studying how he may do them a mischief, as we see in Jobs case, whom he had so observed that he was able to give an answer ex tempore to God what Jobs state and present posture was, and what might be the most probable means of obtaining his will of him; and besides all this, the correspondence that he has with those in and about the Christian, from whom he learnes much of his state, as David by Hushai in Absaloms counsel: all these considered, 'tis almost impossible for the creature to stir out of the closet of his heart, but it will be known where he enclines; some corrupt passion or other will bewray the soul to him, as they did David to Saul, who told him where he might finde him,in the wilderness of Engedi. Thus will these give intelligence to Satan, and say, If you wouldest surprize

such a one, he is gone that way, you shall have him in the wood of worldly employments, over head and eares in the desires and cares of this life, see where another sits under such a bower, delighting himself in this child, or that gift, endowment of mind, or the like; lay but the lime-twig there, and you shall soon have him in it. Now Satan having this intelligence, lets him alone to act his part; he sure cannot be at a losse himself, when his scholars, (the Jesuites I mean) have such agility of minde, to wreath and cast themselves into any forme becoming the persons they would seduce. Is ambition the lust the heart favours? O the pleasing projects that he will put such upon! how easily having first blown them up with vain hopes, does he draw them into horrid sins? Thus Human, that he may have a monopoly of his Princes favor, is hurried into that bloody plot (fatal at last to himself) against the Jewes. Is uncleannesse the lust after which the creatures eye wanders? Now he'll be the Pander, to bring him and his Minion together. Thus he finding Amnon sick of this disease, sends Jonadah a deep-pated fellow, to put this fine device into his head of feigning himself sick whereby his Sister fell into his snare.

Thirdly, in his gradual approaches to the soul. When he comes to tempt, he is modest & asks but a little, he knows he may get that at many times, which he should be denied if lie ask't all at once. A few are let into a city, when an army coming in a body, would be shut out, and therefore that he may beget no suspition, he presents may be a few general propositions, which do not discover the depth of his plot; these like Scouts goe before, while his whole body lies hid as it were in some swamp at hand. Thus he wrigled into Eves bosome, whom he does not at first dash bid Take and eat, no, he is more mannerly then so, this would have been so

hideous, that as the fish with some sudden noise, by a stone cast into the river, is scared from the bait, so would she have been affrighted from holding parley with such a one: no, he propounds a question which shall make way for this, Has God said? are not mistaken? could this be his meaning whose bounty lets you eat of the rest to deny you the best of all? Thus he digs about and loosens the roots of her faith, and then the tree falls the easier the next gust of temptaion. This is a dangerous policy indeed. Many have yielded to go a mile with Satan, that never intended to go two; but when once on the way, have been allured further and further, till at last they know not how to leave his company. Thus Satan leads poor creatures down into the depths of sin by winding staires, that let them not see the bottom where they are going; First he presents an object that ocasions some thoughts, these set fire on the affections, and these fume up into the braine, and cloud the understanding, which being thus disabled, now Satan dares a little more declare himself, and boldly solicite the creature to that it would even now have defied. Many who at this day lie in open profanenesse, never thought they should have roll'd so far from their Profession but Satan beguiled them, poor souls, with their modest beginnings. O Christians, give not place to Satan, no not an inch in his first motions; he that is a beggar and a modest one without doors, will command the house if let in; yield at first, and you givest away your strength to resist him in the rest, when the hem is worne, the whole garment will ravel out, if that be not mended by timely repentance.

The fourth way, wherein Satan shows his subtilty in managing his temptations, is in his Reserves. A wise Captain has ever some fresh troops at hand to fall in at a pinch, when other are worsted.

Satan is seldom at a losse in this respect, when one temptation is beat back, he soon has another to fill up the gap, and make good the line. Thus he tempts Christ to diffidence and distrust, by bidding him turne stones into bread, as if it were time now to carve for himself, being so long neglected of his Father, as to fast fourty days, and no supplies heard of; No sooner had Christ quench't this dart with that, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone,but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God, but he has another on the string which he let flie at him, tempting him to presumption, v. 5. Then the devil takes and sets him on a pinacle, and bids, Cast your self down headlong, for it is written, He shall give his Angels charge over you, &c. As if he had said, If you have such confidence on God and his Word, as you pretendest, show it by casting your self down, for you have a Word between you and the ground, if you darest trust God; and truly, though Christ had his answer ready, and was prepared to receive his charge on the right hand and on the left, being so compleatly arm'd that no temptation could come amisse, yet note we, Satans temptations on Christ, were like the Serpents motion on a rock, (of which Solomon speaks) that makes no impression, no dint at all, but on us they are as a Serpent on sand or dust, that leaves a print, when not in the heart, yet in the fancy, colours that which is next door to it, and so the object there is ready to slip in, if great care be not observ'd, especially when he does thus change his hand, as when we have resisted one way, fall on afresh another, yea, plant his succeeding temptation upon our very resistance in the former. Now it requires some readinesse in our postures, and skill at all our weapons to make our defense, like a disputant, when he is put out of his road, and has a new question started, or argument unusual brought,

now he is tried to purpose. And truly this is Satans way when he tempts the Christian to neglect of duties of Gods worship (from his worldly occasions, the multitude of them or necessity of following them) and this takes not, then he is on the other side, and is drawing the Christian to the neglect of his worldly calling, out of a seeming zeale to promote his other in the Worship of God. Or first, he comes and labors to dead the heart in duty, but the Christian too watchful for him there, then he is puffing of him up with an opinion of his enlargement in it, and ever he keeps his sliest and most sublimated temptations for the last.

Fifthly, in his politick retreats you shall have an enemy flie as overcome, when it is on a design of overcoming; this was Joshua's wile, by which he catcht the men of Ai in a trap, Joshua 3:8. We reade not only of Satans being cast out, but of the uncleane spirits going out, (voluntarily) yet with a purpose to come again, and bring worse company with him, Matth. 12.43. Satan is not alwayes beat back by the dint and power of conquering grace, but sometimes he drawes off, and raiss his own siege, the more handsomely to get the Christian out of his fastnesses and trenches, that so he may snap him on the plaines, whom he cannot come at in his works and Fortifications. Temptations send the Saint to his Castle, as the sight of the dog does the coney to her Burrough; Now the soul walks the rounds, stands upon its guard, dares not neglect duty, because the enemy is under its very walls, shooting in his temptations continually; but when Satan seems to give the soul over, and the Christian finds he is not haunted with such motions as formerly, truly now he is prone to remit in his diligence, faile in his duty, and grow either infrequent or formal therein; As the Romanes, whose valour decayed for want of the Carthaginian

troops to alarm them; let Satan tempt or not tempt, assault or retreat, keep you in order, stand in a fighting posture, let his flight strengthen your faith, but not weaken your care. The Parthians do their enemies most hurt in their flight, shooting their darts as they run, and so may Satan do you, if your seeming victory makes you secure.

Chapter 3. Of Satan's Subtlety in Choosing Instruments Fit for His Turn to Carry On His Tempting Design

• • •

THe third particular in which Satan shewes his subtilty, as a Tempter is in the choice of those instruments, whom he useth for the carrying on this his design, he as the Master-workman cuts out the temptation, and gives it the shape, but sometimes he has his Journeymen to make it up, he knows his work may be carried on better by others, when he appears not aboveboard himself. Indeed there is not such a suitableness between the Angelical nature & mans, as there is between one man & another, and therefore he cannot make his approaches so familiarly to us, as man can do to man; and here (as in other things) he is Gods Ape; you know this very reason was given, why the Israelites desired God might not speak to them, but Moses, and God liked the motion;They have well said, says God, I will raise up a Prophet from the midst of them like unto you. Thus Satan, he useth the Ministery of men like our selves, by which as he becomes more familiar, so he is lesse suspected, while Joab-like, he gets another to do his errand. Now 'tis not any will serve his turne for this

employment, he is very choice in his instruments he pitchs on; 'tis not every souldier is fit for an Ambassage to treat with an enemy, to betray a town and the like. Satan considers who can do his work to his greatest advantage; and in this he is unlike God, who is not at all choice in his instruments, because he needs none, and is able to do as well with one as another; but Satans power being finite, he must patch up the defect of the Lions skin with the Foxes. Now the persons Satan aimes at for his instruments are chiefly of four sorts.

First, persons of place and power. Secondly, persons of parts and policie. Thirdly, persons of holiness, or at least reputed so. Fourthly, persons of relation and interest.

First, Satan makes choice of persons of place and power. These are either in the Common-wealth or Church, if he can he will secure the Throne and the Pulpit, as the two Forts that command the whole line. First, men of power in the Common-wealth, 'tis his old trick to be tampering with such. A Prince, a Ruler may stand for a thousand; therefore says Paul to Elymas, when he would have turned the Deputy from the faith; O full of all subtilty, you child of the devil! Asts 13.8 As if he had said, you have learn't this of your father the devil, to haunt the Courts of Princes, winde into the favor of great ones. There it a double policy Satan has, in gaining such to his side. First, none have such advantage to draw others to their way: corrupt the Captan, and 'tis hard if he bring not off his troop with him. When the Princes, men of renown in their tribes, stood up with Corah, presently a multitude are drawn into the conspiracy. Let Jeroboam set up idolatry, and Israel is soon in a snare; it's said the people willingly walked after his Commandment, Hosea 5:11. Secondly, should the sin stay at Court, and the infection go no further, yet the sin of such a one, (though a good man)

may cost a whole Kingdom dear. 1 Chronicles 21:1. Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number the people. He owed Israel a spite, and he payes them home in their Kings sin, which drop't in a fearful plague upon their heads. Secondly, such as are in place and office in the Church. No such way to infect the whole town, as to poison the Cistern at which they draw their water; who shall perswade Ahab that he may go to Ramoth-Gilead and fall? Satan can tell, I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of his Prophets, 2 Kings 22:21. How shall the profane be hardened in their sins? let the Preacher sowe pillows under their elbowes, and cry peace, peace, and it's done. How may the worship of God come to be neglected? let Hophni and Phineas be but scandalous in their lives, and many both good and bad will abhor the sacrifice of the Lord.

Secondly, he employs persons of parts and policy, if any has more pregnancy of wit, and depth of reason then other, he is the man Satan looks upon for his service: and so far he prevails that very few of this rank are found among Christs disciples, Not many wise. Indeed, God will not have his Kingdom, either in the heart or in the world, maintained by carnal policy, 'tis a Gospel-command that we walk in godly simplicity, sine plicis; though the Serpent can shrink up into his folds, and appear what he is not, yet it does not become the Saints to juggle or shuffle with God or men; and truly when any of them have made use of the Serpents subtilty, it has not followed their hand; Jacob got the blessing by a wile, but he might have had it cheaper with plain dealing. Abraham and Sarah both dissemble to Abimelech, God discovers their sin, and reproves them for it by the mouth of an Heathen. Asa out of State-policy joynes league with Syria, yea, pawns the vessels of the Sanctuary, and all for help, and what comes of all this? Herein you

have done foolishly, says God, from henceforth you shalt have wars. Sinful policy shall not long thrive in the Saints hands well, but Satan will not out of his way, he enquires for the subtilest-pated men, a Balaam, Achitophl, Haman, Sanballat, men admired for their counsel and deep plots, these are for his turne. A wicked cause needs a smooth Oratour, bad ware a pleasing Chapman, as in particular, his instruments he useth to seduce and corrupt the mindes of men are commonly subtile-pated men, such, that if it were possible should deceive the very elect. This made the Apostle so jealous of the Corinthians, whom he had espoused to Christ, lest as Eve by the Serpent, so their minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. He must be a cunning devil indeed, that can draw off the Spouses love from her beloved, yet there is such a witchery in Satans instruments, that many have been brought to flie on the face of those truths and ordinances, yea, Christ himself to whom they have seemed espoused formerly. Now in three particulars this sort of Satans instruments show their Masters subtilty.

First, in aspersing the good name of the sincere messengers of Christ. Satans old trick to raise his credit upon the ruined reputation of Christs faithful servants. Thus he taught Corah, Dathan and Abiram, to charge Moses and Aaron, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the Congregation is holy; they would make the people believe, that it was the pride of their heart, to claim a monopoly to themselves, as if none but Aaron and his fraternity were holy enough to offer incense, and by this subtile practice they seduced (for a while) in a manner, the whole Congregation to their side. So the lying Prophets (that were Satans Knights of the post to Ahab,) fell foul on good Micaiah. Our Saviour himself was no better han-

dled by the Pharisees and their Confederates, and Paul the chief of the Apostles, his Ministery undermined, and his reputation blasted by false teachers, as if he had been some weak sorry Preacher,His bodily presence is weak, say they, and his speech contemptible; and is this your admired man?

Secondly, in covering their impostures and errours with choice notions and excellent truthes. Arrius himself, and other dangerous instruments of Satan were too wise to stuffe their discourses with nothing but heterodoxe matter, precious truths dropt from them with which they sprinkled their corrupt principles, yet with such Art as should not easily be discerned. This (as one observs) our Saviour warns his disciples of, when he bids them beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, (that is, of their errours.) But why leaven? for the secret mixture of it with the wholesom bread; you do not make your bread all of leaven, none would then eate it, but crumble a little into a whole batch, which sowers all: thus Christ does tell the disciples, that the Pharisees among many truths mixe their errours, and therefore it behoves them to beware, lest with the truth the errour goes down also. Again, leaven is very like the dough, of the same grain with it, only differs in age and sourenesse: thus Christ intimates the resemblance of their errours to the truth, scraped, as it were, out of the Scriptures, but sowered with their own false glosses. This indeed makes it easie for Christs sheep to be infected with the scab of errour, because that weed which breeds the rot is so like the grasse that nourishs them.

Thirdly, their subtilty appears in holding forth such principles as are indulgent to the flesh. This brings in whole shoales of silly souls into their net, the heart of man loves of life to shape a Religion according to its own humor, and is easie to believe that to

be a truth, which favours its own inclination. Now there are three lusts that Satans instruments labor to gratifie in their doctrine, Carnal Reason, Pride, and steshly Liberty.

First, Carnal reason, this is the great idol which the more intelligent part of the world worship, making it the very standard of their faith, and from this bitter root have sprung those Arrian and Socinian heresies. And truly he that will go no further then reason will carry him, may hold out in the plain way of the Moral Law, but when he comes to the depths of the Gospel, must either go back, or be content that faith should help reason over.

Secondly, another lust that Satan cockers, is pride. Man naturally would be a god to himself, [though for clambering so high he got his fall] and whatever doctrine nourishs a good opinion of man in his own eye, this is acceptable to him, and this has spawned another fry of dangerous errours. The Pelagian and semi-Pelagian, which set nature upon its own legs, and perswade man he can go alone to Christ, or at least with a little external help, of an hand to lead, or argument to excite, without any creating work in the soul. O, we cannot conceive how glib such stuffe goes down. If one Workman should tell you that your house is rotten, and must be pull'd down, and all new materials prepared; and another should say no such matter, such a beam is good, and such a sparre may stand; a little cost will serve the turne: it were no wonder that you should listen to him that would put you to least cost and trouble: the faithful servants of Christ tell sinners from the Word, that man in his natural state is corrupt and rotten, that nothing of the old frame will serve, and there must needs be all new; but in comes an Arminian and blows up the sinners pride, and tells him he is not so weak or wicked as the other represents him, if you will you may re-

pent and believe, or at least by exerting your natural abilities, oblige God to superadde what you have not. This is the Workman that will please proud man best.

Thirdly, Satan by his instruments nourishs that desire of fleshly liberty, which is in man by nature, who is a son of Belial, without yoke; and if he must wear any, that will please best, which has the softest lining, and pinchs the flesh least, and therefore when the sincere teachers of the Word will not abate of the strictnesse of the command, but presse sincere obedience to it, then come Satans instruments and say, these are hard task-masters, who will not allow one play-day in a year to the Christian, but tie him to continual duty, we'll show you an easier way to heaven: Come, says the Papist, confesse but once a year to the Priest, (pay him well for his paines) and be an obedient son of the Church, and we'll dispense with all the rest. Come, says the Familist, the Gospel-Charter allows more liberty then these legal Preachers tell you of; they bid you repent and believe, when Christ has done all these to your hand. What have you left to do but to nourish the flesh? something sure is in it, that Impostors finde such quick return for their ware, while Truth hangs upon the log; and is it not this? that they are content to afford heaven cheaper to their disciples, then Christ will to his. He that sells cheapest shall have most customers, though at last best will be best cheap; Truth with self-denial, a better penny-worth, then errour with all its flesh-pleasing.

Thirdly, Satan makes choice of such as have a great name for holiness, none to a live bird to draw other birds into the net. But is it possible that such should do this work for the devil? yes, such is the policy of Satan, and the frailty of the best, that the most holy

men have been his instruments to seduce others, Abraham he tempts his wife to lie, Say you are my Sister. The old Prophet leads the man of God out of his way, 1 Kings 13. the holiness of the man, and the reverence of his age, 'tis like, gave authority to his counsel. O how should this make you watchful, whose long travel and great progresse in the ways of God have gained you a name of eminency in the Church, what you say, do; or hold, because you are file-leading men, and others look more on you: then their way.

Fourthly, Satan chooss such, as by relation or affection have deep interest in the persons he would gain. Some will kisse the child for the Nurses sake, and like the Present for the hand that brings it. 'Tis like David would not have received that from Nabal, which he took from Abigail, and thanks her. Satan sent the apple by Eves hand to Adam. Delilah does more with Samson, then all the Philistines bands, Jobs wife brings him the poison, Curse God and die. Some think Satan spared her life, when he slew his children and servants, (though she was also within his Commission) as the most likely instrument, by reason of her relation and his affection, to lead him into temptation. Satan employes Peter a disciple to tempt Christ, at another time his friends and kinsfolk. Some Martyrs have confest, the hardest work they met withal, was to overcome the prayers and tears of their friends and relations. Paul himself could not get off this snare without heart-breaking: What mean ye to weep, and to break my heart? Acts 21:13.

Chapter 4. Wherein This Point of Satan's Subtlety, as a Tempter to Sin, Is Briefly Applied

• • •

Use 1 First, affect not sinful policy and subtilty, it makes you but like the devil. There is the wisdom of the Serpent, which is commended, and that is his perfection as a creature, in which both the literal and the mystical excel, the one in an ingenious observing nature above the beasts of the field, and the other in knowledge as an Angel above men; but as the subtilty of the one, and knowledge of the other is degenerate, and makes them more able to do mischief, the one to the bodies, the other to the souls of men, this kinde of wisdom and subtilty is to be abhorred by us: The Serpents eye (as one says) does well only in the Doves head.

First, affect not subtilty in contriving any sin. Some are wise to do evil, Jeremiah 4:22. Masters of this craft, who can as they lie on their beds, cast their wicked designes into an artificial method, showing a kinde of devillish wit therein, as the Egyptians who dealt wisely (as they thought) with the Israelites and Jezabel, who had printed her bloody design in so faire a letter, that some might

reade her Saint while she was playing the devil. This is the black Art indeed, and will make the soul black as hell that practiss it. It is not hard for any (though a fool) to learn. Be but wicked, and the devil will help you to be witty; Come but a while to his school, and you may soon be a cunning man. No sins speak a higher attainment in wickedness, then those which are the result of deliberate counsel and deep plottings. Creatures, as they go longer with their young, so their birth is more strong and perfect, as the Elephant above all others. The longer a sin is a forming and forging within, and the oftner the head and heart meet about it, the compleater the sin. Here are many litters of unform'd sins in one, such I mean, that are conceived and cast forth in the hurry of an extemporary passion, such sudden acts show weakness, these other deep wickedness.

Secondly, take heed of hiding sin when you have committed it. This is one of the devices that are in mans heart, and as much Art and cunning is shewen in this, as in any one part of the sinners trade. What a trick had the Patriarchs to blinde their fathers eye with a bloody coat? Josephs Mistresse to prevent a charge from Ioseph, accuss him for what she is guilty, like the Robber who scap't by crying Stop the Thief. God taught man to make coats to cover his naked body, but the devil learnt him to weave these coverings to hide the nakednesse of his soul; the more subtile you seemest in concealing your sin, the more egregiously you playest the fool. None so sham'd as the liar when found out, and that you are sure to be. Your covering is too short to hide you from Gods eye, and what God sees, (if you doest not put your self to shame) he will tell all the world of hereafter) however you escapest in this life.

Thirdly, take heed of subtilty and sinful policy, in compassing that which is lawful in it selfe; 'tis lawful to improve your estate and husband it well for your posterity, but take not the divels counsel, who will be putting you upon some tricks in your trade and slights in your dealing; such may go for wise men a while, but the Prophet reads their destiny, Ier. 17.11. At his end he shall be a fool. 'Tis lawful to love our estate, life, liberty, but beware of sinful policy to save them. 'Tis no wisdom to shuffle with God, by denying his truth, or shifting of our duty to keepe correspondence with men; he is a weak fencer that layes his soul at open guard to be stabbed and wounded with guilt, while he is lifting up his hands to save a broken head, Our fear commonly meets us at that door by which we think to run from it. He that will save his life shall lose it As you love your peace, Christians, be plain-hearted with God and man, and keep the Kings high-way; go the plain way of the command to obtain your desire, and not leap over hedge and ditch to come a little sooner to the journeys end; such commonly either meet with some stop that makes them come back with shame, or else put to venture their necks in some desperate leap. He is sure to come safer (if not sooner) home, that is willing to go a little about to keep God company. The Historians observation is worth the Christians remembrance: Consilia callida primâ specie laeta, tractatu dura, eventu tristia, Livius. Crafty counsels promise faire at first, but prove more difficult in the managing, and in the end do pay the undertaker home with desperate sorrow.

Use 2 Is Satan so subtile? O then think not to be too cunning for the devil, he'll be too hard for you at last, sin not with thoughts of an after-repentance; it is possible you meanest this at present: but doest you think who sits down to play with this cheater, to

draw out your stock when you pleasest? alas, poor wretch, he has a thousand devices to carry you on, and engage you deeper, 'till he has not left you any tenderness in your conscience. As some have been served at play, intending only to venture a shilling or two, yet have by the secret witchery in gaming, played the very cloathes off their back before they had done; O how many have thus sinned away all their principles, yea, Profession it self, that they have not so much as this cloak left, but walk naked to their shame? Like children, who got into a boat, think to play near the shore, but are unawares by a violent gust carried down to the wide sea. O how know you that dallie with Satan, but that at last you may (who begin modestly) be carried down to the broad sea of prophanenesse? Some men are so subtile to over-reach, and so cruel when they get men into their hands, that a man had better beg his bread then borrow of them. Such a Merchant is Satan cunning to insinuate, and get the creature into his books, and when he has him on the hip, no more mercy to be had at his hand, then the Lambe may expect from the ravenous Wolfe.

Use 3 Study the wiles, and acquaint your self with Satans policy. Paul takes it for granted, that every Saint does in some measure understand them; We are not ignorant of his devices, 2 Corinthians 2:11. He is but an ill fencer that knows and observes nothing of his emies play; many particular stratagems I have laid down already, which may help a little, and for your direction in this study of, and enquiry into Satans wiles, take this threefold counsel.

First, take God into your counsel. Heaven over-looks hell. God at any time can tell you, what plots are hatching there against you. Consider Satan as he is Gods creature, so God cannot but know

him. He that makes the Watch, knowes every pin in it. He formed this crooked Serpent, though not the crookednesse of this Serpent, and though Satans way in tempting is as wonderful as the way of a Serpent on a rock, yet God tracs him; yea, knowes all his thoughts together. Hell it self is naked before him, and this destroyer has no covering. Again, consider him as Gods Prisoner, who has him fast in chaines, and so the Lord, who is his Keeper, must needs know where his Prisoner goes, who cannot stir without his leave. Lastly, consider him as his messenger, for so he is, An evil spirit from the Lord vexed Saul, and he that gives him his errand, is able to tell you what it is. Go then and plough with Gods heifer, improve your interest in Christ, who knows what his Father knows, and is ready to reveal all that concernes you to you, Joh. 15.15. It was he who descried the devil coming against Peter and the rest of the Apostles, and faithfully revealed it to them, Luke 22. before they thought of any such matter. Through Christs hands passe all that is transacted in heaven and hell. We live in days of great actions, deep counsels, and plots on all sides, and only a few that stand on the upper end of the world know these mysteries of State, all the rest know little more than Pamphlet-Intelligence: Thus it is in regard of those plots which Satan in his infernal Conclave is laying against the souls of men, they are but a few that know any thing to purpose of Satans designes against them; and those are the Saints from whom God cannot hide his own counsels of love, but sends his Spirit to reveal unto them here, what he has prepared for them in heaven, 1 Corinthians 2:10. and therefore much lesse will he conceal any destructive plot of Satan from them.

Be intimately acquainted with your own heart, and you will the better know his design against you, who takes his method of tempting, from the inclination and posture of your heart. As a General walks about the City, and viewes it well, and then raiss his Batteries, where he has the greatest advantage: So does Satan compasse, and consider the Christian in every part before he tempts.

Lastly, be careful to reade the Word of God with observation. In it you have the History of the most remarkable battels that have been fought by the most eminent Worthies in Christs Army of Saints, with this great Warriour Satan; Here you may see how Satan has foiled them, and how they have recovered their lost ground. Here you have his Cabinet-counsels opened, there is not a lust which you are in danger of, but you have it descried, not a temptation which the Word does not arme you against. It is reported that a certain Jew should have poisoned Luther, but was happily prevented by his picture which was sent to Luther, with a warning from a faithful friend, that he should take heed of such a man when he saw him, by which he knew the Murderer, and escaped his hands. The Word shewes you, O Christian, the face of those lusts, which Satan employes to butcher your precious soul; By them is your servant warned, says David, Psalms 19:11.

Chapter 5. Wherein Is Showed the Subtlety of Satan as a Troubler and an Accuser for Sin, Where Many of His Wiles and Policies to Disquiet the Saints' Spirits Are Discovered

• • •

THe second General in which Satan appears such a subtile enemy; is in molesting the Saints peace, and disquieting the Saints spirit. As this holy Spirits work is not only to be a Sanctifier, but also a Comforter, whose fruits are righteousnesse and peace, so the evil spirit Satan is both a seducer unto sin, and an accuser for sin, a Tempter and a Troubler, and indeed in the same order. As the Holy Ghost is first a Sanctifier, and then a Comforter; so Satan first a Tempter, then a Troubler. Josephs Mistresse first tries to draw him to gratifie her lust, that string breaking she has another to trounce him and charge him, and for a plea she has his coat to cover her malice, nor is it hard for Satan to pick some hole in the Saints coat, when he walks most circumspectly. The proper seat of sin is the Will, of comfort the Conscience; Satan has not absolute knowledge of, or power over these, (being lock't up from any other but God; and therefore what

he does, either in defiling temptations, or disquieting, is by wiles more than by open force, and he is not inferiour in troubling, to himself in tempting. Satan has as the Serpent, away by himself; other beasts, their motion is direct, right on, but the Serpent goes a skue (as we say) winding and wreathing its body, that when you see a serpent creeping along, you can hardly discerne which way it tends; thus Satan in his vexing temptations has many intricate policies, turning this way and that way, the better to conceale his designe from the Saint, which will appear in these following methods.

SECT. I.

First, he vexeth the Christian by laying his brats at the Saints door, and charging him with that which is his own creature, and here he has such a notable Art, that many dear Saints of God are wofully hampered and dejected, as if they were the vilest blasphemers, and veriest Atheists in the world: whereas indeed the cup is of his own putting into the sack, but so slily conveyed into the Saints bosome, that the Christian, though amazed and frighted at the sight of them, yet being jealous of his own heart, and unacquainted with Satans tricks of this kind, cannot conceive how such motions should come there, (if not bred in, and vomited out by his own naughty heart) and so bears the blame of the sin himself, because he cannot finde the right father, mourning as one that is forlorn and cast off by God, or else (says he) I should never have such vermine of hell creeping in my bosome, and here Satan has his end he proposs; for he is not so silly as to hope he should have welcome with such a horrid crue of blasphemous and atheistical thoughts in that soul, where he has been denied when he came in an enticing

way; no, but his designe is by way of revenge, because the soul will not prostitute it selt to his lust otherways, therefore to haunt it and scare it with those imps of blasphemy; As he served Luther to whom he appeared, and when repulsed by him, went away and left a noisome stinch behinde him in the room. Thus when the Christian has worsted Satan in his more pleasing temptations, being madded, he belchs forth this stinch of blasphemous motions to annoy and affright him, that from them the Christian may draw some sad conclusion or other; and indeed the Christians sin lies commonly more in the conclusion, which he draws from them (as that he is not a child of God) then in the motions themselves. All the counsel therefore I shall give you in this case, is to do with these motions, as you use to serve those vagrants and rogues that come about the countrey, whom, though you cannot keep from passing through your town, yet you look they settle not there, but whip them and send them to their owne home: Thus give these motions the Law, in mourning for them, resisting of them, and they shall not be your charge, (yea, 'tis like you shall seldomer be troubled with such guests,) but if once you come to entertain them, and be Satans nurse to them, then the Law of God will cast them upon you.

SECT. II.

Secondly, another wile of Satan as a troubler, is in aggravating the Saints sins, (against which he has a notable declamatory faculty) not that he hates the sin, but the Saint; now in this, his chief subtilty is so to lay his charge, that it may seem to be the act of the holy Spirit; he knowes an arrow out of Gods quiver wounds deep; and therefore when he accuss he comes in Gods Name: as suppose

a child were conscious to himselfe of displeasing his father, and one that owes him a spite (to trouble him) should counterfeit a letter from his father, and cunningly conveyes it into the sons hand, who receives it as from his father, wherein he chargs him with many heavy crimes, disownes him, and threatens he shall never come in his sight, or have penny portion from him, the poor son (conscious to himself of many undutiful carriages, and not knowing the plot) takes on heavily, and can neither eate nor sleep for grief, here is a real trouble begot from a false and imaginary ground: Thus Satan observes how the squares go between God and his children, such a Saint he sees tardy in this duty, faulty in that service, and he knows the Christian is conscious of this, and that the Spirit of God will also show his distaste for these, both which prompts Satan to draw a charge at length, raking up all the bloody aggravations he can think of, and give it in to the Saint as sent from God. Thus he taught Jobs friends to pick up those infirmities, which drop't from him in his distress, and shoot them back in his face, as if indeed they had been sent from God to declare him an hypocrite, and denounce his wrath for the same.

Quest. But how should we know the false accusations of Satan from the rebukes of God and his Spirit?

Answ. First if they crosse any former act or work of the Spirit in your soul, they are Satans, not the Holy Spirits. Now you shall observe, Satans scope in accusing the Christian, and aggravating his sin, is to unsaint him, and perswade him he is but an hypocrite. O, says Satan, now you have shewen what you art, see what a foule spot is on your coat, this is not the spot of a child; whoever that was a Saint commited such a sin after such a sort? All your comforts and confidence which you have bragg'd of, were false, I war-

rant you; thus you see Satan at one blow dashs all in pieces. The whole fabrick of grace which God has been rearing up many years in the soul, must now at one puffe of his malicious mouth be blown down, and all the sweet comforts with which the Holy Spirit has seal'd up Gods love, must be defaced with this one blot, which Satan drawes over the faire copy of the Saints evidence. Well, soul, for your comfort know, if ever the Spirit of God has begun a sanctifying or comforting work, causing you to hope in his mercy, he never is, will, or can be the messenger to bring contrary newes to your soul, his language is not yea and nay, but Yea and Amen for ever. Indeed when the Saint playes the wanton, he can chide, yea, will frown and tell the soul roundly of its sin, as he did David by Nathan, You are the man, this you have done, and paints out his sin with such bloody colours, as made Davids heart melt, as it were, into so many drops of water: but that shall not serve his turn, he tells him what a rod is steeping for him (that shall smart to purpose,) one of his own house, no other than his darling son shall rise up against him, that he may the more fully conceive how ill God took the sin of him, a child, a Saint, when he shall know what it is to have his beloved child traiterously invade his Crown, and unnaturally hunt for his precious life; yet not a word all this while is heard from Nathan teaching David to unsaint himself, and call in question the work of God in his soul. No, he had no such commission from God, he was sent to make him mourne for his sin, not from his sin to question his state which God had so oft put out of doubt.

Secondly, when they asperse the riches of Gods grace, and so charge the Christian, that withal they reflect upon the good Name of God, then they are not of the Holy Spirit, but from Satan. When

you finde your sins so represented and aggravated to you, as exceeding either the mercy of Gods nature, or the grace of his Covenant, Hic se aperit diabolus: this comes from that foule liar. The Holy Spirit is Christs Spokesman to commend him to souls, and to wooe sinners to embrace the grace of the Gospel, and can such words drop from his sacred lips, as should break the match, and sink Christs esteem in the thoughts of the creature? you may know where this was minted. When you hear one commend another for a wise or good man, and at last come in with a but that dashs all, you will easily think he is no friend to the man, but some slie enemy that by seeming to commend, desires to disgrace the more: Thus when you finde God represented to you as merciful and gracious, but not to such a great sinner as you, to have power and strength, but not able to save you, you may say, Avant Satan, your speech bewrays you.

SECT. III.

Thirdly, another wile of Satan lies in cavilling at the Christians duties and performances, by which he puts him to much toil and trouble. He is at Church assoon as you can be, Christian, for your heart, yea, he stands under your closet-window, and heares what you sayest to God in secret, all the while studying how he may commence a suit against you from your duty; like those that come to Sermons to carp and catch at what the Preacher says, that they may make him an offender for some word or other mis-placed; or like a cunning Opponent in the Schooles, while his adversary is busie in reading his position, he is studying to confute it; and truly Satan has such an Art at this, that he is able to take our duties in pieces, and so disfigure them that they shall appear formal, though

never so zealous, hypocritical, though enricht with much sincerity. When you have done your duty, Christian, then stands up this Sophister to ravel out your work, there (will he say) you playedst the hypocrite, zealous, but serving your self, here wandring, there nodding; a little further puft up with pride, and what wages can you hope for at Gods hands, now you have spoil'd his work, and cut it all out into chips? Thus he makes many poor souls lead a weary life, nothing they do but he has a fling at, that they know not whether best pray or not, heare or not; and when they have prayed and heard, whether it be to any purpose or not: Thus their souls hang in doubt, and their days passe in sorrow, while their enemy stands in a corner, and laughs at the cheat he has put upon them; as one, who by putting a counterfeit spider into the dish, makes those that sit at table either out of conceit with the meat, that they dare not eat, or afraid of themselves if they have eaten, lest they should be poisoned with their meat.

Quest. But you will say, What will you have us do in this case to withstand the cavils of Satan, in reference to our duties?

First, let this make you more accurate in all you doest: 'tis the very end God aimes at in suffering Satan thus to watch you, that you his children might be the more circumspect, because you have one over-looks you, that will be sure to tell tales of you to God, and accuse you to your own self. Does it not behove you to write your Copy faire, when such a Critick reades and scans it over? Does it not concern you to know your heart well, to turn over the Scriptures diligently, that you may know the state of your soul-controversie in all the cases of conscience thereof, when you have such a subtile Opponent to reply upon you?

Secondly, let it make you more humble. If Satan can charge you with so much in your best duties, O what then can your God do! God suffers sometimes the infirmities of his people to be known by the wicked, (who are ready to check and frump them for them) for this end, to humble his people, how much more low should these accusations of Satan, which are in a great part too true, lay us before God?

Thirdly, observe the fallacy of Satans argument, which discovered, will help you to answer his cavil: the fallacy is double.

First, he will perswade you that your duty and your self are hypocritical, proud, formal, &c, because something of these sins are to be found in your duty: Now, Christian, learn to distinguish between pride in a duty, and a proud duty, hypocrisie in a person and an hypocrite, wine in a man and a man in wine. The best of Saints have the stirrings of such corruptions in them and in their services; these birds will light on an Abrahams sacrifice, but comfort your self with this, that if you findest a party within your bosome pleading for God, and entering its protest against these, you and your services are Evangelically perfect. God beholds these as the weaknesses of your sickly state here below, and pities you, as you wouldest do your lame child; how odious is he to us that mocks one for natural defects, a blear eye, or a stammering tongue? such are these in your new nature. Observable is that in Christs prayer against Satan, Zechariah 3:3. The Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke you, is not this a brand pluck't out of the fire? As if Christ had said, Lord, will you suffer this envious spirit to twit your poor child with, and charge him for those infirmities that cleave to his imperfect state? he is but new pluck't out of the fire. No wonder there are some sparks unquencht, some corrup-

tion unmortified, some disorders unreformed in his place and calling, and what Christ did for Joshuah, he does uncessantly for all his Saints, apologizing for their infirmities with his Father.

Secondly, his other fallacy is in arguing from the sin that is in our duties, to the non-acceptance of them. Will God, says he, think'st you, take such broken groates at your hand? Is he not a holy God? Now here, (Christian) learn to distinguish and answer Satan. There is a double acceptance. There is an acceptance of a thing by way of payment of a debt, and there is an acceptance of a thing offered as a token of love, and testimony of gratitude. He that will not accept of broken money, or half the summe for payment of a debt: the same man, if his friend sends him, though but a bent six pence, in token of his love, will take it kindly. 'Tis true (Christian) the debt you owest to God must be paid in good and lawful money, but (for your comfort) here Christ is your Pay-master; send Satan to him, bid him bring his charge against Christ, who is ready at Gods right hand to clear his accounts, and show his discharge for the whole debt; but now your performances and obedience come under another notion, (as tokens of your love and thankfulnesse to God,) and such is the gracious disposition of your heavenly Father, that he accepts your mite: Love refuss nothing that love sends. 'Tis not the weight or worth of the gift, but the desire of a man is his kindness.

SECT. IV.

A fourth wile of Satan as a troubler, is to draw the Saint into the depths of despair, under a specious pretense of not being humbled enough for sin. This we finde singled out by the Apostle for one of the devils fetches. We are not ignorant (says he) of his devices.[il-

legible], his Sophistical reasonings. Satan sets much by this slight; no weapon oftener in his hand: where is the Christian that has not met him at this door? here Satan findes the Christian easie to be wrought on, the humours being stirr'd to his hand, while the Christian of his own accord complains of the hardness of his heart, and is very prone to believe any, who comply with his musing thoughts; yea, thinks every one flatters him, that would perswade him otherwise. 'Tis easier to die that soul into black, which is of a sad color already, then to make such a one take the lightsome tincture of joy and comfort.

Quest. But how shall I answer this subtile enemy, when he thus perplexs my spirit, with not being humbled enough for sin, &c?

Answ. I answer as to the former, labor to spie the fallacy of his argument, and his mouth is soon stop't.

First, Satan argues thus: There ought to be a proportion between sin and sorrow: But there is no proportion between your sins and your sorrow: Therefore you are not humbled enough. What a plausible argument is here at first blush? For the major, that there ought to be a proportion between sin and sorrow, this Satan will show you Scripture for.Manasseh was a great sinner, and an ordinary sorrow will not serve his turne; He humbled himself greatly before the Lord. Now (says Satan) weigh your sin in the balance with your sorrow; are you as great a Mourner as you have been a sinner? so many years you have waged war against the Almighty, making havock of his lawes, loading his patience till it groaned again, raking in the sides of Christ with your bloody dagger (while you did grieve his Spirit, and reject his grace▪) and doest think a little remorse (like a rolling cloud letting fall a few drops of

sorrow) will now be accepted? no, you must steep in sorrow as you have soak't in sin. Now to show you the fallacy, we must distinguish of a twofold proportion of sorrow.

First, an exact proportion of sorrow to the inherent nature and demerit of sin.

Secondly, there is a proportion to the Law and Rule of the Gospel. Now the first is not a thing feasible, because the injury done in the least sin is infinite, because done to an infinite God; and if it could be feasible, yet according to the tenour of the first Covenant it would not be acceptable; because it had no clause to give any hope for an after-game by repentance; but the other which is a Gospel-sorrow, this is indeed repentance unto life, (both given by the Spirit of the Gospel, and to be tried by the Rule of the Gospel.) This is given for your relief. As you see sometimes in the high-way (where the waters are too deep for travellers,) you have a foot-bridge or Causey, by which they may scape the flood, and safely passe on; so that none but such as have not eyes, or are drunk, will venture to go through the waters, when they may avoid the danger. You are a dead man, if you think to answer your sin with proportionable sorrow, you will soon be above your depth, and quackle your self with your own teares, but never get over the least sin you committedst; go not on therefore as you lovest your life, but turn aside to this Gospel-path, and you escapest the danger. O you tempted souls, when Satan says you are not humbled enough, see where you may be relieved; I am a Romane, (says Paul,) I appeal to Cesar. I am a Christian, (say) I appeal to Christs law; and what is the Law of the Gospel concerning this? Heart-sorrow is Gospel-sorrow; They were pricked in their heart, and Peter (like an honest Chirurgion) will not keep these bleeding Patients

longer in pain with their wounds open; but presently claps on the healing plaister of the Gospel; Believe in the Lord Jesus. Now a prick to the heart is more than a wound to the conscience. The heart is the seat of life. Sin wounded there lies a dying. To do any thing from the heart makes it acceptable, Ephesians 6:6. Now ▪ poor soul, had you sate thus long in the devils stocks, if you had understood this aright? does your heart clear or condemn you, when in secret you are bemoaning your sin before God? if your heart be false I cannot help you, no, not the Gospel it self, but if sincere, you have boldness with God.

A second argument Satan useth, is this: He whose sorrow falls short of theirs, that never truly repented, he is not humbled enough: But, soul, your sorrow falls short of some, that never truly repented; Ergo. Well, the first Proposition is true, but how will Satan prove his minor? Thus, Ahab he took on for his sin, and went in sack-cloth. Judas he made bitter complaint. O (says Satan) did you not know such a one that lay under terrour of conscience, walking in a sad mournful condition so many moneths, and every one took him for the greatest Convert in the countrey? and yet he at last fell foully, and proved an Apostate; but you never did feel such smart, passe so many weary nights and days in mourning and bitter lamentation as he has done, therefore you fallest short of one that fell short of repentance. And truly this is a sad stumbling block to a soul in an hour of temptation. Like a ship sunk in the mouth of the harbour, which is more dangerous to others then if it had perisht in the open sea. There is lesse scandal by the sins of the wicked, who sink (as it were) in the broad sea of profanenesse, then in those who are convinced of sin, troubled in conscience, and miscarry so near the harbour, within sight, as it were, of saving

grace. Tempted souls can hardly get over these without dashing. Am I better than such a one that proved naught at last? Now to help you a little to finde out the fallacy of this argument, we must distinguish between the terrours that accompany sorrow, and the intrinsecal nature of this grace. The first which are necessary may be separated from the other, as the raging of the sea, which is caused by the winde from the sea, when the winde is down. From this distinction take two Conclusions.

First, one may fall short of an hypocrite in the terrours that sometimes accompany sorrow, and yet have the truth of this grace, which the other with all his terrours wants. Christians run into many mistakes, by judging rather according to that which is accessary, then that which is essential to the nature of duties and graces. Sometimes you hearest one pray with a moving expression (while you can hardly get out a few broken words in duty,) and you are ready to accuse your self and to admire him; as if the gilt of the Key made it open the door the better; you seest another abound with joy which you wantest, and are ready to conclude his grace more and yours lesse, whereas you may have more real grace, only you wantest a light to show you where it lies. Take heed of judging by accessaries, perhaps you have not heard so much of the ratling of the chains of hell, nor in your conscience the out-cries of the damned, to make your flesh tremble, but have you not seen that in a bleeding Christ which has made your heart melt and mourne, yea, loath and hate your lusts more than the devil himself? Truly (Christian) 'tis strange, to hear a Patient complain of his Physician, (when he findes his Physick work effectually, to the evacuating of his distempered humours, and the restoring his health) meerly because he was not so sick as some others with the working of it;

soul, you have more reason to be blessing God that the convictions of his Spirit wrought so kindly on you, to effect that in you, without those terrours which have cost others so dear.

Secondly, this is so weak an argument, that contrariwise the more the terrours are, the lesse the sorrow is for sin while they remain. These are indeed preparatory sometimes to sorrow, they go before this grace, as austere John before meek Jesus. But as John went down when Christ went up, his increase was Johns decrease; so as true godly sorrow goes up, these terrours go down. As the winde gathers the clouds, but those clouds seldom melt into a set rain, until the winde falls that gathered them: so these terrours raise the clouds of our sins in our consciences, but when these sins melt into godly sorrow, this layes the storme presently; indeed, as the loud windes do blow away the raine, so these terrours do keep off the soul from this Gospel-sorrow. While the creature is making an out-cry, 'tis damn'd▪ 'tis damn'd, it is taken up so much with the feare of hell, that sin as sin, (which is the proper object of godly sorrow) is little look't on or mourned for. A Murderer condemned to die, is so possest with the feare of death, and thought of the gallowes, that there lies the slaine body (it may be) before him, unlamented by him: but when his pardon is brought, then he can bestow his teares freely on his murdered friend; They shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourne. Faith is the eye, this eye (beholding its sin piercing Christ, and Christ pardoning its sin) affects the heart, the heart affected sighes, these inward clouds melt and run from the eye of faith in tears: and all this is done when there is no tempest of terrour upon the spirit, but a sweet serenity of love and peace: and therefore, Christian, see how Satan

abuss you, when he would perswade you you are not humbled enough, because your sorrow is not attended with these legal sorrowes.

Chapter 6. A Brief Application of the Second Branch of the Point — Of Satan's Subtlety as a Troubler and Accuser for Sin

Use 1 IS Satan so subtile to trouble the Saints peace? this proves them to be the children of Satan, who show the same Art and subtilty in vexing the spirits of the Saints, as does their infernal father: not to speak of bloody Persecutors, who are the devils slaughter-slaves to butcher the Saints, but of those who more slily trouble and molest the Saints peace.

First, such as rake up the Saints old sins, which God has forgiven and forgotten, (meerly to grieve their spirits and bespatter their names,) these show their divellish malice indeed, who can take such pains to travel many years back, that they may finde a handful of dirt to throw on the Saints face. Thus Shimei twitted David,Come out you bloody man. When you that feare God meet with such reproaches, answer them as Beza did the Papists, who for want of other matter charged him for some wanton Poems penn'd by him in his youth, Hi homunciones invident mihi gratiam Dei. These men (said he) grudge me the pardoning mercy of God.

Secondly, such as watch for the Saints halting, and catch at every infirmity to make them odious and themselves merry. 'Tis a dreadful curse such bring upon themselves; (though they little think of it,) no lesse then Amaleks, the remembrance of whose name, God threatened to blot from under heaven; why, what had Amalek done to deserve this? they smote the hindermost, those that were feeble, and could not march with the rest. And was it so great a cruelty to do this? much more to smite with the edge of a mocking tongue the feeble in grace.

Thirdly, such who father their sins upon the Saints, thus Ahab calls the Prophet the Troubler of Israel, when it was himself and his fathers house. What a grief was it, think you to Moses his spirit, for the Israelites to lay the blood of those that died in the wilderness at his door? whereas (God knows) he was their constant Baile, when at any time Gods hand was up to destroy them: and this is the charge which the best of Gods servants in this crooked generation of ours lie under: We may thank them (say the profane) for all our late miseries in the Nation: we were well enough till they would reforme us. O for shame, blame not the good Physick that was administred, but the corrupt body of the Nation that could not bear it.

Fourthly, such as will themselves sin, meerly to trouble the Saints spirit. Thus Rabshakeh blasphemed, and when desired to speak in another language, he goes on the more to grieve them. Sometimes you shall have a profane wretch (knowing one to be consciencious, and cannot brook to hear the Name of God taken in vain, or the ways of God flouted,) will on purpose fall upon such discourse as shall grate his chaste eares, and trouble his gracious

spirit, such a one strikes father and child at one blow, think it not enough to dishonour God, except the Saint stands by to see and heare the wrong done to his heavenly Father.

Use 2 Secondly, This may afford matter of admiration and thankfulnesse to any of you, (O ye Saints) who are not at this day under Satans hatches. Is he so subtile to disquiet, and have you any peace in your conscience? To whom are you beholden for that serenity that is on your spirit? to none but your God, under whose wing you sittest to warme and safe. Is there not combustible matter enough in your conscience for his sparks to kindle? Perhaps you have not committed such bloody sins as others: that's not the reason of your peace, for the least is big enough to damne, much more to trouble you. You have not grossely fallen (may be) since Conversion, that's rare, (if you beest of long standing) yet the ghosts of your unregenerate sins might walk in your conscience: you have had many testimonies of Gods favor, have you not? who more than David? yet he at a losse sometimes learning to spell his evidences, as if he could never have read them. The sense of Gods love comes and goes with the present tast. He that is in the dark (while there) sees not the more for former light. O bless God for that light which shines in at your window; Satan is plotting to undermine your comfort every day. This Thief sees your pleasant fruits as they hang, and his teeth water at them, but the wall is too high for him to climbe; your God keeps this Serpent out of your Paradise. 'Tis not the grace of God in you, but the favor of God, as a shield about you, defends you from the wicked one.

Use 3 Thirdly, let Satans subtilty to molest your peace, make you, (O Christian) more wise and wary, you have not a fool to deale with, but one that has wit enough to spill your comfort, and spoil

your joy, if not narrowly watch't, this is the dainty bit he gapes for; 'tis not harder to keep the flies out of your Cup-boards in Summer, from tainting your provision, then Satan out of your consciences; many a sweet meal has he robbed the Saints of, and sent them supperlesse to bed; take heed therefore that he roams not yours away also.

Chapter 7. Containing Some Directions Tending to Entrench and Fortify the Christian Against the Assaults and Wiles of the Devil as a Troubler of the Soul's Peace

• • •

Quest. HOw shall I stand in a defensive posture (may the Christian say) against these wiles of Satan as a Troubler?

SECT. I.

First, if you wouldest be guarded from him as a Troubler, take heed of him as a seducer. The have of Satans hatchet, (with which he lies chopping at the root of the Christians comfort) is commonly made of the Christians wood: First, he tempts to sin, and then for it. Satan is but a creature, and cannot work without tooles, he can indeed make much of a little, but not any thing of nothing (as we see in his assaulting of Christ, where he troubled himself to little purpose, because he came and found nothing in him. Though the devil throws the stone, yet 'tis the mud in us which royles our comforts. 'Twas in vaine for the Philistines to fall on Samson till his

lock was cut: take heed therefore of yielding to his enticing motions; these are the stumbling block, at which he hopes you'lt break your shins, and bruise your conscience, which once done, let him alone to spin out the cure. Indeed a Saints flesh heals not so easily as others: drink not of the devils wassel, there is poison in the cup, his wine is a mocker, look not on it as it sparkles in the temptation; what you drinkest down with sweetnesse, you will be sure to bring up again as gall and wormwood. Above all sins, take heed of presumptuous ones, you are not out of the danger of such. Sad stories we have of Saints falls, and what follows? then, Take him Jailor, (says God,) Deliver such a one unto Satan; and if a Saint be the Prisoner, and the devil the Keeper, you may guesse how he shall be used. O how he will teare and rend your conscience! Though that dreadful Ordinance is not used (as it should be) in the Church, yet Gods Court sits, and if he excommunicate a soul from his presence, he falls presently into Satans clutches. Well, if through his subtilty you have been overtaken, take heed you stayest not in the devils quarters: shake the viper off your hand, ply you to your Chirurgeon: green wounds cure best, but if you neglectest, and the winde get to it, your conscience will soon fester.Ahab (we read) was wounded in battel, and was loath to yield to it, (it is said) he was held up in his chariot, but he died for it: when a soul has received a wound, committed a sin, Satan labors to boulster him up with flattering hopes, holds him up, as it were, in his chariot against God; what yield for this? afraid for a little scratch, and lose the spoile of your future pleasure for this? O take heed of listening to such counsel, the sooner you yieldest, the fairer quarter you shalt have. Every step in this way sets you further from your peace.

A rent garment is catch't by every naile, and the rent made wider. Renew therefore your repentance speedily, whereby this breach may be made up, and worse prevented, which else will befall you.

SECT. II.

2ly, study that grand Gospel-truth of a souls justification before God, acquaint your self with this in all its causes; the moving cause, the free mercy of God, Being justified freely by his grace, the meritorious, which is the blood of Christ; and the instrumental, faith, with all the sweet priviledges that flow from it. An effectual door once open'd to let the soul into this truth, would not only spoil the Popes market (as Gardner said) but the devils also; when Satan coms to disquiet the Christians peace, (for want of a right understanding here) he is soon worsted by his enemy: as the silly hare which might escape the dogs in some covert or burrough that is at hand, but (trusting to her heels) is by the print of her owne feet and sent, which she leaves behinde, followed, till at last (weary and spent) she falls into the mouth of them. In all that a Christian does, there is a print of sinful infirmity, and a sent by which Satan is enabled to trace and pursue him over hedge and ditch, this grace and that duty, till the soul, not able to stand before the accusation of Satan, is ready to fall down in despair at his feet: whereas here's a hiding place, where the enemy durst not come, the clefts of the rock, the hole of the staires, which this truth leads unto. When Satan chargs you for a sinner, perhaps you interposest your repentance and reformation, but soon are beaten out of those works, (when you are shewen the sinful mixtures that are in them) whereas this truth would choak all his bullets, that you believest on him who has said, Not unto him that works,but unto him that be-

lieves on him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is imputed for righteousnesse. Get therefore into this tower of the Gospel-Covenant, and rowle this truth, (as she that stone on the head of Abimelech) on the head of Satan.

SECT. III.

Thirdly, be sure (Christian) you keepest the Plains. Take heed that Satan coop you not up in some straits, where you can neither well fight, nor flie. Such a trap the Egyptians hoped they had the Israelites in, when they cried, They are entangled, they are entangled. There are three kindes of straits wherein he labors to entrap the Christians; Nice Questions, obscure Scriptures, and dark Providences.

First, he labors to puzzle him with nice and scrupulous questions, (on purpose to retard the work, and clog him in his motion) that meeting with such intricacies in his Christian course, which he cannot easily resolve, thereby he may be made, either to give over, or go on heavily: therefore we have particular charge not to trouble the weak heads of young Converts with doubtful disputations. Sometimes Satan will be asking the soul, how it knowes its election: and where he findes one not so fully resolved, as to dare to own the same, he frames his Argument against such a ones closing with Christ and the promise; as if it were presumption to assume that, (which is the only portion of the Elect) before we know our selves of that number. Now, Christian, keep the Plains and you are safe. 'Tis plain; we are not to make Election a ground for our faith, but our faith and calling a medium or argument to prove our Election. Election indeed is first in order of divine acting. God chooss before we believe; yet faith is first in our acting. We must

believe before we can know we are elected, yea, by believing we know it. The Husbandman knowes 'tis Spring by the sprouting of the grasse, though he has no Astrology to know the Position of the Heavens; you may know you are Elect, as surely by a work of grace in you, as if you had stood by Gods elbowe when he writ your name in the book of life. It had been presumption for David to have thought he should have been King, till Samuel anointed him, but then none at all; when you believest first, and closest with Christ, then is the Spirit of God sent to anoint you to the Kingdom of Heaven: this is that holy oyle which is poured upon none but heires of glory; and 'tis no presumption to reade what Gods gracious purpose was towards you of old, when he prints those his thoughts, and makes them legible in your effectual calling; here you doest not go up to heaven, and pry into Gods secrets, but heaven comes down to you, and reveals them. Again, he will ask the Christian what was the time of his Conversion; Art you a Christian (will he say) and do you not know when you commencedst? now keep the Plains, & content your self with this, that you seest the streams of grace, though the time of your Conversion be like the head of Nylus, not to be found. God oft comes betimes, before grosse sins have deflowered the soul, and steals into the creatures bosome without much noise. In such a case Satan does but abuse you when he sends you on this errand; you may know the Sun is up, though you did not observe when it rose. Again, what will become of you (says Satan) if God should bring you into such an affliction on trial, when you must burn or turn, or when all your outward estate shall be rent from you, no meal in the barrel, no money in the purse; darest you have so good an opinion of your selfe, as to think that your faith will hold out in such an hour of

temptation? It you have but half an eye, Christian, you may see what Satan drives at: this is an ensnaring question; by the feare of future troubles he labors to bring you into a neglect of your present duty, and indispose you also for such a stare whenever it falls. If a man has much businesse to do on the morrow, 'tis his wisdom to discharge his minde thereof, (when composing to sleep) lest the thoughts thereof break his rest, and make him the more unfit in the morning. The lesse rest the soul has in God and his promise concerning future events, the lesse strength it will finde to beare them when the pinch comes. When therefore you are molested with such feares, pacifie your heart with these three plain Conclusions.

First, every event is the product of Gods Providence, not a sparrow, much lesse a Saint falls to the ground by poverty, sicknesse, persecution, &c. but the hand of God is in it.

Secondly, God has put in caution he will never leave you, nor forsake you. He that enables you in one condition, will in another. God learns his servants their whole trade. Grace is an universal principle. At the first moment of your spiritual life suffering grace was infused as well as praying grace.

Thirdly, God is wise to conceale the succours he intends in the several changes of your life, that so he may draw your heart into an entire dependance on his faithful promise. Thus to try the mettal of Abrahams faith he let him go on, till his hand was stretch't forth, and then he comes to his rescue. Christ sends his disciples to sea, but stayes behinde himself, on a design to try their faith, and show his love. Comfort your self therefore with this, though you seest not your God in the way, yet you shalt finde him in the end.

Secondly, Satan perplexs the tender consciences of doubting Christians with obscure Scriptures, whose sense lies too deep for their weak and distempered judgements, readily to finde out, and with these he hampers poor souls exceedingly; indeed as melancholy men delight in melancholy walks, so doubting souls most frequent such places of Scripture in their musing thoughts, as encrease their doubts; how many have I known that have look't so long on those difficult places, Hebrews 6:7. Hebrews 10:26. (which passe the understanding, as a swift stream the eye, so that the sense is not perceived without great observation,) till their heads have turned round, and they at last (not able to untie the difficulties,) have fallen down into despairing thoughts and words of their own condition, crying out, O they have sinned against knowledge of the truth, and therefore no mercy remains for them; who if they would have refreshed their understandings by looking off these places, (whose engraving is too curious to be long pored on by a weak eye,) they might have found that in other Scriptures plainly exprest, which would have enabled them, as through a glasse, more safely to have viewed these? Therefore, Christian, keepe the Plaines; you may be sure 'tis yours enemy that gives you such stones to break your teeth, when your condition calls rather for bread and wine, such Scriptures, I mean, as are most apt to nourish your faith, and cheere your drooping spirit. When you meetest such plain Scriptures which speak to your case, go over where it is fordable, and do not venture beyond your depth. Art you afraid because you have sinned since the knowledge of the truth, and therefore no sacrifice remains for you? See David and Peters case, how it patterns yours, and left upon record that their recovery may be a Key in yours hand to open such places as these; may you not safely

conclude from these, this is not their meaning, that none can be saved that sin after knowledge? Indeed in both those places, it is neither meant of the falls of such as ever had true grace, nor of a falling away in some particular acts of sin, but of a total universal falling away from the Faith, (the doctrine of it as well as seeming practice of it.) Now if the root of the matter were ever in you, other Scriptures will first comfort you against those particular apostasies into which you have relapsed, by sweet promises inviting such to return, and Precedents of Saints, who have had peace spoken to them after such folly, and also they will satisfie you against the other, by giving full security to your faith, that your little grace shall not die, being immortal, though not in its proper essence, because but a creature, yet by Covenant, as it is a child of Promise.

Thirdly, Dark Providences. From these Satan disputes against Gods love to, and grace in a soul. First, he got a commission to plunder Job of his temporal estate, and bereave him of his chilchildren, and then labors to make him question his spiritual estate and sonship: his wife would have him entertain hard thoughts of God, (saying, Curse God and die,) and his friends as hard thoughts of himself, (as if he were an hypocrite) and both upon the same mistake, as if such an afflicted condition and a gracious state were inconsistent. Now (Christian) keep the Plaines, and neither from this charge God foolishly for yours enemy, nor your self as his. Reade the saddest Providence with the Comment of the Word, and you can not make such an harsh interpretation. As God can make a streight line with a crooked stick, be righteous when he useth wicked instruments; so also gracious when he dispenss harsh Providences. Joseph kept his love, when he spoke roughly to his brethren. I do not wonder that the wicked think they have Gods

blessing, because they are in the warme Sun: Alas, they are strangers to Gods counsels, void of his Spirit, and sensual, judging of God and his Providence, by the report their present feeling makes of them; like little children, who think every one loves them that gives them plums. But 'tis strange, that a Saint should be at a losse for his afflicted state, when he has a Key to decipher Gods character: Christian, has not God secretly instructed you by his Spirit from the Word, how to reade the short-hand of his Providence? doest not you know that the Saints afflictions stand for blessings? Every son whom he loves he corrects; and prosperity in a wicked state, must it not be read a curse? does not God damne such to be rich, honorable, victorious in this world, as well as to be tormented in another world? God gives them more of these then they seem to desire sometimes, and all to binde them faster up in a deep sleep of security, as Jael served Sisera, he shall have milk though he asked but water, that she might naile him the surer to the ground. Milk having a property (as some write) to encline to sleep.

SECT. IV.

Fourthly, be careful to keep your old receits which you have had from God for the pardon of your sins. There are some gaudy days, and Jubilee-like Festivals, when God comes forth clothed with the robes of his mercy, and holds forth the Scepter of his grace more familiarly to his children then ordinary, bearing witnesse to their faith, sincerity, &c. and then the firmament is clear, not a cloud to be seen to darken the Christians comfort. Love and joy are the souls repast and pastime, while this feast lasts. Now when God withdrawes, and this chear is taken off, Satans work is how he may

deface and weare off the remembrance of this testimony, which the soul so triumphs in for its spiritual standing, that he may not have it as an evidence when he shall bring about the suite again, and put the soul to produce his writings for his spiritual state, or renounce his claim. It behoves you therefore to lay them up safely; such a testimony may serve to non-suit your accuser many years hence; one affirmative from Gods mouth for your pardoned state, carries more weight (though of old date) then a thousand negatives from Satans. Davids Songs of old spring in with a light to his soul in his midnight-sorrowes.

Quest. But what counsel would you give me (says the distressed soul,) who cannot fasten on my former comforts, nor dare to vouch those evidences, which once I thought true? I finde indeed there have been some treaties of old between God and my soul; some hopes I have had, but these are now so defaced and interlined with back-slidings, repentances, and falls again, that now I question all my evidences, whether true or counterfeit, what should one in this case do?

Answ. First, renew your repentance, as if you had never repented. Put forth fresh acts of faith, as if you had never believed. This seriously done will stop Satans mouth with an unexpected answer. Let him object against your former actings as hypocritical, what can he say against your present repenting and beleeving, which if true, sets you beyond his shot. It will be harder for Satan to disprove the present workings of Gods gracious Spirit, whilest the impressions thereof are fresh, then to pick an hole in your old deeds and evidences. Acts are transient, and as wicked men look at sins committed many years since, as little or none, by reason of that breadth of time which interposs; so the Christian upon the

same account stands at great disadvantage, to take the true aspect of those acts of grace, which so long ago passed between God and him, though sometimes even these are of great use. As God can make a sinner possess the sins of his youth, as if they were newly acted to his terrour in his old age; so God can present the comforts and evidences which of old the Saint received, with those very thoughts he had then of them, as if they were fresh and new.

And therefore secondly; If yet he haunts you with the feares of your spiritual estate, ply you to the throne of grace, and beg a new copy of your old evidence, which you have lost. The Original is in the Pardon-Office in Heaven, whereof Christ is Master; if you beest a Saint your name is upon record in that Court; make your moane to God, heare what newes from Heaven, rather than listen to the tales which are brought by yours enemie from hell. Did such reason lesse with Satan, and pray over their feares more to God, they might sooner be resolved. Can you expect truth from a liar, and comfort from an enemy? Did he ever prophesie well of believers? Was not Job the Devils hypocrite, whom God vouch't for a non-such in holiness, and prov'd him so at last? If he knew you wert a Saint, would he tell you so? if an hypocrite, he would be as loath you shouldest know it; turn your back therefore on him, and go to your God: feare not, but sooner or later he will give his hand again to your Certificate. But look you doest not rashly passe a censure on your self, because a satisfactory answer is not presently sent at your desire; the Messenger may stay long, and bring good newes at last.

Thirdly, shun battel with yours enemy while you are in a fitter posture? and that you may draw into your trenches, and make an honorable retreat into those fastnesses and strengths, which Christ

has provided for his sick and wounded souldiers. Now there are two places of advantage into which deserted souls may retire; the Name of God, and the absolute Promises of the Gospel; these I may call the faire Havens, which are then chiefly of use, when the storme is so great that the ship cannot live at sea. O, says Satan, doest you hope to see God? none but the pure in heart shall be blest with that vision. Think'st you to have comfort? that is the portion of the Mourners in spirit. Now, soul, though you can not say (in the hurry of temptation) you are the pure and the Mourner in spirit, yet then say you believest God is able to work these in you, yea, has promised such a mercy to poor sinners, 'tis his Covenant, (He will give a new heart, a clean heart, a soft heart,) and here I wait, knowing, as there was nothing in the creature to move the great God to make such Promises; so there can be nothing in the creature to hinder the Almighty his performance of them, where and when he pleass. This act of faith, accompanied with a longing desire after that grace you can not yet finde, and an attendance on the meanes, though it will not fully satisfie all your doubts, (may be) yet will keep your head above water, that you despairest not; and such a shore you need'st in this case, or the house falls.

Fourthly, If yet Satan dogs you, call in help, and keep not the devils counsel. The very strength of some temptations lies in the concealing of them, and the very revealing of them to some faithful friend, (like the opening and pricking of an imposthume) gives the soul present ease: Satan knowes this too well; and therefore, as some thieves, when they come to rob an house, either gagge them in it, or hold a pistol to their breast, frighting them with death, if they cry or speak: Thus Satan that he may more freely rifle the soul

of its peace and comfort, over-awes it so, that it dares not disclose his temptation. O, says Satan, if your brethren or friends know such a thing by you, they'l cast you off, others will hoote at you. Thus many a poor soul has been kept long in its pangs by biting them in; you losest (Christian) a double help by keeping the devils secret, the counsel and prayers of your fellow-brethren; and what an invaluable losse is this?

Chapter 8. Of the Saints' Victory Over Their Subtle Enemy, and Whence It Is That Creatures So Overmatched Should Be Able to Stand Against Satan's Wiles

• • •

THe second Branch of the Apostles Argument followes, to excite them the more vigourously to their armes; and that is from the possibility, yea, certainty of standing against this subtile enemie, if thus arm'd, That ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. So that this gives the Apostles argument its due temperament: for he meant not to scare them into a cowardly flight, or sullen despaire of victory, when he tells them their enemy is so subtile and politick: but to excite them to a vigourous resistance, from the assured hope of strength to stand in battel, and victoriously after it; which two I conceive are comprehended in that phrase, (standing against the wiles of Satan. Sometimes to stand implies a fighting posture; so verse 14. Sometimes a conquering posture, Job 19:25. I know that my Redeemer lives, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. That earth which was the field, where all the bloody battels were fought be-

twixt him and Satan, on it shall he stand, when not an enemy shall dare to show his head. So that taking both these in: the Observation is,

Satan with all his wits and wiles shall never vanquish a soul arm'd with true grace; nay, he that has this armour of God on, shall vanquish him. Look into the Word, you shall not finde a Saint, but has been in the list with him, sifted and winnowed more or lesse by this enemy, yet at last we finde them all coming off with an honorable victory: as in David, Job, Peter, Paul, who were the hardest put to it of any upon record, and lest some should attribute their victory to the strength of their inherent grace, above other of their weaker brethren, you have the glory of their victories appropriated to God, in whom the weak are as strong as the strongest. We shall give a double Reason of this truth, why the Christian who seemes to be so over-match't, is yet so unconquerable.

First, the curse that lies upon Satan and his cause. Gods curse blasts whereever it comes. The Canaanites with their neighbor-Nations were bread for Israel, though people famous for warre; and why? They were cursed Nations. The Egyptians a politick people; Let us deal wisely, (say they) yet being cursed of God; this lay like a thorne at their heart, and was at last their ruine; yea, let the Israelites themselves, (who carry the badge of Gods Covenant on their flesh) by their sins once become the people of Gods curse, and they are trampled like dirt under the Assyrians feet. This made Balak beg so hard for a curse upon Israel, Now there is an irrevokeable curse cleaves to Satan from Genesis 3:14, 15. And the Lord said to the Serpent, Because you have done this, you are cursed, &c. which place, though partly meant of the literal serpent, yet chiefly of the devil and the wicked, (his spiritual serpentine

brood) as appeares by the enmity pronounced against the Serpents seed and the womans, which clearly holds forth the feud between Christ with his seed, against the devil and his. Now there are two things in that curse which may comfort the Saints. First, the curse prostrates Satan under their feet: Upon your belly shalt you go, which is no more than is elsewhere promised, that God will subdue Satan under our feet. Now this prostrate condition of Satan assures believers, that the devil shall never lift his head (that is, his wily policy) higher than the Saints heele. He may make you limp, but not bereave you of your life, and this bruise which he gives you shall be rewarded with the breaking of his own head, that is, the utter ruine of him and his cause. Secondly, his food is here limited and appointed. Satan shall not devoure whom he will. The dust is his food, which seems to restrain his power to the wicked, who are of the earth earthy, meere dust; but for those who are of a heavenly extraction, their graces are reserved for Christs food, Cant. 7.13. and their souls surely are not a morsel for the devils tooth.

The second reason is taken from the wisdom of God, who as he undertakes the ordering of the Christians way to heaven, Psalms 37:24. so especially this businesse of Satans temptations. We finde Christ was not led of the evil spirit into the wilderness to be tempted, but of the Holy Spirit, Matthew 4:1. Satan tempts not when he will, but when God pleass: and the same Holy Spirit which led Christ into the field, brought him off with victory. And therefore we finde him marching in the Power of the Spirit (after he had repulsed Satan) into Galilee, Luke 4:14. When Satan tempts a Saint, he is but Gods messenger, 2 Corinthians 12:7. There was given to me a thorne in the flesh, the Messenger of Satan to buffet me. So our Translation. But rather as Beza, who will have it in casu

recto, the Messenger Satan, implying that he was sent of God to Paul; And indeed the errand he came awas too good and gracious to be his own, Lest I should be exalted above measure; The devil never meant to do Paul such a good office: but God sends him to Paul, as David sent Uriah with letters to Joab, neither knew the contents of their message. The devil and his instruments both are Gods instruments, therefore the wicked are called his sword, his axe: now let God alone to wield the one and handle the other. He is but a bungler that hurts and hackles his own legs with his own axe; which God should do, if his children should be the worse for Satans temptations. Let the devil choose his way, God is for him at every weapon. If he'll try it by force of armes, and assault the Saints by persecution, as the Lord of Hostes, he will oppose him. If by policy and subtilty, he is ready there also. The devil and his whole counsel are but fooles to God. Nay, their wisdom, foolishnesse. Cunning and Art commend every thing but sin. The more artificial the watch, the picture, &c. the better; but the more wit and Art in sin, the worse, because it is employed against an Allwise God, that cannot be out-witted, and therefore will in the end but pay the workmen in greater damnation. The foolishnesse of God is wiser than men, yea then the wisdom of men and devils, that is, the meanes and instruments which God opposs Satan withal. What weaker than a Sermon? who sillier then the Saints in the account of the wise world? yet God is wiser in a weak Sermon, then Satan is in his deep plots (wherein the State-heads of a whole Conclave of profound Cardinals are knock't together:) wiser in his simple ones, then Satan in his Achitophels and Sanballats; and truly God chooss on purpose to defeat the policies of hell and earth by these, that he may put such to greater shame, 1 Corinthians

1:21. How is the great Scholar ashamed to be baffled by a plain Countrey-mans argument? thus God calls forth Job to wrestle with Satan and his Seconds, (for such his three friends showed themselves in taking the devils part) and sure he is not able to hold up the cudgels against the fencing-Master, who is beaten by one of the scholars. God sits laughing while hell and earth sit plotting, Psalms 2:4. He disappoints the devices of the crafty, he breaks their studied thoughts and plots, as the words import, Job 5:12. in one moment pulling down the labors of many years policy. Indeed as great men keep wilde beasts for game and sport, (as the fox, the boare, &c.) so does God Satan and his instruments, to manifest his wisdom in the taking of them. It is observed, that the very hunting of some beasts affords not only pleasure to the Hunter, but also more sweetnesse to the eater. Indeed God by displaying of his wisdom in the pursuit of the Saints enemies does superadde a sweet relish to their deliverances at last. He brake the heads of Leviathan in pieces, and gave him to be meat to his people. After he had hunted Pharaoh out of all his formes and burrowes, now he breaks the very braines of all his plots, and serves him up to his people, with the garnishment of his wisdom and power about.

Chapter 9. An Account Is Given How the All-Wise God Does Outwit the Devil in His Tempting of Saints to Sin, Wherein Are Laid Down the Ends Satan Propounds and How He Is Prevented in Them All

• • •

Quest. But how does God defeat Satan, and out-wit his wiles in tempting his Saints?

Answ. This God does by accomplishing his own gracious ends for the good and comfort of his people out of those temptations from which Satan designes their ruine, this is the noblest kinde of Conquest, to beat back the devils weapon to the wounding of his own head, yea, to cut it off with the devils own sword; thus God sets the devil to catch the devil, and layes, as it were, his own counsels under Satans wings, and makes him hatch them. Thus the Patriarchs help't to fulfil Josephs dream, while they are thinking to rid their hands of him. To instance in a few particulars.

SECT. I.

First, Satan by his temptations aimes at the defiling of the Christians conscience, and disfiguring that beautiful face of Gods image, which is engraven with holiness in the Christians bosome, he is an unclean spirit himself, and would have them such, that he might glory in their shame; but God out-wits him, for he turns the temptations of Satan to sin, to the purging them from sin; they are the black soap with which God washs his Saints white.

First, God useth the temptations of Satan to one sin, as a preventive against another; to Pauls thorn in the flesh to prevent his pride. God sends Satan to assault Paul on that side where he is strong, that in the mean time he may fortifie him where he is weak. Thus Satan is befool'd, as sometimes we see an army sitting down before a town, where it wasts its strength to no purpose, and in the mean time gives the enemy an advantage to recruit; and all this by the counsel of some Hushai, that is a secret friend to the contrary side: God, who is the Saints true friend, sits in the devils Councel, and over-rules proceedings there to the Saints advantage; He suffers the devil to annoy the Christian with temptations to blasphemy, atheisme, and by these, together with the troubles of spirit they produce; the soul is driven to duty, is humbled in the sense of these horrid apparitions in its imagination, and secured from abundance of formality and pride, which otherwise God saw invading him. As in a family, some businesse falls out, which keeps the Master up later then ordinary, and by this the thief, who that night intended to rob him, is disappointed; had not such a soul had his spirit of prayer and diligence kept awake by those afflicting temptations, 'tis likely Satan might have come as a seducer, and taken him napping in security.

Secondly, God purgs out the very sin Satan tempts to, even by his tempting. Peter never had such a conquest over his self-confidence, never such an establishment of his faith, as after his foule fall in the High Priests hall. He that was so well perswaded of himself before, as to say, Though all were offended with Christ, yet would not he, how modest and humble was he in a few days become, when he durst not say he loved Christ more than his fellow-brethren, to whom before he had preferr'd himself? what an undaunted Confessour of Christ and his Gospel does he prove before Councels and Rulers, who even now was dash't out of countenance by a filly maid? and all this the product of Satans temptation sanctified unto him. Indeed a Saint has a discovery by his fall, what is the prevailing corruption in him, so that the temptation does but stir the humor, which the soul having found out, has the greater advantage to evacuate, by applying those means, and using those ingredients which do purge that malady cum delectu. Now the soul sure will call all out against this destroyer? Paul had not took such pains to buffet his body, had he not found Satan knocking at that door.

Thirdly, God useth these temptations for the advancing of the whole work of grace in the heart. One spot occasions the whole garment to be washed. David overcome with one sin, renewes his repentance for all, Psal. 51. A good husband when he seeth it rain in at one place, sends for the Workman to look over all the house. This indeed differencs a sincere heart from an hypocrite, whose repentance is partial, soft in one plot, and hard in another. Judas cries out of his treason, but not a word of his thievery and

hypocrisie. The hole was no wider in his conscience then where the bullet went in, whereas true sorrow for one, breaks the heart into shivers for others also.

SECT. II.

Secondly, Satan by tempting one Saint has a mischievous design against others, either by encouraging them to sin by the example of such a one, or discouraging them in their holy course by the scandal he has given; but God here befooles him,

First, making the miscarriages of such a seasonable caveat to others to look to their standing. Doest you see a meek Moses provok't to anger, what watch and ward have you need keep over your unruly heart? though loud winds do some hurt by blowing down here a loose tyle, and there a turret, (which was falling before,) yet the common good surmounts the private damage of some few; these being as a broom in Gods hand to sweep and cleanse the aire: so though some (that are wicked) are by Gods righteous judgement for the same hardened into further abominations by the Saints falls, yet the good which sincere souls receive by having their formality and security in a further degree purged does abundantly countervaile the other, who are but sent a little faster, where they were going before.

Secondly, God makes his Saints falls an argument for comfort to distressed consciences. This has been, and is as a feather, (when the passage seems so stop't, that no comfort can be got down otherwise) to drop a little hope into the soul, to keep the creature alive from falling into utter despair; some have been revived with this, when next door to hell in their own feares. Davids sin was great,

yet found mercy; Peter fell foully, yet now in heaven. Why sittest you here, O my soul, under the hatches of despair? up and call upon your God for mercy, who has pardoned the same to others.

Thirdly, God has a design in suffering Satan to trounce some of his Saints by temptation, to train them up into a fitnesse to succour their fellow-brethren in the like condition: he sends them here to school, (where they are under Satans ferular and lash) that his cruel hand over them may make them study the Word and their own hearts, by which they get experience of Satans policies, till at last they commence Masters in this Art of comforting tempted souls. It is an Art by it self, to speak a word in season to the weary soul: 'tis not serving out an Apprenticeship to humane Arts will furnish a man for this: great Doctors have proved very dunces here, knowing no more how to handle a wounded conscience then a Rustick the Chirurgions instrument in dissecting the body when an Anatomy-Lecture is to be read. 'Tis not the knowledge of the Scripture (though a man were as well acquainted with it, as the Apothecary with his pots and glasses in his shop, able to go directly to any promise on a sudden,) will suffice. No, not grace it selfe, except exercised with these buffetings and soul-conflicts. Christ himself we finde trained up in this school, Isaiah 50:4. He wakens mine eare to heare as the learned. Even as the Tutor calls up his Pupil to reade to him; and what is the Lecture which is read to Christ, that he may have the tongue of the learned to speak a word in season to the weary soul? see, vers. 5. The Lord has opened mine eare, and I was not rebellious, neither turned I away my back, I gave my back to the smiters, &c. His sufferings (which were all along mingled with temptations,) were the Lecture from which Christ came out so learned, to resolve and comfort dis-

tressed souls. So that the devil had better have let Christ alone, yea, and his Saints also, who do him but the greater disservice in comforting others; none will handle poor souls so gently as those, who remember the smart of their owne heart-sorrowes; none so skilful in applying the comforts of the Word to wounded consciences, as those who have layen bleeding themselves; such know the symptomes of soul-troubles, and feel others pains in their own bosomes, which some that know the Scriptures, (for sack of experience) do not, and therefore are like a novice Physician, who perhaps can tell you every plant in the Herbal, yet wanting the practick part, when a Patient comes, knowes not well how to make use of his skill: The Saints experiences help them to a soveraign treacle made of the Scorpions own flesh, (which they through Christ have slain) and that has a vertue above all other to expel the venome of Satans temptations from the heart.

SECT. III.

Thirdly, Satan in tempting the Saint to sin, labors to make a breach between God and the soul. He hates both, and therefore labors to divide these dear friends. If I can (thinks he) get such a one to sin, God will be angry, and when angry he'll whip his child foundly, this will be some sport, and when God is correcting the Saint, he'll be questioning the love of God to him, and cooles in his love to God; so though I should not keep him from heaven at last, yet he shall have little joy there in the way. In this case God and the soul will be like man and wife fallen out, who neither of them look kindly one upon another. Now see how God befooles Satan in both these.

First, God useth his Saints temptations, as his method by which he advancs the communications of his love unto them. The devil thought he had got the goale, when he got Adam to eate the forbidden fruit, he thought now he had man in the same predicament with himself, as unlikely ever to see the face of God, as those Apostate spirits; but (alas!) this was by God intended to usher in that great Gospel-plot of saving man by Christ, who (assoon as this Prologue of mans fall is done) is brought upon the stage in that grand Promise of the Gospel made to Adam, and at Gods command undertakes the charge of recovering lost man out of Satans clutches, and re-instating him in his primitive glory, with an accesse of more than ever man had at first, so that the meanest lilly in Christs field, exceeds Adam in all his native Royalty. And as Satan sped in his first temptation, so he is still on the losing hand: what got he by all his paines upon Job, but to let that holy man know at last how dearly God loved him? When he foiled Peter so shamefully, do we not finde Christ owning Peter with as much love as ever? Peter must be the only disciple, to whom by name the joyful newes of his resurrection is sent: Go tell my disciples and Peter. As if Christ had said, Be sure let his sad heart be comforted with this newes, that he may know I am friends with him for all his late cowardise.

Quest. But does not this seem to countenance sin, and make Christians heedlesse, whether they fall into temptation or no? If God do thus show his love to his Saints after their falls and foiles, why should we be so shy of sin, which ends so well at last?

Answ. Two things will prevent the danger of such an inference.

First, we must distinguish between a souls being foiled through his own infirmity, and his enemies subtilty and power over-matching him; and another, who through a false heart does voluntarily prostrate himself to the lust of Satan; though a General will show little pity to a souldier that should traiterously throw down his armes, and run to the enemy, yet if another in fighting receives a wound and be worsted, it will be no dishonour for him to express his pity and love, no, though he should send him out of the field in his own coach, lay him in his own bed, and appoint him his own Chirurgion. God does not encourage wickedness in his Saints, but pities weakness. Even when the Saints fall into a sin in its nature presumptuous, they do not commit it so presumptuously as others; there is a part true to God in their bosomes, though over-voted Moses spoke unadvisedly, but the devil had his instruments to provoke him, quite against the good mans temper. David numbers the people, but see how the devil dogg'd and hunted him, till at last he got the better, 1 Chronicles 21:1. Satan stood up and provoked David to number Israel. How bravely did Job repel Satans darts? no wonder if in such a shower some one should get between the joynts of his armour. And for Peter, we know (good man) with what a loyal heart, yea, zealous he went into the field, though when the enemy appear'd his heart fail'd him.

Secondly, consider but the way how God communicates his love after his Saints falls, not in sinning, or for sinning, but in mourning and humbling their souls for their sins. Indeed did God smile on them, while acting sinfully, this might strengthen their sin, as wine in a feaver would the disease; but when the fit is off, the venome of the disease spent, and breathed out in a kindly humiliation, now the creature lies low. Gods wine of comfort is a cor-

dial to the drooping spirit, not fuel for sin. When David was led into temptation first, he must be clad in sack-cloth and mourning, and then God takes it off, and puts on the garment of joy and praise, 1 Chronicles 21:10, 15. Job, though he exprest so much courage and patience, yet (bewraying some infirmities after he was baited long by so many fresh dogs, men and devils) he must cry peccavi, and abhor himself in dust and ashes, before God will take him into his armes, Job 42:6. and the same way God takes with all his children. Now to his Saints in such a posture, God may with safety to his honor and their good, give a larger draught of his love then ordinary; their feares and sorrow which their sin has cost them, will serve instead of water to dash this strong wine of joy, and take away its headinesse, that it neither fume up into pride, nor occasion them to reele backward into Apostasie.

Quest. But why does God now communicate his love?

Answ. 1 First, from his own pitiful nature; You have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lordis very pitiful, and of tender mercy. God loves not to rake in bleeding wounds, he knowes a mourning soul is subject to be discouraged. A frown or an angry look from God, whom the Saint so dearly loves, must needs go near the heart, therefore God declares himself at hand to revive such, Isa. 57, 15. and he gives the reason, verse 16. For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be alwayes wreth, for the spirit should faile before me. Whose spirit is there meant? not of the presumptuous sinner; he goes on, and never blunks; but of the contrite and humble ones. As the father observes the disposition of his children, one commits a fault and goes on rebelliously, despising his fathers anger, another (when offending him) layes it to heart, refuss to eat, gets into some corner to lament

the displeasure of his father; the father sees it, and his bowels yerne towards him. Indeed should he not put his child out of feare by discovering his love, the spirit of such a one would faile; 'tis not possible there should be a long breach between such a father and such a son, the one relenting over his sin, the other over his mourning son.

Secondly, God does thus to pour the greater shame upon Satan, who is the great make-bate between God and the soul. How is the man ashamed that has stirr'd up variance between husband and wife, father and son, to see the breach made up, and all set themselves against him? It went ill on Christs side, when Herod and Pilate were made friends, and can it go well with Satan to see all well between God and his children? If Esther be in favor, Haman her enemy shall have his face covered. Indeed, this covers Satans face with shame, to see a poor Saint even now his prisoner, whom he had leave to rob and plunder, tempt and disquiet, now sitting in the Sun-shine of Gods love, while he like a ravening Lion takes on for the losse of his prey.

Secondly, Satans aime is to weaken the Saints faith on God, and cool his love to God, but befool'd in both; for, first God turnes their temptations, yea, their falls, to the further establishment of their faith, which (like the tree) stands stronger for its shaking, or like the Gyant Anteus, who in his wrestling with Hercules is feigned to get strength by every fall to the ground. False faith indeed once foiled, seldom comes on again; but true faith riseth and fights more valiantly, as we see in Peter and other Scripture-examples. Temptation to faith is as fire to gold, 1 Peter 1:7. The fire does not only discover which is true gold, but makes the true gold more pure; it comes out may be lesse in bulk and weight, (because sev-

ered from that soile and drosse which embased it) but more in value and worth, when Satan is bound up, and the Christian walks under the shines of divine favor, and encouragement of divine assistance; his faith may appear great, if compared with another under the withdrawings of God, and buffetings of Satan, but this is not equall judging; as if to try who is biggest of two men, we should measure one naked, and the other over his clothes; or in comparing two pieces of gold, weigh one with the drosse and dirt it contracts in the purse, with the other purged from these in the fire; faith before temptation has much heterogeneal stuffe that cleaves to it, and goes for faith; but when temptation comes, these are discovered. Now the Christian feels corruption stir, which lay as dead before, now a cloud comes between the soul and the sweet face of God, (the sense of which latter, and the little sense of the other bore up his faith before) but these bladders prick't, he comes now to learne the true stroke in this heavenly Art of swimming on the promise, having nothing else to beat him up but that; and a little of this carries more of the precious nature of faith in it, then all the other; yea, is (like Gideons handful of men) stronger, when all these accessaries to faith are sent away, then when they were present; and here is all the devil gets: in stead of destroying his faith which he aimes at, he is the occasion of the refining of it, and thereby adding to its strength.

Secondly, the love of tempted Saints is enkindled to Christ by their temptations, and foiles in their temptations. Possibly in the fit there may seem a damp upon their love, as when water is first sprinkled upon the fire, but when the Conflict is a little over, and the Christian comes to himself, his love to Christ will break out like a vehement flame; First, the shame and sorrow which a gracious

soul must needs feele in his bosome for his sinful miscarriage, while under the temptation, will provoke him to express his love to Christ above others, as is sweetly set forth in the Spouse, who when the cold fit of her distemper was off, and the temptation over, bestirs her to purpose, her lazy sicknesse is turned to love-sicknesse: she findes it as hard now to sit, as she did before to rise: she can rest in no place out of her Beloveds sight, but runs and asks every one she meets for him; and whence came all this vehemency of her zeale? all occasioned by her undutiful carriage to her husband: she parted so unkindly with him, that (bethinking what she had done) away she goes to make her peace. If sins committed in unregeneracy have such a force upon a gracious soul, that the thought of them, though pardoned, will still break and melt the heart into sorrow, (as we see in Magdalen) and prick on to show zeal for God above others, (as in Paul) how much more will the sins of a Saint, who after sweet acquaintance with Jesus Christ, lifts up the heel against that bosome where he has layen, affect, yea, dissolve the heart as into so many drops of water, and that sorrow provoke him to serve God at a higher rate then others? No child so dutiful in all the family, as he who is return'd from his rebellion. Again secondly, as his own shame, so the experience which such a one has of Christs love above others will encrease his love. Christs love is fuel to ours. Ex iisdem nutrimur quibus constamus; as it gives its being, so it affords growth: It is both Mother and Nurse to our love. The more Christ puts forth his love, the more heat our love gets, and next to Christs dying love, none greater than his succouring love in temptation. The Mother never has such advantage to show her affection to her child, as when in distress, sick, poor or imprisoned; so neither has Christ to his children as

when tempted, yea, worsted by temptation. When his children lie in Satans prison, bleeding under the wounds of their consciences, this is the season he takes to give an experiment of his tender heart in pitying, his faithfulness in praying for them, his mindfulnesse in sending succour to them, yea, his dear love in visiting them by his comforting Spirit. Now when the soul has got off some great temptation, and reades the whole history thereof together, (wherein he findes what his own weakness was to resist Satan, nay, his unfaithfulnesse in complying with Satan, which might have provok't Christ to leave him to the fury of Satan) now to see both his folly pardoned, and ruine graciously prevented, and that by no other hand, but Christs coming in to his rescue (as Abishai to David, when that gyant thought to have flaine him.) This must needs exceedingly endear Christ to the soul. At the reading of such records the Christian cannot but enquire, (as Ahashuerus concerning Mordecai, who by discovering a treason had saved the Kings life,) what honor has been done to his sweet Saviour for all this. And thus Jesus Christ, whom Satan thought to bring out of the souls favor, and liking, comes in the end to sit higher and surer in the Saints affections then ever.

Chapter 10. A Brief Application of the Point in Two Branches

Use 1 THis affords a reason why God suffers his dear children to fall into temptation, because he is able to out-shoot Satan in his own bowe, and in the thing wherein he thinks to outwit the Christian to be above him. God will not only be admired by his Saints in glory for his love in their salvation, but for his wisdom in the way to it. The love of God in saving them will be the sweet draught at the marriage-feast, and the rare wisdom of God in effecting this, as the curious workmanship with which the cup shall be enamel'd. Now wisdom appears most in untying knots, and wading through difficulties. The more crosse wards there are in a businesse, the more wisdom to fit a key to the lock, to make choice of such means as shall meet with the several turnings in the same. On purpose therefore does God suffer such temptations to intervene, that his wisdom may be the more admired in opening all these, and leading his Saints that way to glory, by which Satan thought to have brought them to hell. The Israelites are bid remember all the way that God led them in the wilderness for fourty years, Deuteronomy 8:2. The History of these warres (Christian) will be pleasant to reade in heaven, though bloody to fight on earth. Moses and Elias talk't with Christ on Tabor, (an

Embleme of the sweet communion which shall passe between Christ and his Saints in glory,) and what was their talk, Luke 9:30. but of his death and sufferings? It seems a discourse of our sufferings and temptations, are not too low a subject for that blisseful state. Indeed this left out, would make a blemish in the faire face of Heavens glory. Could the damned forget the way they went into hell, how oft the Spirit of God was wooing, and how far they were overcome by the conviction of it; in a word, how many turnes and returnes there were in their journey forward and backward, what possibilities, yea, probabilities they had for heaven, when on earth; were but some hand so kinde as to blot these tormenting passages out of their memories, it would ease them wonderfully. So were it possible glorified Saints could forget the way, wherein they went to glory, and the several dangers that interven'd from Satan, and their own back-sliding hearts, they and their God too would be losers by it, I mean in regard of his manifestative glory. What is the glory wherein God appears at Zions deliverance? those royal garments of salvation, that make him so admired of men and Angels? but the celebration of all his Attributes, according to what every one has done towards their salvation. Now wisdom being that which the creature chiefly glories in, (and chosen by Satan for his first bait, who made Eve believe she should be like God in knowledge and wisdom) therefore God, to give Satan the more shameful fall, gives him leave to use his wits and wiles in tempting and troubling his children, in which lies his great advantage over the Saints, that so the way to his own Throne (where his Wisdom shall at last, as well as his mercy sit in all its Royalty) may be paved with the sculls (as I may so speak) of devils.

Use 2 Secondly, this gives a strong cordial to our fainting faith, in the behalf of the Church of Christ. If all the devils wits and wiles will not serve him to overcome one single souldier in Christs Camp, much lesse shall he ever ruine the whole Army. These are days of great confusions in the Christian world, and the chief feare of a gracious heart is for the Ark, lest that should fall into the enemies hand, (and when this Palladium is taken, the City of God (his Church,) be trod under the feet of pride,) I confesse Satan seems to get ground daily; he has strangely wrigled into the bosomes and principles of many, who by the fame of their Profession and zeal, had obtained in the opinion of others, to be reckoned among the chief of Christs Worthies in their generation. He has sadly corrupted the truths of Christ, brought a dis-esteem on Ordinances, (that by this, and as a judgment for this, the wombe of the Gospel is become in a great measure barren, and her children which hang upon her breasts, thrive not in love and holiness as of old, when the milk was not so much nor that so spiritfull) he has had advantage by the divisions of the godly, to harden those that are wicked into a further disdain of Religion, and by the bloody wars of late years, to boile up the wrath of the Popish and profane crue to a higher pitch of rage and fury against Christs little remnant then ever: so that if ever God should suffer the sword to fall into their hand, they are disciplin'd and fitted to play the bloody butchers on Christs sheep above their fore-fathers, (neither are they so crestfallen, but that they can hope for such a day, yea, take up some of those joyes upon trust afore-hand to solace themselves, while the rest follow.) And now (Christian) may be their confidence, together with the distracted state of Christs affaires in the world, may discompose your Spirit, concerning the issue of these rolling

Providences that are over our heads, but be still, poor heart, and know that the contest is not between the Church and Satan, but between Christ and him. These are the two Champions. Stand now, O ye Army of Saints, still by faith, to see the All-wise God wrestle with a subtil devil. If you live not to see the period of these great confusions, yet generations after you shall behold the Almighty smite off this Geliah's head with his own sword, and take this cunning hunter in the toile of his own policies, that says which ascribes greatness and wisdom to God, will shrink up Satans subtilty into a nigrum nihil, a thing of nothing. Incredulitiment diabolum, quasi leonem, qui fide fortes despiciunt quasi vermiculum. Bern. Unbelief feares Satan as a Lion, faith trends on him as a worme Behold therefore your God at work, and promise your self that what he is about, will be an excellent piece. None cn drive him from his work. The Pilot is beaten from the helme, and can do little in a storme, but lets the ship go a drift. The Architect cannot work, when night drawes the curtaine, yea, is driven off the Scaffold with a storme of raine, such Workmen are the wisest Counsellours and mightiest Princes on earth. A pinch may come, when it is as vain to say, Help O King, as, Help O beggar; mans wisdom may be level'd with folly, but God is never interrupted. All the plots of hell and commotions on earth, have not so much as shak't Gods hand, to spoile one letter or line that he has been drawing. The mysteriousnesse of his Providence may hang a curtain before his work, that we cannot see what he is doing, but then when darkness is about him, righteousnesse is the seat of his Throne for ever. O. where's our faith (Sirs!) let God be wise, and all men and devils fools. What though you seest a Babel more likely to go up, then a Babylon to be pull'd down, yet believe God is making his secret approaches, and

will clap his ladders on a sudden to the walls thereof: Suppose truth were Prisoner with Joseph, and errour the Courtier, to have its head lift up by the favor of the times, yet doest not remember that the way to truths preferment lies through the prison? yea, what though the Church were like Jonah in the Whales belly, swallowed up to the eye of reason by the fury of men, yet doest not remember the Whale had not power to digest the Prophet? O be not too quick to bury the Church before she be dead. Stay while Christ tries his skill before you give it over: bring Christ by your prayers to its grave, to speak a Resurrection-word. Admirable has the Saints faith been in such straits: as Josephs, who pawn'd his bones that God would visit his brethren, willing them to lay him where he believ'd they should be brought; Jeremiah purchass a field of his Uncle, and payes down the money for it, and this when the Caldean army quartered about Jerusalem, ready to take the Cisy, and carry him with the rest into Babylon: And all this by Gods appointment, Jeremiah 22:6, 7, 8. that he might show the Jewes by this, how undoubtedly he (in that sad juncture of time) did believe the performance of the Promise for their returne out of captivity. Indeed God counts himself exceedingly disparaged in the thoughts of his people, (though at the lowest ebbe of his Churches affairs) if his naked word, and the single bond of his Promise will not be taken as sufficient security to their faith for its deliverance.

_VERSE 12._For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against Principalities and Powers, against the Rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

THe words are coupled to the Precedent with that causal particle For, which either referres to the two foregoing verses, and then they are a further reason, pressing the necessity of Christian forti-

tude in the tenth verse, and furniture in the eleventh: or else to the last words of the eleventh verse, where the Apostle having descried the Saints grand enemie to be Satan, and described him in one of his attributes, his wily subtilty, he in this further displayes him in his proper colours, not to weaken the Saints hands, but waken their care, that seeing their enemy marching up in a full body, they might stand in better order to receive his charge. Where by the way we may observe the Apostles simplicity and plain dealing; he does not undervalue the strength of the enemy, and represent him inconsiderable, as Captains use to keep their souldiers together, by slighting the power of their adversary; no, he tells them the worst at first. If Satan had been to set out his own power, he could have challeng'd no more than is here granted him. See here the difference between Christ dealing with his followers, and Satan with his. Satan dares not let sinners know who that God is they fight against; this were enough to breed a mutiny in the devils camp. Silly souls they are drawn into the field by a false report of God and his ways, and are kept there together with lies and faire tales, but Christ is not afraid to show his Saints their enemy in all his Power and Principality, the Weakness of God being stronger than the powers of hell.

Chapter 1. Showing the Christian's Life Here to Be a Continual Wrestling with Sin and Satan, and How the True Wrestlers Should Manage Their Combat

• • •

THe words contain a lively description of a bloody and lasting war between the Christian and his implacable enemy; in which we may observe; First, the Christians state in this life, set out by this word wrestling.

Secondly, the Assailants that appear in armes against the Christian, who are described; First, Negatively, Not flesh and blood: Or rather comparatively, not chiefly flesh and blood. Secondly, Positively, but against Principalities, Powers, &c.

SECT. I.

First, for the first, the wrestling or conflicting state of a Christian in this life, is rendered observable here by a threefold circumstance.

First, the kinde of combate which the Christians state is here set out by, [illegible], which though it be used sometimes for a wrestling of sport and recreation, yet here to set out the sharpness of the Christians encounter; there are two things in wrestling that render it a sharper combate then others. First, wrestling is not properly fighting against a multitude, but when one enemy singles out another, and enters the list with him, each exerting their whole force and strength against one another, as David and Goliah, when the whole Armies stood as it were in a ring to behold the bloody issue of that duel. Now this is more fierce then to fight in an army, where though the battel be sharp and long, the souldier is not alwayes engaged, but falls off when he has discharged, and takes breath a while: yea, possibly may escape without hurt or stroak, because there the enemies aime is not at this or that man, but at the whole heap, but in wrestling one cannot scape so, he being the particular object of the enemies fury, must needs be shaked and tried to purpose. Indeed the word [illegible] signifies such a strife, as makes the body shake again, quia corpus[illegible]. Satan has not only a general malice against the army of Saints, but a spite against you John, you Joane: he'll single you out for his enemy. We finde Jacob, when alone, a man wrestled with him. As God delights to have private communion with his single Saints, so the devil to try it hand to hand with the Christian, when he gets him alone. As we lose much comfort, when we do not apply the Promise and Providence of God to our particular persons and conditions, God loves me, pardons me, takes care of me: the water at the town-conduit does me no good, if I want a pipe to empty it into my cisterne; so it obstructs our care and watchfulnesse, when we conceive of Satans wrath and fury, as bent in general against the Saints, and

not against me in particular. O how careful would a soul be in duty, if as going to Church or Closet he had such a serious meditation as this, Now Satan is at my heels to hinder me in my work, if my God help me not!

Secondly, 'tis a close combate. Armies fight at some distance. Wrestlers grapple hand to hand. An arrow shot from afar may be seen and shunn'd, but when the enemy has hold of one there is no declining, but either he must resist manfully, or fall shamefully at his enemies foot. Satan comes close up, and gets within the Christian, takes his hold of his very flesh and corrupt nature, and by this shakes him.

Secondly, the universality of the combate. We wrestle [illegible], which comprehends all, on purpose you may perceive the Apostle changs the pronoune [illegible] in the former verse, into [illegible] in this, that he may include himself as well as them; as if he had said, the quarrel is with every Saint. Satan neither feares to assault the Minister, nor despiss to wrestle with the meanest Saint in the Congregation; great and small, Minister and people, all must wrestle: Not one part of Christs Army in the field, and the other at ease in their quarters, where no enemy comes, here are enemies enough to engage all at onee.

Thirdly, the permanency or duration of this combate, and that lies in the tense [illegible]. Not, our wrestling was at first Conversion, but now over, and we past the pikes; not, we shall wrestle when sicknesse comes, and death comes, but our wrestling is; the enemy is ever in sight of us, yea, in fight with us, there is an evil of every days temptation, which (like Pauls bonds,) abides us wherever we become. So that these particulars summ'd up will amount to this Point:

SECT. II.

The Christians life is a continual wrestling. He is as Jeremy said of himself, borne a man of strife, or what the Prophet to Asa, may be said to every Christian; From hence you shalt have wars, from your spiritual birth to your natural death, from the hour when you first diddest set your face to heaven, till you shalt set your foot in heaven. Israels march out of Egypt was in Gospel-sense our taking the field against sin and Satan, and when had they peace? not till they lodged their colours in Canaan. No condition wherein the Christian is here below is quiet. Is it prosperity or adversity, here is work for both hands, to keep pride and security down in the one, faith and patience up in the other: no place which the Christian can call priviledg'd ground. Lot in Sodom wrestled with the wicked inhabitants thereof, his righteous soul being vexed with their unclean conversation. And how fares he at Zoar? do not his own daughters bring a spark of Sodoms fire into his own bed, whereby he is inflamed with lust? Some have thought if they were but in such a family, under such a Ministery, out of such occasions: O then they should never be tempted as now they are; I confesse change of aire is a great help to weak nature, and these forenamed as vantage-ground against Satan; but think'st you to flie from Satans presence thus? No, though you should'st take the wings of the morning he would flie after you, these may make him change his method in tempting, but not lay down his designe; so long as his old friend is alive within, he will be knocking at your door without. No duty can be performed without wrestling; The Christian needs his sword as much as his trowel. He wrestles with a body of flesh; this to the Christian in duty is as the beast to the traveller; he cannot go his journey without it, and much ado to go with it. If the

flesh be kept high and lusty, then 'tis wanton and will not obey; if low, then it's weak and soon tires: Thus the Christian rids but little ground, because he must go his weak bodies pace. He wrestles with a body of sin as well as of flesh, this mutters and murmures when the soul is taking up any duty. Sometimes it keeps the Christian from duty, so that he cannot do what he would. As Paul said, I would have come once and again, but Satan hindred me. I would have prayed may the Christian say at such a time, and meditated on the Word I heard, the mercies I received at another, but this enemy hindred. 'Tis true indeed, grace swayes the Scepter in such a soul, yet as Schoolboyes taking their time when their Master is abroad do shut him out, and for a while lord it in misrule, though they are whip't for it afterwards: thus the unregenerate part takes advantage when grace is not on its watch to disturb its government, and shut it out from duty, though this at last makes the soul more severe in mortifying, yet it costs some scuffle before it can recover its throne, and when it cannot shut from duty, yet then is the Christian wofully yok't with it in duty; it cannot do what it does as it would; many a letter in its copy does this enemy spoil, while he joggs him with impertinent thoughts; when the Christian is a praying, then Satan and the flesh are a prating; he cries, and they louder, to put him out or drown his cry. Thus we see the Christian is assail'd on every side by his enemy; and how can it be other, when the seeds of war are laid deep in the natures of both, which can never be rooted up till the devil cease to be a devil, sin to be sin, and the Saint to be a Saint? Though wolves may snarle at one another, yet soon are quiet again, because the quarrel is not in

their nature; but the Wolfe and the Lamb can never be made friends. Sin will lust against grace, and grace draw upon sin whenever they meet.

SECT. III.

Use 1 First, this may reprove such as wrestle, but against whom? against God, not against sin and Satan. These are bold men indeed, who dare try a fall with the Almighty; yet such there are, and a Wo pronounced against them. Isaiah 45:9. Wo unto him that strivs with his Maker. 'Tis easie to tell which of these will be worsted. What can he do, but break his shins that dashs them against a rock? A goodly battel there is like to be, when thorns contest with fire, and stubble with flame. But where live those giants, that dare enter the list with the great God? what are their names that we may know them, and brand them for creatures above all other unworthy to live? Take heed O you who askest, that the wretched man whom you seemest so to defie, be not found in your own clothes it self. Iudas was the Traitour, though he would not answer to his name, but put it off with a Master is it I? and so may you be the fighter against God. The heart is deceitful. Even holy David, for all his anger was so hot against the rich man, that took away the poor mans ewe-Lamb, that he bound it with an oath, the man should not live who had done it, yet proves at last to be himself the man, as the Prophet told him, 2 Sam. 12.

Now there are two ways wherein men wrestle against God; First, when they wrestle against his Spirit. Secondly, when they wrestle against his Providence.

First, when they wrestle against his Spirit. We reade of the Spirits striving with the creature, Genesis 6:3. My spirit shall not alwayes strive with man. Where the striving is not in anger and wrath to destroy them, (that God could do without any stir or scuffle) but a loving strife and contest with man. The old world was running with such a cariere headlong into their ruine, he sends his Spirit to interpose, and by his counsels and reproofes to offer, as it were, to stop them and reclaim them. As if one seeing another ready to offer violence on himself, should strive to get the knife out of his hand, with which he would do the mischief. Or one that has a purse of gold in his hand to give, should follow another by all manner of entreaties, striving with him to accept and take it. Such a kinde of strife is this of the Spirits with men. They are the lusts of men, (those bloody instruments of death, with which sinners are mischieving themselves) that the holy Spirit strives by his sweet counsels and entreaties to get out of our hands. They are Christs, his grace and eternal life he strives to make us accept at the hands of Gods mercy; and for repulsing the Spirit thus striving with them, sinners are justly counted fighters against God: Ye stiffe-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears,ye do alwayes resist the Holy Ghost. Now there is a twofold striving of the Spirit, and so of our wrestling against it. First, the Spirit strives in his messengers with sinners. They coming on his errand, and not their owne, he vouchs the faithful counsels, reproofs and exhortations which they give as his own act. Noah, that Preacher of righteousnesse, what he said to the old world, is call'd the Preaching of the Spirit, 1 Peter 3:19. The pains that Moses, Aaron and other servants of God took in instructing Israel, is call'd the instruction of the Spirit, Nehem. 9.20. so that when the Word, which Gods Ministers bring

in his Name, is rejected, the faithful counsels they give are thrown at sinners heels and made light of; then do they strive with the Spirit, and wrestle against Christ as really, as if he visibly in his own person had been in the Pulpit, and preached the same Sermon to them. When God comes to reckon with sinners, it will prove so; then God will rub up your memories, and minde you of his striving with you, and your unkinde resisting him. They, whether they will heare, or whether they will forbear,shall know they had a Prophet among them. Now men soon forget whom and what they hear; ask them what was prest upon their conscience in such a Sermon, they have forgot; what were the precious truthes laid out in another, and they are lost: & well were it for them if their memories were no better in another world: it would ease their torments more than a little. But then they shall know they had a Prophet among them, and what a price they had with him in their hands, though it was in fooles keeping. They shall know what he was, and what he said, though a thousand years past, as fresh as if it were done but last night. The more zealous and compassionate, the more painful and powerful he was in his place, the greater shall their sin be found, to break from such holy violence offered to do them good. Surely God will have something for the sweat, yea, lives of his servants which were worne out in striving with such rebellious ones. May be yet, sinners, your firmament is clear, no cloud to be seen that portends a storme; but know (as you use to say) winter does not rock in the clouds, you shall have it at last: every threatening which your faithful Ministers have denounced against you out of the Word, God is bound to make good. He confirms the Word of his servant,and performs the counsel of his messengers, and that in judgement against sinners, confirming the threatenings, as well as in mercy

performing the promises, which they declare as the portion of his children. But it will be time enough to ask such on a sick-bed, or a dying hour, whether the words of the Lord delivered by their faithful Preachers have not taken hold of them. Some have confessed with horrour they have, as the Jewes, Zechariah 1:6. Like as the Lord of hosts thought to do unto us, so has he dealt with us. Secondly, the Spirit strives with men more immediately, when he makes his inward approaches to the consciences of men, debating in their own bosoms the case with them; one while he shows them their sins in their bloody colours, and whether they will surely bring them, if not look't to timely, which he does so convincingly, that the creature smells sometimes the very fire and brimstone about him, and is at present in a temporary hell; another while he falls a parlying and treating with them, making gracious overtures to the sinner, if he will return at his reproof, presents the grace of the Gospel, and opens a door of hope for his recovery, yea, falls a wooing and beseeching of him to throw down his rebellious armes, and come to Christ for life, whose heart is in a present disposition to receive and embrace the first motion the returning sinner makes for mercy. Now when the Spirit of God follows the sinner from place to place, and time to time, suggesting such motions, and renewing his old suit, and the creature shall fling out of the Spirits hands thus striving with him re infectâ, as far from renouncing his lusts, or taking any liking to Christ as ever: This is to resist the Spirit to his face, and it carries so much malignity in it, that (even where it has not been final) poor humbled souls have been so overset with the horrour of it, that they could not for a long time be perswaded, but that it was the unpardonable sin. Take heed therefore sinners, how you use the Spirit when he comes, knocking at

the door of your hearts: Open at his knock, and he will be your guest, you shall have his sweet company; repulse him, and you have not a Promise he'll knock again. And if once he leave striving with you, unhappy man, you are lost for ever; you liest like a ship cast up by the waves upon some high rock, where the tide never comes to fetch it off. You may come to the Word, converse with other Ordinances, but in vain. 'Tis the Spirit in them, which is both tide and winde, to set the soul afloat, and carry it on, or else it lies like a ship on dry ground which stirs not.

Secondly, we wrestle against God when we wrestle with his Providence, and that two ways; First, when we are discontented with his providential disposure of us. Gods carving for us does not please us so, but that we are objecting against his dealings towards us, at least muttering something with the fool in our hearts, which God heares as lightly as man our words. God counts then we begin to quarrel with him, when we do not acquiesce in, and say Amen to his Providence whatever it is. He calls it a contending with the Almighty, Iob. 40.1. yea, a reproving of God. And he is a bold man sure that dare finde fault with God, and article against heaven. God challengs him, whoever he is that does this, to answer it at his peril. He that reprovs God, let him answer it, v. 2. of the chapter fore-mentioned. It was high time for Iob to have done, when he heares what a sense God puts upon those unwary words, which drop't from him in the anguish of his Spirit, and paroxysme of his sufferings; contend with the Almighty? reprove God? Good man, how blank he is, and cries out, I am vile, what shall I answer you? I will lay my hand upon my mouth. Let God but pardon what is past, and he shall hear such language no more. O Sirs, take heed of this wrestling above all other. Contention is uncomfortable, with

whomsoever it is we fall out. Neighbors or friends, wife or husband, children or servants: but worst of all with God. If God cannot please you, but your heart riseth against him, what hopes are there of your pleasing him, who will take nothing kindly from that man who is angry with him? And how can love to God be preserved in a discontented heart, that is alwayes muttering against him? Love cannot think any evil of God, nor endure to heare anyspeak evil of him, but it must take Gods part, as Ionathan Davids, when Saul spoke basely of him, and when it cannot be heard, will like him arise and be gone. When afflicted, love can allow you to groan, but not to grumble. If you will ease your incumbred spirit into Gods bosome by prayer, and humbly wrestle with God on your knees, love is for you, and will help you to the best arguments you can use to God; But if you will vent your distempered passions, and show a mutinous spirit against God, this stabs it to the heart.

Secondly, we wrestle against Providence, when uncorrigible under the various dispensations of God towards us. Providence has a voice, if we had an eare; mercies should draw, afflictions drive; now when neither faire meanes nor foule do us good, but we are impenitent under both; this is to wrestle against God with both hands. Either of these have their peculiar aggravations. One is against love, and so dis-ingenuous; the other is against the smart of his rod, and therein we slight his anger, and are cruel to our selves in kicking against the pricks. Mercy should make us ashamed, wrath afraid to sin. He that is not ashamed, has not the spirit of a man. He that is not afraid when smitten, is worse then the beast, who stands in aw of whip & spur. Sometimes mercy (especially these outward mercies, which have a pleasing relish to the carnal part in a Christian) has prov'd a snare to the best of men,

but then affliction useth to recover them; but when affliction makes men worse, and they harden themselves against God, to sin more and more while the rod is on them, what is like to reclaim them? few are made better by prosperity, whom afflictions make worse. He that will sin, though he goes in pain, will much more if that once be gone. But take heed of thus contesting with God. There is nothing got by scuffling with God, but blows, or worse. If he say he will afflict you no more, 'tis even the worst he can say; 'tis as much as if he should say he'll be in your debt till another world, and there pay you altogether. But if he means you mercy, you shalt hear from him in some sharper affliction then ever. He has wedges that can rive you, wert you a more knotty piece then you art. Are there yet the treasures of wickedness, and the scant measure that is abominable? (says God to Israel) what uncorrigible, though the Lords voice cries unto the City, bidding you hear the rod, and him that has appointed it? See what course God resolvs on, v. 13. Therefore will I make you sick in smiting of you. As if he had said, my other Physick I see was too weak, it did not work or turne your stomach, but I will prepare a potion that shall make you sick at heart.

Secondly, It reproves those who seem to wrestle against sin, but not according to the Word of Command that Christ gives. There is a Law in wrestling which must be observ'd, 2 Timothy 2:5. If a man also strive for Masteries, yet is he not crowned except he strive lawfully. He alludes to the Romane games, to which there were Judges appointed to see that no foule play were offered contrary to the Law for wrestling; the prize being denied to such, though they did foile their adversary, which the Apostle improves to make the Christian careful in his war, as being under a stricter

Law and Discipline, that requires not only valour to fight, but obedience to fight, by order and according to the Word of Command: Now few do this that go for great Wrestlers.

First, some while they wrestle against one sin, embrace another; and in this case 'tis not the person wrestles against sin, but one sin wrestles with another, and 'tis no wonder to see thieves fall out when they come to divide the spoil; Lusts are divers, Titus 3:3. and 'tis hard to please many Masters, especially when their commands are so contrary; when pride bids lay on in bravery, lavish out in entertainment; covetousnesse bids lay up, when malice bids revenge; carnal policy says, conceal your wrath, though not forgive. When lust sends to his whores, hypocrisie pulls him back for shame of the world. Now is he Gods Champion that resists one sin at the command of another, it may be a worse.

Secondly, some wrestle, but they are prest into the field, not Voluntiers, their slavish feare scares them at present from their lust; so that the Combate is rather betwixt their Conscience and Will, then them and their lust, Give me such a sin says Will; No, says conscience, it will scall'd, and throwes it away. A man may love the wine though he is loath to have his lips burnt. Hypocrites themselves are afraid to burne. In such Combates the Will at last prevails, either by bribing the understanding to present the lust it desires in a more pleasing dresse, (that conscience may not be scared with such hideous apparitions of wrath) or by pacifying conscience with some promise of repentance for the future, or by forbearing some sin for the present, which it can best spare, thereby to gain the reputation of something like a reformation; Or if all this will not do, then (prompted by the fury of its lust) the Will proclaims open war against conscience, sinning in the face of

it, like some wilde horse, (impatient of the spur which pricks him, and bridle that curbs him) gets the bit between his teeth, and runs with full speed, till at last he easeth himself of his Rider; and then where he sees fattest pasture, no hedge or ditch can withhold him, till in the end you finde him, starving in some pound for his trespasse: Thus many sin at such rate, that conscience can no longer hold the reines, nor sit the saddle. but is thrown down and laid for dead; and then the wretches range where their lusts can have the fullest meal, till at last they pay for their stollen pleasures most dearly, when conscience comes to it self, pursues them, and takes them more surely by the throat then ever, never to let them go till it brings them before Gods Tribunal.

Thirdly, others wrestle with sin, but they do not hate it, and therefore they are favorable to it, and seek not the life of sin as their deadly enemy; these wrestle in jest, and not in earnest; the wounds they give sin one day, are healed by the next. Let men resolve never so strongly against sin, yet it will creep again into their favor, till the love of sin be quenched in the heart, and this fire will never the of it self, the love of Christ must quench the love of sin, as Ierome excellently, Unus amor extinguit alium. This heavenly fire will indeed put out that flame of hell, which he illustrates by Ahashuerus his carriage to Vashti his Queen, who in the first Chapter makes a decree in all haste, that she comes no more before him; but when his passion is a little down, chap. 2. v. 1. he begins to relent towards her, which his Councel perceiving, presently seek out for a beautiful Virgin, on whom the King might place his love, and take into his royal bed, which done, we hear no more of Vashti, then and not till then will the souls decree stand against sin, when the soul has taken Christ into his bosome.

SECT. IV.

Secondly, to the Saints, seeing your life is a continual wrestling here on earth, 'tis your wisdom to study how you may best manage the combate with your best enemy, which that you may do, take these few directions.

First, look you goest not into the field without your Second; my meaning is, engage God by prayer to stand at your back; God is in a league offensive and defensive with you, but he looks to be called. Did the Ephraimites take it ill, that Gideon called them into the field, and may not God much more? as if you meanedst to steal a victory before he should know it. You have more valour then Moses, who would not stir without God, no, though he sent an Angel for his Lieutenant. You are wiser than Iacob, who to overcome Esau, now marching up, turnes from him, and falls upon God; he knew if he could wrestle with God, he might trust God to deale with his brother. Engage God and the back-door is shut, no enemy can come behinde you, yea, yours enemy shall fall before you. God turne the counsel of Achitophel into foolishnesse, says David, Heaven says Amen to his prayer, and the wretch hangs himself.

Secondly, be very careful of giving yours enemy hand-hold. Wrestlers strive to fasten upon some part or other, which gives them advantage more easily to throw their adversary; to prevent which, they used, First, to lay aside their garments. Secondly, to anoint their bodies. For the first, Christian, labor to put off the old man which is most personal, that corruption, which David calls his own iniquity, Psalms 18:23. This is the skirt which Satan layes hold of, observe what it is, and mortifie it daily, then Satan will retreat

with shame, when he sees the head of that enemy upon the wall, which should have betrayed you into his hands. Secondly, the Romane wrestlers used to anoint their bodies; so do you, bathe your soul with the frequent meditation of Christs love. Satan will finde little welcome, where Christs love dwells, love will kindle love, and that will be as a wall of fire to keep off Satan, it will make you disdain the offer of a sin, and as oile supple your joynts, and make agile to offend your enemy. Think how Christ wrestled in your quarrel, sin, hell and wrath had all come full mouth upon you, had not he coped with them in the way. And can you finde in your heart to requite his love, by betraying his glory into the hands of sin, by cowardise or treachery: say not you lovest him, so long as you can lay those sins in your bosome, which pluck't his heart out of his bosome. It were strange if a child should keep, and delight to use no other knife, but that wherewith his father was stabb'd.

Thirdly, improve the advantage you gettest at any time wisely. Sometimes the Christian has his enemy on the hip, yea, on the ground, can set his foot on the very neck of his pride, and throw away his unbelief, as a thing absurd and unreasonable; now (as a wise wrestler) fall with all your weight upon yours enemy; though man think it foule play to strike when his adversary is down, yet do not you so complement with sin, as to let it breath or rise. Take heed you beest not charged of God, as once Ahab, for letting go this enemy now in your hands, whom God has appointed to destruction. Learne a little wisdom of the Serpents brood, who when they had Christ under their foot, never thought they had him sure enough; no, not when dead, and therefore both seale and watch his

grave. Thus do you to hinder the resurrection of your sin, seal it down with stronger purposes, solemn covenants, and watch it by a wakeful circumspect walking,

Use. 3 This is ground of consolation to the weak Christian, who disputes against the truth of his grace, from the inward conflicts and fightings he has with his lusts, and is ready to say (like Gideon, in regard of outward enemies,) If God be with me, why is all this befallen me? why do I finde such struglings in me, provoking me to sin, pulling me back from that which is good? Why doest ask? The Answer is soon given, because you are a Wrestler, not a Conquerour. You mistakest the state of a Chistian in this life: when one is made a Christian, he is not presently call'd to triumph over his slaine enemies, but carried into the field to meet and fight them. The state of grace is rhe commencing of a war against sin, not the ending of it; rather than you shalt not have an enemy to wrestle with, God himself will come in a disguise into the field, and appear to be yours enemy. Thus when Jacob was alone, a man wrestled with him until breaking of the day, and therefore set your heart at rest if this be your scruple: Your soul may rather take comfort in this, that you are a wrestler; This strugling within you, if upon the right ground, and to the right end, does evidence there are two Nations within you, two contrary natures, the one from earth earthly, and the other from heaven heavenly; yea, for your further comfort know, though your corrupt nature be the elder, yet it shall serve the younger.

Use. 4 O how should this make you (Christian) long to be gone home, where there is none of this stir and scuffle! 'Tis strange, that every hour seems not a day, and everyday a year, till death sounds your joyful retreat, and calls you off the field, where the bullets flie

so thick, and you are fighting for your life with your deadly enemies, to come to Court, where not swords, but palmes are seen in the Saints hands; not drums, but harps; not groanes of bleeding souldiers and wounded consciences, but sweet and ravishing musick is heard of triumphing Victors caroling the praises of God and the Lambe, through whom they have overcome. Well, Christians, while you are below, comfort your selves with these things; There is a place of Rest remains for the people of God: You do not beat the aire, but wrestle for a Heaven that is yonder above these clouds; you have your worst first, the best will follow. You wrestle but to win a Crown, and win to wear it, yea wear never to lose it, which once on none shall take off, or put you to the hazard of battel more. Here we overcome to fight again, the battel of one temptation may be over, but the war remaines. What peace can we have, as long as devils can come abroad out of their holes, or anything of sinful nature remains in our selves unmortified? which will even fight upon its knees, and strike with one arme while the other is cut off; but when death comes, the last stroak is struck: this good Physician will perfectly cure you of your spiritual blindness and lamenesse, (as the Martyr told his fellow at the stake bloody Bonner would do their bodily.) What is it, Christian, which takes away the joy of your life, but the wrestlings and combates which this bosome-enemy puts you to? Is not this the Peninnah, that vexing and disturbing your Spirit, has kept you off many a sweet meale, you might have had in communion with God and his Saints? or if you have come, has made you cover the Altar of God with your teares and groans? and will it not be a happy hand that cuts the knot, and sets you loose from your deadnesse, hypocrisie, pride, and what not, wherewith you wert yoak't? 'Tis life which is

your losse, and death which is your gaine. Be but willing to endure the rending of this vaile of your flesh, and you are where you wouldest be, out of the reach of sin, at rest in the bosome of your God. And why should a short evil of paine affright you more, then the deliverance from a continual torment of sins evil ravish you? Some you know have chose to be cut, rather than to be ground daily with the stone, and yet, may be, their pain comes again, and can you not quietly think of dying, to be delivered from the torment of these sins, never to return more? And yet that is not the half that death does for you: Peace is sweet after war, ease after pain; but what tongue can express what joy, what glory must fill the creature at the first sight of God, and that blessed company? none but one that dwells there can tell. Did we know more of that blisseful state, we Ministers should finde it as hard a work to perswade Christians to be willing to live here so long, as now it is to perswade them to be willing to die so soon.

Chapter 2. Wherein Is Showed What Is Meant by Flesh and Blood, and How the Christian Wrestles Against the Same

• • •

SECT. I.

NOw followes the description of the Saints enemies, with whom he is to wrestle;

First, described Negatively, Not with flesh and blood.

Secondly, Positively, But against Principalities and Powers, &c.

First, for the Negative part of the Description; we are not to take it for a pure negation, as if we had no conflict with flesh and blood, but wholly and solely to engage against Satan; but by way of comparison, not only with flesh and blood, and in some sense not chiefly. It is usual in Scripture such manner of phrase, Luke 14:12. Call not your friends to dinner, but the poore; that is, not only those, so as to neglect the poor. Now what is meant here by flesh and blood? there is a double interpretation of the words.

First, by flesh and blood may be meant our own bosome-corruptions; that sin which is in our corrupt nature so oft called flesh in the Scripture; The flesh lusts against the Spirit, and sometimes flesh and blood, as Matth.6.17. Flesh and blood has not revealed this, that is, this Confession you have made comes from above; your fleshly corrupt minde could never have found out this supernatural truth, your sinful Will would never have embraced it. So, 1 Cor 15:20. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, that is, sinful mortal flesh, as it's expounded in the words following. So, Galatians 1:21. I consulted not with flesh and blood, that is, carnal reason. Now this bosome-enemy may be called flesh, partly from its derivation, and partly from its operation; from its derivation, because it's derived and propagated to us by natural generation; thus Adam is said to beget a son in his own likenesse, sinful as he was, as well as mortal and miserable; yea, the holiest Saint on earth having flesh in him, derives this corrupt and sinful nature to his child, as the circumcised Jew begat an uncircumcised child; and the wheat cleans'd and fann'd (being sowen) comes up with a husk, John 3:6. That which is borne of the flesh is flesh.

Secondly, its call'd flesh from the operations of this corrupt nature, which are fleshly and carnal; The reasonings of the corrupt minde fleshly, therefore called the carnal minde, uncapable indeed of the things of God, which it neither does nor can perceive: As the Sunne does obsignare superiora dum revelat inferiora; hide the Heavens which are above it from us, while it reveales things beneath; so carnal reason leaves the creature in the dark concerning spiritual truths, when it is most able to conceive and discourse of creature-excellencies, and carnal interests here below. What a childish question, for so wise a man did Nicodemus put to Christ?

though Christ to help him did wrap his speech in a carnal phrase. If fleshly reason cannot understand spiritual truths when thus accommodated, and the notions of the Gospel translated into its own language, what skill is it like to have of them, if put to reade them in their original tongue? I mean, if this garment of carnal expression were taken off, and spiritual truths in their naked hue presented to its view. The motions of the natural will are carnal, and therefore, Romans 8:5. They that are after the flesh, are said to minde the things of the flesh. All its desires, delights, cares, feares, are in and of carnal things; it savours spiritual food no more than an Angel fleshly. Omnis vita gustu ducitur: What we cannot relish we will hardly make our daily food. Every creature has its proper diet, the Lion eats not grasse, nor the horse flesh; what is food to the carnal heart, is poison to the gracious; and that which is pleasing to the gracious, is distastful to the carnal. Now according to this Interpretation the sense of the Apostle is not, as if the Christian had no combate with his corrupt nature, (for in another place it's said, the Spirit lusts against the flesh, and the flesh against the Spirit, and this enemy is called, [illegible], the sin that besets the Christian round) but to aggravate his conflict with this enemy by the accesse of a forreign power, Satan who strikes in with this domestick enemy. As if while a King is fighting with his own mutinous subjects, some out-landish troops should joyne with them, now he may be said not to fight with his subjects, but with a forrein power. The Christian wrestles not with his naked corruption, but with Satan in them; were there no devil, yet we should have our hands full in resisting the corruptions of our own hearts, but the accesse of this enemy makes the battel more terrible, because he heads them who is a Captain so skilful and experienced.

Our sin is the engine, Satan is the Engineer; lust the bait, Satan the Angler; when a soul is enticed by his own lust, he is said to be tempted, James 1:14. because both Satan and our own lust concur to the compleating the sin.

First, let this make you, Christian, ply the work of mortification close; it is no policy to let your lusts have armes, who are sure to rise and declare against you when yours enemy comes. Achish his Nobles did but wisely, in that they would not trust David in their army, when to fight against Israel, lest in the battel he should be an adversary to them; And darest you go to duty, or engage in any action, where Satan will appear against you, and not endeavour to make sure of your pride, unbelief, &c. that they joyne not with yours enemy?

Secondly, are Satan and your own flesh against you, not single corruption, but edged with his policy, and backed by his power? see then what need you have of more help then your owne grace; take heed of grapling with him in the strength of your naked grace; here you have two to one against you: Satan was too hard for Adam, though he went so well appointed into the field, because left to himself, much more easily will he foile you; cling therefore about your God for strength, get him with you, and then though a worme, you shalt be able to deal with this Serpent.

SECT. II.

Secondly, flesh and blood is interpreted as a periphrasis of man. We wrestle not with flesh and blood, that is, not with man, who is here described by that part which chiefly distinguishs him from the

Angelical nature; Touch me, says Christ, and handle me, a Spirit has not flesh. Now according to this Interpretation observe;

First, how meanly the Spirit of God speaks of man.

Secondly, where he layes the stresse of the Saints battel, not in resisting flesh and blood, but Principalities and Powers; where the Apostle excludes not our combate with man, for the war is against the Serpent and his seed. As wide as the world is, it cannot peaceably hold the Saints and wicked together; but his intent is to show, what a complicated enemy (mans wrath and Satans interwoven together) we have to deal with.

First, for the first, how meanly does the Spirit of God speak of man, calling him flesh and blood? Man has a Heaven-borne soul, which makes him a kin to Angels, yea, to the God of them who is the Father of Spirits; but this is passed by in silence, as if God would not owne that which is tainted with sin, and not the creature God at first made it, or because the soul, though of such noble extraction, yet being so immerst in sensuality, deserves no other name then flesh, which part of man levels him with the beast, and is here intended to express the weakness and frailty of mans nature. 'Tis the phrase which the Holy Ghost expresss the weakness and impotency of a creature by, Isaiah 31:3. They are men, and their horses are flesh; that is, weak; as on the contrary, when he would set out the power and strength of a thing, he opposs it to flesh, 2 Corinthians 10:3. Our weapons are not carnal, but mighty; and so in the text, not flesh and blood, but Powers. As if he should say, Had you no other to feare but a weak sorry man, it were not worth the providing armes or ammunition; but you have enemies that neither are flesh, nor are resisted with flesh; so that here we see what a weak creature man is, not only weaker than Angels, as

they are Spirit, and he flesh, but in some sense beneath the beasts, as the flesh of man is frailer then the flesh of beasts, therefore the Spirit of God compares man to the grasse, which soon withers, Isaiah 40:6. and his goodlinesse to the flower of the field. Yea, he is called vanity, Psalms 62:9. Men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie, both alike vain; only the rich and the great man, his vanity is covered with honor, wealth, &c. which are here called a lie, because they are not what they seem, and so worse then plain vanity, which is known to be so, and deceives not.

Use. 1 First, Is man but fraile flesh? let this humble you, O man, in all your excellency, flesh is but one remove from filth and corruption: your soul is the salt that keeps you sweet, or else you wouldest stink above ground. Is it your beauty you pridest in? flesh is grasse, but beauty is the vanity of this vanity. This goodlinesse is like the flower, which lasts not so long as the grasse, appears in its moneth, and is gone, yea, like the beauty of the flower, which fades while the flower stands. How soon will times plough make furrowes in your face, yea, one fit of an Ague so change your countenance, as shall make your doting lovers afraid to look on you? Is it strength? alas, it is an arme of flesh, which withers oft in the stretching forth; ere long your blood which is now warm, will freeze in your veines; your Spring crown'd with May-buds, will tread on Decembers heel; your marrow dry in your bones, your sinews shrink, your legs bow under the weight of your body, your eye-strings crack, your tongue not able to call for help; yea, your heart with your flsh shall faile; and now you, who are such a giant, take a turne if you can in your chamber, yea, raise but your head

from your pillow if you are able, or call back your breath, which is making haste to be gone out of your nostrils, never to return more; and darest you glory in that which so soon may be prostrate?

Is it wisdom? the same grave rhat covers your body, shall bury all that, (the wisdom of your flesh I mean) all your thoughts shall perish, and goodly plots come to nothing. Indeed, if a Christian, your thoughts as such shall ascend with you, not one holy breathing of your soul lost. Is it your blood and birth? whoever you art, you are base-borne till borne againe, the same blood runs in your veines, with the beggar in the street, Asts 17.26. All Nations there we finde made of the same blood, in two things all are alike, we come in and go out of the world alike; as one is not made of finer earth, so not resolved into purer dust.

Use. 2 Secondly, Is man flesh? trust not in man; Cursed be he that makes flesh his arme. Not the mighty man; robes may hide and garnish, they cannot change flesh, Psal. 146. Put not your trust in Princes; alas, they cannot keep their crownes on their own heads, their heads on their own shoulders, and lookest you for that which they cannot give themselves? Not in wise men, whose designes recoile oft upon themselves, that they cannot performe their enterprise.—Amphora coepit institui currente rot â cur urceus exit. Mans carnal wisdom intends one thing, but God turnes the wheele, and brings forth another. Trust not in holy men, they have flesh, and so their judgement not infallible, yea, their way sometimes doubtful. His mistake may lead you aside, and though he returns, you may go on and perish. Trust not in any man, in all men, no not in your self, you artflesh. He is a fool, (says the Wise man) that trusts his heart. Not in the best you are or doest, the garment of

your righteousnesse is spotted with the flesh; all is counted by Saint Paul, confidence in the flesh, besides our rejoycing in Christ, Philippians 3:3.

Use 3 Thirdly, feare not man, he is but flesh. This was Davids resolv, Psalms 56:4. I will not fear what flesh can do unto me; you need'st not you ought'st not to fear. You need'st not. What, not such a great man, not such a number of men, who have the keyes of all the prisons at their girdle, who can kill or save alive, no, not these, only look they be your enemies for Righteousnesse sake. Take heed you makest not the least child yours enemy, by offering wrong to him, God will right the wicked even upon the Saint. If he offends, he shall finde no shelter under Gods wing for his sin. This made Jerome complain that the Christians sins made the armes of those barbarous Nations which invaded Christendome victorious: Nostris peccatis fortes sunt barbari. But if mans wrath findes you in Gods way, and his fury take fire at your holiness, you needest not feare, though your life be the prey he hunts for. Flesh can only wound flesh, he may kill you, but not hurt you, why shouldest you feare to be stript of that which you have resign'd already to Christ? 'tis the first lesson you learnest, if a Christian, to deny your self, take up your crosse, and follow your Master; so that the enemy comes too late; you have no life to lose, because you have given it already to Christ, nor can man take away that without Gods leave; all you have is ensured; and though God has not promised you immunity from suffering in this kinde, yet he has undertaken to beare your losse, yea, to pay you a hundred fold, and you shalt not stay for it till another world. Again, you ought'st not to feare flesh. Our Saviour, Mat. 10. thrice in the compasse of sixe verses, commands us not to feare man; if your heart quailes at him, how will you be-

have your self in the list against Satan, whose little finger is heavier then mans loines? The Romanes had arma praelusoria; weapons rebated or cudgels, which they were tried at before they came to the sharp. If you can not beare a bruise in your flesh from mans cudgel and blunt weapon, what will you do when you shalt have Satans sword in your side? God counts himself reproached when his children feare a sorry man; therefore we are bid, Sanctifie the Lord, and not to feare their feare. Now if you wouldest not feare man who is but flesh; Labor,

First, to mortifie your own flesh. Flesh only feares flesh: when the soul degenerates into carnal desires and delights, no wonder he falls into carnal feares. Have a care, Christian, you bring'st not your self into bondage: perhaps your heart feeds on the applause of men, this will make you afraid to be evil spoken of, as those who shuffled with Christ, John 12:42. owning him in private when they durst not confesse him openly, for they loved the praise of men; David says, the mouth of the wicked is an open Sepulchre; and in this grave has many a Saints name been buried; but if this fleshly desire were mortified, you would'st not passe to be judg'd by man, and so of all carnal affections. Some meat you observe is aguish; if you settest your heart on any thing that is carnal, wife, child, estate, &c. these will incline you to a base feare of man, who may be Gods messenger to afflict you in these.

Secondly, set faith against flesh. Faith fixeth the heart, and a fixed heart is not readily afraid. Physicians tell us we are never so subject to receive infection as when the spirits are low, and therefore the antidotes they give are all cordials: When the spirit is low

through unbelief, every threatening from man makes sad impression. Let your faith take but a deep draught of the Promises, and your courage will rise.

Fourthly, comfort your self, Christian, with this, that as you are flsh, so your heavenly Father knows it, and considers you for it.

First, in point of affliction, Psalms 103:14. He knows our frame, he remembrs that we are but dust. Not like some unskilful Emperick, who has but one receipt for all, strong or weak, young or old, but as a wise Physician considers his Patient, and then writes his bill: men and devils are but Gods Apothecaries, they make not our physick, but give what God prescribes. Balaam loved Balks see well enough, but could not go an hairs breadth beyond Gods Commission. Indeed God is not so choice with the wicked, Isaiah 27:7. Has he smitten him, as he smote those that smote hm? In a Saints cup the poison of the affliction is corrected, not so in the wickeds, and therefore what is medicine to the one is ruine to the other.

Secondly, in duty; he knows you are but flesh, and therefore pities and accepts your weak service, yea, he makes apologies for you; The Spirit is willing, says Christ, but the flesh is weak.

Thirdly, in temptations he considers you are flesh, and proportions the temptation to so weak a nature: 'tis call'd [illegible], such a temptation as is common to man, a moderate temptation (as in the margin) fitted for so fraile a creature. Whenever the Christian begins to faint under the weight of it, God makes as much haste to his succour, as a tender mother would to her swooning child; therefore he is said to be nigh, to revive such, lest their spirits should faile.

SECT. III.

The second thing follows: The conjuncture of the Saints enemies; We have not to do with naked man, but with man led on by Satan; not with flesh and blood, but Principalities and Powers acting in them. There are two sorts of men the Christian wrestles with, good men and bad. Satan strikes in with both.

First, the Christian wrestles with good men. Many a sharp conflict there has been betwixt Saint and Saint, scuffling in the dark through mis-understanding of the truth, and each other: Abraham and Lot at strife. Aaron and Miriam justled with Moses for the wall, till God interposed and ended the quarrel by his immediate stroak on Miriam. The Apostles even in the presence of their Master, were at high words, contesting who should be greatest. Now in these Civil wars among Saints, Satan is the great kindle-coale, though little seen, because, like Ahab, he fights in a disguise, playing first on one side, and then on the other, aggravating every petty injury, and thereupon provoking to wrath and revenge: therefore the Apostle dehorting from anger, useth this argument, Give no place to the devil; as if he had said, Fall not out among your selves, except you long for the devils company, who is the true souldier of fortune (as the common phrase is.) living by his sword, and therefore hastes there where there is any hope of war. Gregory compares the Saints in their sad differences to two cocks, which Satan the Master of the pit sets on fighting, in hope, when kill'd to sup with them at night. Solomon says, Proverbs 18:6. The mouth of the contentious man calls for stroakes. Indeed we by our mutual strifes give the devil a staffe to beat us with; he cannot well work without fire, and therefore blows up these coales of contention, which he useth as his forge, to heat our spirits into wrath, and then

we are malleable, easily hammer'd as he pleass. Contention puts the soul into disorder, and inter arma silent leges. The Law of grace acts not freely, when the Spirit is in a commotion; Meek Moses provok't, speaks unadvisedly. Me thinks this (if nothing else will) should sound a retreat to our unhappy differences, that this Joab has a hand in them, he sets this evil spirit betwixt brethren, and what folly is it for us to bite and devoure one another to make hell sport? we are prone to mistake our heat for zeal, whereas commonly in strifes between Saints, it is a fire-ship sent in by Satan to break their unity and order; wherein while they stand they are an Armado invincible, and Satan knows he has no other way but this to shatter them: when the Christians language which should be one, begins to be confounded, they are then neare a scattering; 'tis time for God to part his children, when they cannot live in peace together.

Secondly, the Christian wrestles with wicked men. Because you are not of the world, says Christ, the world hates you. The Saints nature and life are Antipodes to the world, fire and water, heaven and hell, may assoon be reconciled as they with it. The Heretick is his enemy for truths sake, the prophane for holiness, to both the Christian is an abomination, as the Israelite to the Egyptian; hence come wars▪ the fire of persecution never goes out in the hearts of the wicked, who say in their hearts as they once with their lips, Christiani ad leones. Now in all the Saints wars with the wicked, Satan is Commander in chief, 'tis their fathers work they do, his lusts they fulfil. The Sabeans plunder'd Job, but went on Satans errand. The Heretick broachs corrupt doctrine, perverts the faith of many, but in that the Minister of Satan, 2 Corinthians 11:15. they have their call, their wiles and wages from him. Persecutors their

work ascribed to hell; is it a persecution of the tongue? 'tis hell sets it on fire; is it of the hand? still they are but the devils instruments, Revelation 2:10. The devil shall cast some of you into prison.

Use, 1 First, do you see any driving furiously against the truths or servants of Christ; O pity them as the most miserable wretches in the world, feare not their power, admire not their parts, they are men possessed of, and acted by the devil, they are his drudges and slaughter-slaves, as a Martyr call'd them. Augustine in his Epistle to Lycinius, one of excellent parts, but wicked, who once was his Scholar, speaks thus pathetically to him: O how I could weep and mourne over you, to see such a sparkling wit prostituted to the devils service! If you had found a golden chalice, you wouldest have given it to the Church, but God has given you a golden head, parts and wit, and in this propinas teipsum Diabolo, you drinkest your self to the devil. When you see men of power or parts, using them against God that gave them, weep over them; better they had lived and died, the one slaves, the other fools, then do the devil such service with them.

Use. 2 Secondly, O ye Saints, when reproached and persecuted, look further then man, spend not your wrath upon him; alas, they are but instruments in the devils hand; save your displeasure for Satan who is your chief enemy, these may be won to Christs side, and so become your friends at last Now and then we see some running away from the devils colours, and washing the wounds with their teares, which they have made by their cruelty. 'Tis a notable passage in Anselme, who compares the heretick and persecutour to the horse, and the devil to the Rider. Now, says he, in battel, when the enemy comes riding up, the valiant souldier, Non irascitur equo, sed equiti, & quantum potest agit ut equitem percutiat,

equum possideat; sic contra malos homines agendum, non contra illos, sed illum qui illos instigat, ut dum Diabolus vincitur, infoelices quos ille possidet liberentur: He is angry not with the horse but horseman, he labors to kill the man that he may possess the horse for his use: Thus must we do with the wicked, we are not to bend our wrath against them, but Satan that rides them, and spurs them on labouring by prayer for them as Christ did on the Crosse, to dismount the devil, that so these miserable souls hackneyed by him may be delivered from him. 'Tis more honor to take one soul alive out of the devils clutches, then to leave many slain upon the field. Erasmus says of Augustine, that he begg'd the lives of those hereticks, at the hands of the Emperours Officers, who had been bloody persecutours of the Orthodox; Cupiebat, says he, amicus medicus superesse, quos arte suâ sanaret: Like a kinde Physician he desired their life, that if possible he might work a cure on them, and make them sound in the faith.

Chapter 3. Wherein Is Shown What a Principality Satan Has, How He Came to Be Such a Prince, and How We May Know Whether We Are Under Him

• • •

VERSE 12._But against Principalities and Powers, &c.

SECT. I.

THe Apostle having shewen what the Saints enemies are not, flesh and blood, fraile men, who cannot come but they are seen, who may be resisted with mans power, or escape by flight; now he describes them Positively, against Principalities, against Powers, &c. Some think the Apostle by these divers names and titles, intends to set forth the distinct orders, whereby the devils are one subordinate to another, so they make the Devil, verse 11. to be the Head or Monarch, and these, verse 12. so many inferiour orders, as among men there are Princes, Dukes, Earles, &c. under an Emperour. That there is an order among the devils cannot be denied. The Scripture speaks of a Prince of devils, Matth. 9. and of the Devil and his Angels, who with him fell from their first station, called his

Angels as it's probably conceived, because one above the rest (as the head of the faction) drew with him multitudes of other into his party, who with him sinned and fell. But that there should be so many distinct orders among them, as there are several branches in this description, is not probable; too weak a notion to be the foundation of a Pulpit-discourse, therefore we shall take them as meant of the devil collectively. We wrestle not with flesh and blood, but devils, who are Principalities, Powers, &c. and not distributively, to make Principalities one rank, Powers another; for some of these branches cannot be meant of distinct orders, but promiscuously of all as spiritual wickednesses; it being not proper to one to be spirits or wicked, but common to all.

First, then the devil or whole pack of them are here described by their Government in this world, Principalities.

Secondly, by their strength and puissance, called Powers.

Thirdly, by their nature in its substance and degeneracy, Spiritual wickednesses.

Fourthly, in their Kingdom or proper Territories, Rulers of the darkness of this world.

Fifthly, by the ground of the war, In heavenly places, or about heavenly things.

First, of the first, Principalities; [illegible], the abstract for the concrete, that is, such as have a Principality; So, Titus 3:1. we are bid to be subject to Principalities and Powers, that is, Princes and Rulers, so the vulgar reades it. We wrestle against Princes, which some will have to express the eminency of their nature above mans, that as the state and spirit of Princes is more raised then others, great men have great spirits, as Zeba and Zalmunna to

Gideon, asking who they were they slew at Tabor; As you art, (say they) so were they, each one resembled the children of a King, that is, for Majesty and Presence beseeming a Princely race; so they think, the eminent nature of Angels here to be intended, who are as far above the highest Prince, as he above the basest peasant; but because they are described by their nature in the fourth branch, I shall subscribe to their judgement, who take this for their Principality of Government, which the devil exerciss in this lower world; and the Note shall be,

That Satan is a great Prince, Christ himself stiles him the Prince of the world, John 14. Princes have their thrones where they sit in state; Satan has his, Revelation 2:13. You dwellest where Satan has his throne; and that such a one as no earthly Prince may compare; few Kings are enthroned in the hearts of their subjects, they rule their bodies, and command their purses, but how oft in a day are they pull'd out of their thrones by the wishes of their discontented subjects: But Satan has the heart of all his subjects. Princes have their homage and peculiar honor done to them; Satan is served upon the knee of his subjects, the wicked are said to worship the devil, Revelation 13:4. No Prince expects such worship as he, no lesse then religious worship will serve him, 2 Chronicles 11:15. Jeroboam there is said to ordain Priests for devils, and therefore he is call'd not only the Prince, but the god of this world, because he has the worship of a god given him. Princes such as are absolute have a Legislative Power, nay, their own will is their law, as at this day in Turkey, where their Laws are writ in no other Tables, then in the proud Sultans breast; thus Satan gives law to the poor sinner, who is bound and must obey, though the Law be writ with his own blood, and the creature has nothing but damna-

tion for fulfilling the devils lust; 'tis call'd a Law of sin, Romans 8:2. because it comes with authority; Princes have their Ministers of State, whom they employ for the safety and enlargement of their Territories: So Satan his, 2 Corinthians 11:15. who propagates his cursed designes, therefore we reade of doctrine of devils. Princes have their Arcana Imperii, which none knowes but a few Favourites in whom they confide: thus the devil has his mysteries of iniquity, and depths of Satan we reade of, which all his subjects know not of, Revelation 2:24 ▪ these are imparted to a few Favourites, such as Elymas, whom Paul calls full of all subtilty, and child of the devil; such, whose consciences are so debauched, that they scruple not the most horrid sins, these are his white boyes. I have read of a people in America, that love meat best when 'tis rotten and stinks. The devil is of their diet, the more corrupt and rotten the creature is in sin, the better he pleass his tooth; some are more the children of the devil then others. Christ had his beloved disciple; and Satan those that lie in his very bosome, and know what is in his heart. In a word, Princes have their Vectigalia, their tribute and custom; so Satan his. Indeed he does not so much share with the sinner in all, but is owner of all he has, so that the devil is the Merchant, and the sinner but the broker to trade for him, who at last puts all his gaines into the devils purse: time, strength, parts, yea, conscience and all spent to keep him in his throne.

SECT. II.

Quest. But how comes Satan to this Principality?

Answ. Not lawfully, though he can show a faire claim. As,

First, he obtained it by Conquest, as he won his crown; so he weares it by power and policy. But conquest is a crack't title. A thief is not the honester, because able to force the traveller to deliver his purse; and a thief on the throne is no better than a private one on the road, or Pyrate in a Pinnace, as he boldly told Alexander. Neither does that prove good with processe of time, which was evil at first: Satan indeed has kept possession long, but a thief will be so as long, as he keeps his stollen goods; He stole the heart of Adam from God at first, and does no better to this day. Christs Conquest is good, because the ground of the war righteous, to recover what was his own, which Satan cannot say of the meanest creature, 'Tis my own.

Secondly, Satan may lay claim to his Principality by Election; 'Tis true he came in by a wile, but now he is a Prince elect, by the unanimous voice of corrupt nature; Ye are of your father the devil, says Christ, and his lusts ye will do. But this also has a flaw in it, for man by law of Creation is Gods subject, and cannot give away Gods right; by sin he loseth his right in God, as a Protectour; but God loseth not his right as a Soveraign. Sin disabled man to keep Gods Law, but it does not enfranchise or dis-oblige him that he need not keep it.

Thirdly, Satan may claim a deed of gift from God himself, as he was bold to do to Christ himself upon this ground, perswading him to worship him as the Prince of the world, Luke 4:5, 6. He showed unto him all the Kingdoms of the world, saying, All this will I give you, for that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it. Where there was a truth, though he spoke more than the truth, (as he cannot speak truth, but to gain credit to some lie at the end of it.) God indeed has delivered in a sense this world to him, but

not in his sense to do what he will with it, nor by any approbatory act given him a Pattent to vouch him his vice-Roy, not Satan by the grace of God, but by the permission of God Prince of the world.

Quest. But why does God permit this Apostate-creature, to exercise such a Principality over the world?

Answ. First, as a righteous act of vengeance on Man, for revolting from the sweet Government of his rightful Lord and Maker; 'Tis the way that God punishs rebellion; Because ye would not serve me with gladnesse in the abundance of all things, therefore ye shall serve your enemies in hunger, &c. Satan is a King given in Gods wrath. Chams curse is mans punishment, a Servant of servants. The devil is Gods slave, man the devils. Sin has set the devil on the creatures back, and now he hurries him without mercy, (as he did the swine) till he be choak't with flames, if mercy interpose not.

Secondly, God permits this his Principality, in order to the glorifying of his Name in the recovery of his Elect from the power of this great Potentate. What a glorious Name will God have when he has finished this war, wherein at first he found all possessed by this enemy, and not a man of all the sons of Adam to offer himself as a Voluntier in this service, till made willing by the day of his Power? this, this will gain God a Name above every name, not only of creatures, but of those by which himself was known to his creature. The workmanship of heaven and earth gave him the Name of Creatour, Providence of Preserver, but this of Saviour, wherein he does both the former, preserve his creature which else had been lost, and create a new creature, I mean the Babe of Grace, which, through God, shall be able to beat the devil out of the field, who was able to drive Adam (though created in his full stature) out of

Paradise, and may not all the other works of God empty themselves as rivers into this sea, losing their names, or rather swelling into one of Redemption? Had not Satan taken Gods Elect prisoners, they would not have gone to heaven with such acclamations of triumph. There are three expressions of a great joy in Scripture; the joy of a woman after her travel, the joy of harvest, and the joy of him that divids the spoil: the exultaton of all these is wrought upon a sad ground, many a paine and teare it costs the travelling woman, many a feare the husbandman, perils and wounds the souldier, before they come at their joy, but at last are paid for all, the remembrance of their past sorrows feeding their present joyes. Had Christ come and entered into affinity with our nature, and return'd peaceably to heaven with his Spouse, finding no resistance; though this would have been admirable love, and that would have afforded the joy of marriage, yet this way of carrying his Saints to heaven will greaten the joy, as it addes to the nuptial Song, the triumph of a Conquerour, who has rescued his Bride out of the hands of Satan, as he was leading her to the chambers of hell.

SECT. III.

Use 1 Is Satan such a great Prince? try whose subject you art. His Empire is large, only a few priviledg'd, who are translated into the Kingdom of Gods dear Son; even in Christs own territories, (visible Church I mean) where his Name is profest, and the Scepter of his Gospel held forth, there Satan has his subjects. As Christ had his Saints in Nero's Court; so the devil his servants in the outward Court of his visible Church. You must therefore have something more to exempt you from his Government, then living within the

pale, and giving an outward conformity to the Ordinances of Christ, Satan will yield to this, and be no loser: As a King lets his Merchants trade to, yea, live in a forreign Kingdom, and while they are there learn the language, and observe the customs of the place; this breaks not their allegiance, nor all that your loyalty to Satan. When a Statute was made in Queen Elizabeths reign, that all should come to Church, the Papists sent to Rome to know the Popes pleasure, he return'd them this answer, (as 'tis said) Bid the Catholicks in England give me their heart, and let the Queen take the rest. His subject you are whom you crownest in your heart, and not whom you flatterest with your lips.

But to bring the trial to an issue, know you belongest to one of these, and but to one, Christ and Satan divide the whole world; Christ will bear no equal, and Satan no Superiour, and therefore hold in with both you can not. Now if you sayest Christ be your Prince, answer to these Interrogatories.

First, how came he into the throne? Satan had once the quiet possession of your heart: you were by birth as the rest of your neighbors, Satans vassal, yea, have oft vouch't him in the course of your life to be your Liege Lord, how then comes this great change? Satan surely would not of his own accord resigne his Crown and Scepter to Christ; and for your self you wert neither willing to renounce, nor able to resist his, power: this then must only be the fruit of Christs victorious armes, whom God has exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, Asts 5.31. Speak therefore, has Christ come to you, as once Abraham to Lot, when prisoner to Kederlaomer, rescuing you out of Satans hands, as he was leading you in chains of lust to hell? Didst you ever hear a voice from heaven in the Ministery of the Word calling out to you, as once to Saul, so as to

lay you at Gods foot, and make you face about for heaven, to strike you blinde in yours own apprehension, who before had a good opinion of your state, to tame and meeken you; so as how you are willing to be led by the hand of a child after Christ? Did ever Christ come to you, as the Angel to Peter in prison, rowsing you up, and not only causing the chaines of darkness and stupidity to fall off your minde and conscience, but make you obedient also, that the iron gate of your Will has opened to Christ before he left you? then you have something to say for your freedom: But if in all this I be a Barbarian, and the language I speak be strange, you knowest no such work to have passed upon your spirit, then you are yet in your old prison; can there be a change of Government in a Nation by a Conquerour that invades it, and the subjects not heare of this? one King unthroned, and another crowned in your soul, and you hear no scuffle all this while? The regenerating Spirit is compared to the winde, John 3:8. His first attempts on the soul may be so secret, that the creature knows not whence they come, or where they tend; but before he has done, the sound will be heard throughout the soul, so as it cannot but see a great change in it self, and say, I that was blinde, now I see; I that was as hard as ice, now relenting for sin; now my heart gives, I can melt and mourne for it. I that was well enough without a Christ, yea, did wonder what others saw in him, to make such a do for him, now have changed my note with the Daughters of Jerusalem; and for what, is your Beloved (as I scornfully have ask't) I have learn't to ask where he is, that I might seek him with you. O soul! can you say 'tis thus with you, you may know who has been here; no lesse then Christ, who by his victorious Spirit has translated you from Satans power into his own sweet Kingdom.

Secondly, whose law doest you freely subject your self unto? the lawes of these Princes are as contrary as their natures; the one a law of sin, Romans 8:2. the other a law of holiness, Romans 7:12. and therefore if sin has not so far bereav'd you of your wits, as not to know sin from holiness, you may, (except resolve to cheat your own soul) soon be resolved; confesse therefore and give glory to God, to which of these laws does your soul set its seal? When Satan sendes out his Proclamation, and bids sinner goe, set your foot upon such a command of God, observe what is your behavior, doest you yield your self, as Paul phrass it, Romans 6:16. [illegible], a metaphor from Princes servants or others, who are said [illegible], to present themselves before their Lord, as ready and at hand to do their pleasure, by which the Apostle elegantly describes the forwardnesse of the sinners heart to come to Satans foot, when knock or call; Now does your soul go out thus to meet your lust, (as Aaron his brother) glad to see its face in an occasion? you are not brought over to sin with much ado, but you likest the command: Transgresse at Gilgal, (says God) this liketh you well, Hosea 4:5. As a Courtier, who does not only obey, but thank his Prince that he'll employ him. Need'st you be long in resolving whose you art? did ever any question, whether those were Jeroboams subjects, who willingly followed his command? Hosea 5:11. Alas, for you, you are under the power of Satan, tied by a chaine stronger than brasse or iron; you lovest your lust. A Saint may be for a time under a force, sold under sin, as the Apostle bemoans, and therefore glad when deliverance comes, but you sellest your self to work iniquity. If Christ should come to take you from your lusts, you wouldest whine after them, as Micah after his gods.

Thirdly, to whom goest you for protection? as it belongs to the Prince to protect his subjects, so Princes expect their subjects should trust them with their safety; the very bramble bids, Iudg. 9.15. If in truth ye anoint me King, then put your trust under my shadow. Now who has your confidence? Darest you trust God with your soul, and the affaires of it in well-doing? Good subjects follow their calling, commit State-matters to the wisdom of their Prince and his Councel; when wrong'd, they appeal to their Prince in his Laws for right; and when they do offend their Prince, they submit to the penalty of the Law; and beare his displeasure patiently, till humbling themselves they recover his favor, and do not in a discontent fall to open rebellion. Thus a gracious soul follows his Christian calling, committing himself to God as a faithful Creatour, to be ordered by his wise Providence. If he meets with violence from any, he scornes to beg aid of the devil to help him, or be his own Judge to right himself; No, he acquiescs in the counsel and comfort the Word of God gives him. If himself offends, and so comes under the lash of Gods correcting hand, he does not then take up rebellious armes against God, and refuse to receive correction, but says, Why should a living man complain? a man for the punishment of his sin; whereas a naughty heart dares not venture his estate, life, credit, or any thing he has with God in well-doing, he thinks he shall be undone presently, if he sits still under the shadow of Gods promise for protection; and therefore he runs from God as from under an old house that would fall on his head, and layes the weight of his confidence in wicked policy, making lies his refuge, like Israel, he trusts in perversenesse, when God, tells him, In returning and rest he shall be saved, in quietnesse and confidence shall be his strength: he has not faith to take Gods

Word for his security in ways of obedience. And when God comes to afflict him for any disloyal carriage, in stead of accepting the punishment for his sin, and so to own him for his Soveraign Lord, that may righteously punish the faults of his disobedient subjects, his heart is fill'd with rage against God, and in stead of waiting quietly and humbly, (like a good subject) till God upon his repentance receives him into his favor, his wretched heart (presenting God as an enemy to him) will not suffer any such gracious and amiable thought of God to dwell in his bosome, but bids him look for no good at his hand. This evil is of the Lord, why should I wait on the Lord any longer? whereas a gracious heart is most encouraged to wait from this very consideration that drives the other away; Because 'tis the Lord afflicts, Micah 7:6.

Fourthly, whom doest you sympathize with? he is your Prince, whose victories and losses you layest to heart, whether in your own bosome, or abroad in the world. What says your soul, when God hedgs up your way, and keeps you from that sin which Satan has been soliciting for? If on Christs side you will rejoyce when you are delivered out of a temptation, though it be by falling into an affliction; as David said of Abigail, so will you here: Blessed be the Ordinance, blessed be the Providence which kept me from sinning against my God; but if otherwise you will harbour a secret grudge against the Word which stood in your way, and be discontented, your designe took not. A naughty heart (like Amnon) pines while his lust has vent, Again, what musick do the atchievements of Christ in the world make in your eare? when you hearest the Gospel thrives, the blinde see, the lame walk, the poor gospellized, does your spirit rejoyce in that hour? If a Saint, you will, as God is your Father, rejoyce you have more brethren borne; as he is your

Prince, that the multitude of his subjects increase; so when you seest the plots of Christs enemies discovered, powers defeated, can you go forth with the Saints to meet King Jesus, and ring him out of the field with praises? or do your bells ring backward, and such newes make you haste like Haman, mourning to yours house, there to empty your spirit swolne with rancour against his Saints and truth? or if your policy can master your passion, so far as to make faire weather in your countenance, and suffer you to joyne with the people of God in their acclamations of joy, yet then are you a close mourner within, and likest the work no better than Haman his office in holding Mordecai's stirrup, who had rather have held the ladder; this speaks you a certain enemy to Christ, how handsomely soever you may carry it before men.

Use 2 Secondly, blesse God, O ye Saints, who upon the former trial can say, you are translated into the Kingdom of Christ, and so delivered from the tyranny of this usurper: There are few but have some one gaudy day in a year which they solemnize; some keep their birth-day, others their marriage; some their manumission from a cruel service, others their deliverance from some imminent danger; here is a mercy where all these meet. You may call it, as Adam did his wife, Chavah, the mother of all the living; every mercy riseth up and calls this blessed; this is your birth-day, you wert before, but beganst to live, when Christ began to live in you, the father of the Prodigal dated his sons life from his returne; This my son was dead, and is alive. It is It is your marriage-day; I have married you to one husband, even Christ Jesus, said Paul to the Corinthians. Perhaps you have enjoyed this your husbands sweet company many a day, and had a numerous off-spring of Joyes and comforts by your fellowship with him, the thought of which cannot

but endeare him to you, and make the day of your espousals delightful to your memory; 'Tis your manumission, then were the Indentures cancell'd, wherein you wert bound to sin and Satan; when the Sonne made you free, you becamest free indeed: You can not say you were borne free, for your father was a slave, nor that you boughtest your freedom with a summe; By grace ye are saved. Heaven is setled on you in the promise, and you not at charge so much as for the writings drawing. All is done at Christ his cost, with whom God indented, and to whom he gave the promise of eternal life before the world began, as a free estate to settle upon every believing soul in the day they should come to Christ, and receive him for their Prince and Saviour; so that from the hour you did come under Christs shadow, all the sweet fruit that grows on this tree of life is yours; with Christ all that both worlds have falls to you: All is yours, because you are Christs. O Christian, look upon your self now, and blesse your God to see what a change there is made in your state, since that black and dismal time, when you wert slave to the Prince of darkness; how couldest you like your old Scullions work again? or think of returning to your house of bondage? now you knowest the priviledges of Christs Kingdoms. Great Princes, who from basenesse and beggery have ascended to Kingdoms and Empires, (to adde to the joy of their present honor) have delighted to speak often of their base birth; to go and see the mean cottages where they were first entertained, and had their birth and breeding, and the like. And 'tis not unuseful for the Christian to look in at the grate, to see the smokie hole where once he lay, to view the chaines wherewith he was laden, and so to compare Christs Court, & the divels prison; the felicity of the one, and the horror of the other together. But when we do our best to affect

our hearts with this mercy by all the inhancing aggravations we can find out. Alas, how little a portion of it shalwe know here? this is a nimium excellens, which cannot be fully seen, unlesse it be by a glorified eye; how can it be fully known by us, where it cannot be fully enjoyed? you are translated into the Kingdom of Christ, but you are a great way from his Court. That is kept in heaven, and that the Christian knows, but as we far countreys which we never saw, only by map, or some rarities that are sent us as a taste of what grows there in abundance.

Use 3 Thirdly, this (Christian) calls for your loyalty and faithful service to Christ, who has saved you from Satans bondage. Say, O ye Saints, to Christ, as they to Gideon, Come you and rule over us, for you have delivered us from the hand, not of Midian, but of Satan. Who so able to defend you from his wrath, as he who broke his power? who like to rule you so tenderly, as he that could not brook anothers tyranny over you? In a word, who has right to you besides him, who ventur'd his life to redeem you? that being delivered from all yours enemies, you may serve him without feare in holiness all the days of your life. And we it not pity that Christ should take all this pains to lift up your head from Satans house of bondage, and give you a place among those in his own house, who are admitted to minister unto him, (which is the highest honor the nature of men or Angels is capable of,) and that you shouldest after all this be found to have a hand in any treasonable practice against your dear Saviour? surely Christ may think he has deserved better at your hands, if at none besides. Where shall a Prince safely dwell, if not in the midst of his own Courtiers; and those such who were all taken from chains and prisons to be thus preferr'd, the more to oblige them in his service? Let devils and devillish men do their

own work, but let not your hand (O Christian) be upon your dear Saviour. But this is too litle to bid you not play the traitour. If you have any loyal blood running in your veines, your own heart will smite you when you rendest the least skirt of his holy Law; you can as well carry burning coales in your bosome, as hide any treason there against your dear Soveraign. No, 'tis some noble enterprise I would have you think upon, how you may advance the Name of Christ higher in your heart, and world too as much as in you lies. O how kindely did God take it, that David (when peaceably set in his throne) was casting about, not how he might entertain himself with those pleasures, which usually corrupt and debauch the Courts of Princes in times of peace, but how he might show his zeal for God, in building a house for his worship, that had rear'd a throne for him, 2 Sam. 7. And is there nothing (Christian) you can think on, wherein you may eminently be instrumental for God in your generation? He is not a good subject that is all for what he can get of his Prince, but never thinks what service he may do for him. Nor he the true Christian, whose thoughts dwell more on his own happiness then the honor of his God. If subjects might chuse what life stands best for their own enjoyment, all would desire to live at Court with their Prince: But because the Princes honor is more to be valued then this: therefore noble spirits (to do their Prince service) can deny themselves the delicacies of a Court, to jeopard their lives in the field, and thank their Prince too for the honor of their employment. Blessed Paul upon these termes was willing to have his day of coronation in glory prorogued, & he to stay as companion with his brethren in tribulation here, for the furtherance of the Gospel. This indeed makes it opera pretium vivere, worth the while to live, that we have by it a faire opportunity,

(if hearts to husband it) in which we may give a proof of our real gratitude to our God, for his redeeming love in rescuing us out of the power of the Prince of darkness, and translating us into the Kingdom of his dear Son. And therefore (Christian) lose no time, but what you meanest to do for God, do it quickly: Art you a Magistrate? now it will be soon seen on whose side you art; if indeed you have renounced allegiance to Satan, and taken Christ for your Prince, declare your self an enemy to all that bear the name of Satan, and march under his colours. Study well your commission, and when you understandest the duty of your place, fall to work zealously for God. You have your Princes sword put into your hand, be sure you use it, and take heed how you usest it; that when call'd to deliver it up, and your account also, it may not be found rusty in the sheath through sloth and cowardise, besmeared with the blood of violence, nor bent and gap't with partiality and injustice. Art you a Minister of the Gospel? your employment is high, an Ambassadour, and that not from some petty Prince, but the great God to his rebellious subjects. A calling so honorable, that the Son of God disdained not to come in extraordinary from heaven to perform it, call'd therefore the messenger of the Covenant; yea, he had to this day stay'd on earth in person about it, had he not been call'd to reside as our Ambassadour and Advocate in heaven with the Father: and therefore in his bodily absence he has intrusted you and a few more to carry on the Treaty with sinners, which when on earth himself began. And what can you do more acceptable to him, then to be faithful in it, as a businesse on which he has set his heart so much? As ever you would see his sweet face with joy, (you that are his Ambassadours) attend to your work, and labor to bring this Treaty of Peace to a blessed issue between God and those you

are sent to. And then if sinners will not come off, and seal the Articles of the Gospel, you shall (as Abraham said to his servant) be cleare of your oath. Though Israel he not gathered, yet you shall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord. And let not the private Christian say he is a dry tree, and can do nothing for Christ his Prince, because he may not bear the Magistrates fruit or Ministers. Though you have not a commission to punish the sins of others with the sword of justice, yet you may show your zeal, in mortifying your own with the sword of the Spirit, and mourne for theirs also: though you may not condemn them on the bench, yet you may, yea, oughtest by the power of a holy life to convince and judge them. Such a Judge Lot was to the Sodomites. Though you are not sent to preach and baptize, yet you may be wonderful helpful to them who are. The Christians prayers whet Magistrates and Ministers sword also. O pray, Christian, and pray again, that Christs Territories may be enlarged; never go to heare the Word, but pray, Your Kingdom come. Loving Princes take great content in the acclamations and good wishes of their subjects as they passe by. A vivat rex, Long live the King, coming from a loyal breath, though poor, is more worth then a subsidy from those who deny their hearts while they part with their money. You servest a Prince (Christian) who knowes what all his subjects think of him, and he counts it his honor, not to have a multitude feinedly submit to him, but to have a people that love him and cordially like his government, who if they were to chuse their King, and make their own lawes they should live under every day would desire no other than himself, nor any other lawes then what they have already from his mouth. It was no doubt great content to David, that he had the hearts of his people so, as Whatever the King did, pleased them all.

And surely God took it as well, that what he did pleased David; for indeed David was as content under the rule and disposure of God as the people were under his; witnesse the calmnesse of his Spirit in the greatest affliction that ever befell him, 2 Samuel 15:26. Behold, here am I, let him do to me as seems good unto him. Loyal soul! he had rather live in exile with the good Will of God, then have his throne, if God will not say 'tis good for him.

Chapter 4. Of the Great Power Satan Has Not Only Over the Elementary and Sensitive Part of the World, but the Intellectual Also — the Souls of Men

• • •

SECT. I.

THis is the Second Branch of the Description, wherein Satan is set forth by his might and Power. This gives weight to the former, were he a Prince, and not able to raise a force that might dread the Saints, the swelling name of Prince were contemptible; but he has power answerable to his dignity, which in five particulars will appear.

First, in his names; Secondly, his nature; Thirdly, his number; Fourthly, his order and unity; Lastly, the mighty works that are attributed to him.

First, for the first, he has names of great power called the strong man, Luke. 11.21. so strong that he keeps his house in peace in defiance of all the sons of Adam, none on earth being able to

cope with this giant: Christ must come from Heaven to destroy him and his works, or the field is lost. He is call'd the roaring lion, which beast commands the whole forrest; If he roares all tremble, yea, in such a manner, as Pliny relates, that he goes amongst them, and they stand exanimated while he chooss his prey without resistance; such a lion is Satan, who leads sinners captive at his will, 2 Timothy 3:26. He takes them alive, as the word is, as the Fowler the bird, which with a little scrap is enticed into the net; or as the Conquerour his cowardly enemy, who has no heart to fight, but yields without contest. Such cowards the devil finds sinners, he no sooner appears in a motion, but they yield; They are but a very few noble spirits and those are the children of the most High God, who dare valiantly oppose him, and in striving against sin resist to blood. He is call'd the great red dragon, who with his taile, wicked men his instruments, sweeps down the third part of the stars of Heaven. The Prince of the power of the aire, because as a Prince can muster his subjects, and draw them into the field for his service, so the devil can raise the posse coeli aërii. In a word, he is call'd the God of this world, 2 Corinthians 4:4. because sinners give him a God-like worship, feare him as the Saints do God himselfe.

Secondly, the devils nature shewes his power: 'Tis Angelical. Blesse the Lord, ye his Angels, that excel in strength, Psalms 103:20. Strength is put for Angels, Psalms 78:25. They did eat Angels food, Heb. the food of the mighty. In two things the power of Angelical nature will appear; In its Superiority, and in its Spirituality.

First, its Superiority, Angels are the top of the Creation; man himself made a little lower than the Angels. Now in the works of Creation, the Superiour has a power over the Inferiour; the beasts over the grasse and herb, man over the beasts, and Angels over man.

Secondly, the Spirituality of their nature. The weakness of man is from his flesh: his soul made for great enterprizes, but weighed down with a lump of flesh, is forced to rowe with a strength suitable to its weak Partner; but now the devils being Angels have no such incumbrance, no sumes from a fleshly part to cloud their understanding, which is clear and piercing; no clog at their heele to retard their motion, which for swiftnesse is set out by the winde and flame of fire. Yea, being spiritual they cannot be resisted with carnal force, fire and sword hurt not them. The Angel which appear'd to Manoah, went up in the fire that consumed the sacrifice, though such has been the dotage, and is at this day of superstitious ones, that they think to charme the devil with their carnal exorcismes; hence the Romish Reliques, Crosse, holy water, yea, and among the Jewes themselves in corrupter times, who thought by their phylacteries and Circumcision, to scare away the devil, which made some of them expound that, Cant. 3.8. of Circumcision, Every man has his sword on his thigh, because of feare in the night. By sword on the thigh, they expound Circumcision, which they will vainly have given as a charme against evil spirits that affright them in the night. But alas, the devil cares for none of these, no, not for an Ordinance of God, when by fleshly confidence we make it a spell: he has been often bound with these fetters and chaines, (as is said of him in the Gospel) and the chaines have been plucked asunder by him, nei-

ther could any man thus tame him. He esteems, as Job says of the Leviathan, iron as straw, and brasse as rotten wood. It must be a stronger than the strong man must binde him, and none stronger but God the Father of spirits. The devil lost indeed by his fall much of his power, in relation to that holy and happy estate in which he was created, but not his natural abilities, he is an Angel still, and has an Angels power.

Thirdly, the number of devils addes to their power. What lighter then the sand? yet number makes it weighty? what creature lesse then lice? yet what plague greater to the Egyptians? How formidable then must devils be, who are both for nature so mighty, and for number such a multitude? there are devils enough to beleaguer the whole earth; not a place under heaven where Satan has not his troops; not a person without some of these cursed spirits haunting and watching him whereever he goes; yea, for some special service he can send a legion to keep garrison in one single person, as, Mark 5. and if so many can be spared to attend one, to what a number would the muster-rolle of Satans whole army amount if known? And now tell me, if we are not like to finde our march difficult to heaven, (if ever we mean to go there) that are to passe through the very quarters of this multitude, who are scattered over the face of all the earth. When armies are disbanded and the roads full of debautch't souldiers, wandering up and down, it's dangerous travelling: we heare then of murders and robberies from all quarters: These powers of hell are that party of Angels, who for their mutiny and disobedience were cashier'd heaven, and thrust out of that glorious host, and ever since they have stragled here below, endeavouring to do mischief to the children of men, especially travelling in heavens road.

Fourthly, their unity and order makes their number formidable. We cannot say there is love among them, that heavenly fire cannot live in a devils bosome, yet there is unity and order as to this, they are all agreed in their designe against God and man: so their unity and consent is knit together by the ligaments, not of love, but of hatred and policy; Hatred against God and his children which they are filled with; and policy, which tells them, that if they agree not in their designe, their Kingdom cannot stand. And how true they are to this wicked brotherhood, our Saviour gives a faire testimony, when he says, Satan fights not against Satan. Did you ever heare of any mutiny in the devils army? or that any of those Apostate Angels did freely yield up one soul to Christ? They are many, and yet but one spirit of wickedness in them all. My name, said the devils, (not our name,) is legion. The devil is call'd the Leviathan, Isaiah 27:1. The Lord with his strong sword shall punish Leviathan, from their cleaving together of [illegible] compact or joyned together, used for the Whale, Jeb 4. whose strength lies in his scales, which are so knit, that he is, as it were, covered with armour. Thus these cursed spirits do accord in their machinations, and labor to bring their instruments into the same league with them, not contented with their bare obedience, but where they can obtain it do require an express oath of their servants to be true to them, as in witches.

Fifthly, the mighty works that are attributed to these evil spirits in Scripture declare their power, and these either respect the elementary, sensible, or intellectual part of the world. The Elementary, what dreadful effects this Prince of the power of the aire is able to produce on that, see in the Word; he cannot indeed make the least breath of aire, drop of water, or spark of fire, but he

can, if let loose, (as Reverend Master Caryl says on Job 1.) go to Gods store-house, and make use of these in such a sort, as no man can stand before him; he can hurle the sea into such a commotion, that the depths shall boile like a pot, and disturb the aire into stormes and tempests, as if heaven and earth would meet. Jobs children were buried in the ruines of their house by a puffe of his mouth, yea, he can go to Gods magazine, (as the former Author says) and let off the great ordnance of heaven, causing such dreadful thunder and lightning, as shall not only affright, but do real execution, and that in a more dreadful way then in the ordinary course of nature. If mans Art can so sublimate nature, as we see in the invention of powder, that has such a strange force, much more able is he to draw forth its power. Again, over the sensitive world his power is great, not only the beasts, as in the herd of swine, hurried by him into the deep; but over the bodies of men also, as in Iob, whose sore boiles were not the breakings out of a distempered nature, but the print of Satans sangs on his flesh, doing that suddenly, which in nature would have required more time to gather and ripen: and the demoniacks in the Gospel grievously vexed and tormented by him. But this the devil counts small game, his great spite is at the souls of men, which I call the Intellectual world, his cruelty to the body is for the souls sake. As Christs pity to the bodies of men, (when on earth) healing their diseases, was in a subserviency to the good of their souls, bribing them with those mercies suitable to their carnal desires, that they might more willingly receiv mercies for their souls, from that hand which was so kind to their bodies, as we give children somthing that pleass them, to perswade them to do something that pleass them not, go to school, learn their book: so the devil who is cruel, as Christ is meek, and

wishs good neither to body nor soul, yet shewes his cruelty to the body, but on a design against the soul, knowing well that the soul is soon discomposed by the perturbation of the other, the soul cannot but lightly heare, (and so have its peace and rest broken by the groanes and complaints of the body) under whose very roof it dwells; and then it is not strange, if as for want of sleep the tongue talk idly, so the soul should break out into some sinful carriage, which is the bottom of the devils plot on a Saint. And as for other poor silly souls, he gaines little lesse then a God like fear and dread of them by that power he puts forth (through divine permission) in smiting their goods, beasts and bodies, as among the Indians at this day. Yea, there are many among our selves plainly show what a throne Satan has in their hearts upon this account, such who, as if there were not a God in Israel, go for help and cure to his Doctours, wizzards I mean. And truly had Satan no other way to work his will on the souls of men, but by this vantage he takes from the body, yet considering the degeneracy of mans state, how low his soul is sunk beneath its primitive extraction, how the body which was a lightsome house is now become a prisoner to it, that which was its servant is now become its Master; it is no wonder he is able to do so much. But besides this, he has as a spirit a neerer way of accesse to the soul, and as a superiour spirit, yet more over man a lower creature. And above all, having got within the soul by mans fall, he has now far more power then before; so that where he meets not resistance from God he carrries all before him: As in the wicked, whom he has so at his devotion, that he is (in a sense) said to do that in them, which God does in the Saints. God works effectually in them, Galatians 2:8. 1 Thes. 2.13. Satan works effectually in the children of disobedience, Ephesians 2:2. [illegible],

the same word with the former places, he is in a manner as efficacious with them, as the holy Spirit with the other. His delusions strong, 2 Thes. 2.11. They return not re infectâ. The Spirit enlightens, he blindes the mindes of those that believe not, 2 Corinthians 4:4. The Spirit fills the Saints, Ephes. 5.18. Why has Satan filled your heart, says Peter to Ananias, Acts. 5.3. The Spirit fills with knowledge, and the fruits of righteousnesse; Satan fills with envy and all unrighteousnesse. The holy Spirit fills with comfort; Satan the wicked with terrours: As in Saul vexed by an evil spirit; and Iudas, into whom 'tis said he entered, and when he had satisfied his lust upon him, (as Amnon on Tamar) shuts the door of mercy upon him, and makes him that was even now Traitour to his Master, Hangman to himselfe. And though Saints be not the proper subjects of his power, yet they are the chief objects of his wrath, his foot stands on the wickeds back, but he wrestles with these, and when God steps aside, he is far above their match: He has sent the strongest among them home, trembling and crying to their God, with the blood running about their consciences. He is mighty, both as a tempter to and for sin, knowing the state of the Christians affairs so wel, & able to throw his fire-bals so far into the inward senses, (whether they be of lust or horrour) and to blow up these with such unwearied solicitations, that if they at first meet not with some suitable dispositions in the Christian, at which (as from loose cornes of powder) they may take fire, (which is most ordinary) yet in time he may bring over the creature by the length of the siege, and continued volleys of such motions, to listen to a parley with them, if not a yielding to them. Thus many times he even wearies out the soul with importunity.

SECT. II.

Use 1 First, let this (O man make the plumes of your pride fall, whoever you are that gloriest in your power; had you more than you or any of the sons of Adam ever had, yet what were all that to the power of these Angels? Is it the strength of your body you gloriest in? Alas, what is the strength of frail flesh, to the force of their spiritual nature? you are no more to these then a child to a giant, a worme to a man: who could tear up the mountaines, and hurle the world into a confusion, if God would but suffer them. Is it the strength of your parts above others? doest you not see what fooles he makes of the wisest among men? winding them about as a Sophister would do an Idiot, making them believe light is dark, bitter is sweet, and sweet bitter; were not the strength of his parts admirable, could he make a rational creature as man is, so absurdly throw away his scarlet, and embrace dung: I mean, part with God and the glorious happiness he has in him, in hope to mend himself, by embracing sin? Yet this he did when man had his best wits about him in innocency. Is it the power of place and dignity got by warlike atchievement? Grant you wert able to subdue Nations, and give lawes to the whole world, yet even then without grace from above you wouldest be his slave. And he himselfe for all this his power is a cursed spirit, the most miserable of all Gods creatures, and the more because he has so much power to do mischief; had the devil lost all his Angelical abilities, when he fell, he had gained by his losse. Therefore tremble (O man) at any power you have, except you usest it for God. Art strong in body? who has your strength? God, or your lusts? some are strong to drink, strong to sin, Your bands shall therefore be stronger, Isaiah 28:22. Have you power by your place to do God and his Church service, but no

heart to lay it out for them, but rather against them? you and the devil shall be tried at the same bar, it seems you meanest to go to hell for something, you will carry your full lading there. No greater plague can befall a man then power without grace. Such great ones in the world, while here, make a brave show, like chief Commanders and field-Officers at the head of their Regiments, the common souldiers are poor creatures to them; but when the Army is beaten, and all taken prisoners, then they fling off their scarfe and feather, and would be glad to passe for the meanest in the army. Happy would devils be, Princes and great ones in the world be, if then they could appear in the habit of some poor sneaks to receiv their sentence as such, but then their titles, and dignity, and riches shall be read, not for their honor, but further shame and damnation.

Us;e 2 Secondly, it shewes the folly of those that think it is such an easie matter to get heaven. If the devil be so mighty, and heavens way so full of them, then sure it will cost hot water before we display our banners upon the walls of that new Ierusalem. Yet it is plain many think otherwise by the provision they make for their march. If you should see a man walking forth without a cloak, or with a very thin one, you will say, Surely he fears no foule weather, or one riding a long journey alone and without armes, you will conclude he expects no thieves on the road. All (if you ask them) will tell you they are on their way to heaven, but how few care for the company of the Saints, as if they needed not their fellowship in their journey? Most go naked, without so much as any thing like armour, have not enough to gaine the name of Professours at large; others, it may be, will show you some vaine slighty hopes on the mercy of God, without any Scripture-bottom for the same, and

with these content themselves, which will like a rusty unsound pistol flie in their own face, when they come to use it, and is it any wrong to say these make nothing of getting heaven? Surely these men, (many of whom thrive so well in the world) never got their estates with so little care as they think to get heaven. Ask them why they follow their trade so close, they will tell you estates are not got by sleeping, families are not provided for with the hands in the pocket, they meet with many rooks and cheaters in their dealing, who should they not look to themselves would soon undo them: and are there none that you needest feare will put a cheat on your soul, and bereave you of your crown of glory if they can? you are blinder then the Prophets servant, if you seest not more devils encompassing you then he saw men about Samaria. Your worldly trade they will not hinder, nay, may be help you to sinful tricks in that to hinder you in this: but if once you resolvest to seek out for Christ and his grace, they will oppose you to your face; they are under an oath, as Pauls enemies were, to take away the life of your soul if they can; desperate creatures themselves, who know their doom is irrecoverable, and sell their own lives they will as dear as they can. Now what folly is it to betray your soul into their hands, when Christ stands by to be your convoy? out of him you are a lost creature, you can not defend your self alone against Satan, nor with Satan against God. Close with Christ, and you are delivered from one of your enemies, and him the most formidable, God I mean: yea, he is become your friend, who will stick close to you in your conflict with the other.

Us;e 3 Thirdly, to the Saints; be not ye dismayed at this report which the Scripture makes of Satans power. Let them feare him who feare not God. What are these mountains of power and pride

before you, O Christian, who servest a God that can make a worme thresh a mountain? the greatest hurt he can do you, is by nourishing this false fear of him in your bosome: It is observed (Bernard says) of some beasts in the forrest, Plerunque superant leonem ferientem, quae non sustinent rugientem: Though they are too hard for the Lion in fight, yet tremble when he roares, Thus the Christian ▪ when he comes to the pinch indeed, is able through Christ to trample Satan under his feet, yet before the conflict stands trembling at the thought of him. Labor therefore to get a right understanding of Satans power, and then this Lion will not appear so fierce, as you paint him in your melancholy fancy. Three considerations will relieve you, when at any time you are beset with the feares of his power.

First, it is a derived power; he has it not in himself, but by pattent from another, and that no other but God: All powers are of him, whether on earth or in hell. This truth subscribed in faith would first sccure you (Christian) that Satans power shall never hurt you. Would your Father give him a sword to mischief you his child? I have created the Smith (says God) that blows the coales, I have created the waster to destroy, and therefore assures them, that no weapon formed against them shall prosper, Isaiah 54:16, &c. If God provides his enemies armes, they shall (I warrant you) be such as will do them little service. When Pilate thought to scare Christ, with what he could do towards the saving or taking away of his life, he replies, that he could do nothing except it were given from above, Iohn 19.10. as if he had said, Do your worst, I know who seal'd your commission,

Secondly, this considered, would meeken and quiet the soul, when troubled by Satan within, or his instruments without; 'Tis Satan buffets, man persecutes me, but God who gives them both power. The Lord (says David) bids him curse. The Lord (says Iob) has given, and the Lord has taken. This kept the Kings peace in both their bosomes. O Christian, look not on the Jayler that whips you, may be he is cruel, but reade the warrant, who wrote that, and at the bottome you shalt finde your Fathers hand.

Secondly, Satans power is limited, and that two ways; he cannot do what he will, and he shall not do what he can.

First, he cannot do what he will. His desires are boundlesse, they walk not only to and fro here below, but in heaven it self, where he is pulling down his once fellow-Angels, knocking down the carved-work of that glorious Temple, as with axes and hammers, yea, unthroning God, and setting himself in his place, this foole says in his heart, There is no God; but he cannot do this, nor many other things which his canker'd malice stirres him up to wish; he is but a creature, and so has the length of his Tedder to which he is staked and cannot exceed; and if God be safe then you also, for your life is hid with Christ in God; If I live (says Christ) you shall live also. You are engraven on the table of his heart, if he plucks one away, he must the other also. Again, as he cannot hurt the being of God, so he cannot pry into the boseme of God. He knowes not mans, much lesse the thoughts of God. The Astrologers nor their Master could bring back Nebuchadnezzars dream. As men have their closets for their own privacy, where none can enter in but with their Key: so God keeps the heart as his withdrawing room, shut to all besides himself, and therefore when he takes upon him to foretel events: if God teach him not his lesson, nor

second causes help him, he is beside his book; so to save his credit, delivers them dubiously, that his text may beare a glosse suitable to the effect whatever it is. And when he is bold to tell the state of a person, there is no weight to be laid on his judgment. Job was an hypocrite in his mouth, but God proved him a liar. Again, thirdly, he cannot-hinder those purposes and counsels of God he knows. He knew Christ was to come in the flesh and did his worst, but could not hinder his landing, though there were many devices in his heart, yet the counsel of the Lord concerning him did stand, yea, was delivered by the midwifery of Satan suggesting, and his instruments executing his lust as they thought, but fulfilling Gods counsel against themselves. Fourthly, he cannot ravish your will, Diabolus non est jussor vitiorum, sed incentor. He cannot command you to sin against your will; he can motum agere, make the soul go faster, that is, on its way, as the winde carries the tide with more swiftnesse, but he cannot turn the stream of the heart contrary to its own course and tendency.

Secondly, Satans power is so limited, that he shall not do what he can. God lets out so much of his wrath as shall praise him, and be as a stream to set his purpose of love to his Saints on work, and then lets down the flood-gate by restraining the residue thereof; God ever takes him off before he can finish his work on a Saint. He can (if God suffers him) rob the Christian of much of his joy, and disturb his peace by his cunning insinuations, but he is under command; he stands like a dog by the Table while the Saints si at this sweet fest of comfort▪ but dares not stir to roam off their cheer, his Masters eye is on him. The want of this consideration loseth God his praise, and us our comfort, God having lock't up our comfort in the performance of our duty. Did the Christian consider what

Satans power is, and who damms it up; This would alwayes be a Song of praise in his mouth. Has Satan power to rob and burn, kill and slay, torment the body, distress the minde? whom may I thank that I am in any of these out of his hands? does Satan love one better than Job? or am I out of fight, or beside his walk? is his courage cool'd, or his wrath appeas'd, that I scape so well? no, none of these, his wrath is not against one, but all the Saints; his eye is on you, and his arme can reach you; his spirit is not cow'd, nor his stomach stay'd with those millions he has devoured, but keen as ever; yea, sharper, because now he sees God ready to take away, and the end of the world drawing on so fast. 'Tis your God alone whom you are beholden to for all this, his eye keeps you; when Satan finds the good man asleep, then he finds our good God awake; therefore you are not consumed, because he changs not. Did his eye slumber or wander one moment, there would need no other flood to drown you, yea, the whole world, then what would come out of this dragons mouth.

Thirdly, Satans power is ministerial, appointed by God for the service and benefit of the Saints: 'Tis true (as its said of the proud Assyrian,) be weans not so, neither does his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy those he tempts: but no matter what he thinks: as Luther comforted himself, when told what had passed at the diet at Noremburg against the Protestants, that it was decreed one way there, but otherwise in heaven; so for the Saints comfort, the thoughts which God thinks to them are peace, while Satans are ruine to their graces, and destruction to their souls; and his counsel shall stand in spite of the devil. The very mittimus which God makes, when he commits any of his Saints to the devils prison, runs thus, Deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the

flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus, 1 Corinthians 5:5. so that tempted Saints may say, we had perished if we had not perished to our own thinking. This Leviathan, while he thinks to swallow them up, is but sent of God, (as the whale to Jonah) to waft them safe to land. Some of them of understanding shall fall to try them, and to purge them, and to make them white, Daniel 11:35. This God intends when he lets his children fall into temptation, as we do with our linnen, the spots they get at our feasts are taken out by washing, rubbing and laying them out to bleech. The Saints spots are most got in peace, plenty and prosperity, and they never recover their whitenesse to such a degree as when they come from under Satans scouring. We do too little, not to feare Satan, we should comfort our selves with the usefulnesse and subserviency of his temptations to our good. All things are yours, who are Christs. He that has given life to be yours, has given death also. He that has given heaven for your inheritance, Paul and Cephas, his Ministers and Ordinances to help you there; has given the world with all the afflictions of it, yea, the Prince of it too, with all his wrath and power in order to the same end. This indeed is love and wisdom in a riddle, but you who have the Spirit of Christ can unfold it.

Chapter 5. Of the Time When, the Place Where, and the Subjects Whom Satan Rules

• • •

These words contain the third Branch in the Description of our great enemy the devil; and they hold forth the proper seat of his Empire, with a threefold boundary; he is not Lord over all, that is, the incommunicable title of God, but a Ruler of the darkness of this world, where the time, place, and subjects of his Empire are stinted.

1. The time when this Prince has his rule, In this world, that is, now, not hereafter.

2. The place where he rules, In this world, that is, here below, not in heaven.

3. The subjects or persons whom he rules, not all in this lower world neither: and they are wrap't up in these words: The darkness of this world. First, of the first boundary.

SECT.

The time when he rules: so this word (world) may be taken in the text for that little spot of time, which (like an inconsiderable parenthesis) is clasp't in on either side with vast eternity; call'd sometimes the present world. On this stage of time this mock-King acts the part of a Prince, but when Christ comes to take down this scaffold at the end of this world, then he shall be degraded, his crown taken off, his sword broke over his head, and he hist off with scorne and shame; yea, of a Prince become a close prisoner in hell; no more than shall he infest the Saints, no nor rule the wicked: but he with them, and they with him, shall lie under the immediate execution of Gods wrath, for this very end Christ has his Pattent and Commission, which he will not give up, till he shall have put down all rule, then and not till then will he deliver up his Oeconomical Kingdom to his Father, when he shall have put down all rule; for he must reign till he has put all enemies under his feet. Satan is cast already, his doom is past upon him, as Adams was upon his first sin, but full execution is stayed till the end of the world. The devil knows it, it is an Article in his Creed, which made him trembling ask Christ why he came to torment him before his time.

Use 1 First, this brings ill newes to the wicked. Your Prince cannot long sit in his throne, sinners at present have a merry time of it, if it would hold; they rejoyce, while Christs disciples weep and mourne; they ruffle in their silkes, while the Saint goes in his rags. Princes are not more careful to oblige their Courtiers with pensions and preferments, then the devil is to gratifie his followers. He has his rewards also; All this will I give you; Am not I able to promote you, says Balak to Balaam? O 'tis strange, (and yet not strange, considering the degeneracy of mans nature) to see how Satan carries sinners after him with this golden hook. Let him but

present such a bait as honor, pelfe or pleasure, and their hearts skip after it, as a dog would at a crust; he makes them sin for a morsel of bread: O the naughty heart of man loves the wages of unrighteousnesse, (which the devil promiss) so dearly, that it feares not the dreadful wages which the great God threatens. As sometimes you shall see a Spaniel so greedy of a bone, that he'll leap into the very river for it, if you throw it there, and by that time he comes with much ado there, 'tis sunk, and he gets nothing but a mouth-full of water for his pains; Thus sinners will after their desired pleasures, honours and profits, swimming through the very threatenings of the Word to them, and sometimes they lose even what they gaped for here. Thus God kept Balaam, (as Balak told him) from honor, Numb. 24.11. But however they speed here, they are sure to lose themselves everlastingly without repentance. They that are resolved they will have these things, are the men that fall into the devils snare, and are led into those foolish and hurtful lusts, which will drown them in destruction and perdition, 1 Timothy 6:9. O poor sinners! were it not wisdom before you truck with the devil, to enquire what title he can give you to these goodly vanities? will he settle them as a free estate upon you? can he secure your bargain and keep you from suits of law? or is he able to put two lives into the purchase, that when you die, you may not be left destitute in another world? Alas, poor wretches! you shall ere long see what a cheat he has put on you, from whom you are like to have nought but Caveat emptor, Let the buyer look to that; yea, this great Prince that is so brag, to tell what he will give you, must down himself: and a sad Prince must needs make a sad Court; O what howling will there then be of Satan and his vassals together! O but, says the sinner, the pleasures and honours sin and Satan of-

fer are present, and that which Christ promiss we must stay for: This indeed is that which takes most. Demas, says Paul, forsook me, having loved this present world, 2 Timothy 4:10. 'Tis present indeed (sinners,) for you cannot say it will be yours the next moment; your present felicity is going, and the Saints (though future,) is coming never to go; and who for a gulpe of pottage, and sensual enjoyments at present, would part with a reversion of such a Kingdom? except you are of his minde, who thought he had nothing, but what he had swallowed down his throat. Haec habeo quae edi, quaeque exaturata libido —Hausit. which Cicero could say, was more fit to be writ on an oxes grave then a mans. Vile wretch, that thinkest 'tis not better to deale with God for time, then the devil for ready pay. Tertullian wonders at the folly of the Romanes ambition, who would endure all manner of hardship in field and fight, for no other thing but to obtain at last the honor to be Consul, which he calls unius anni volaticum gaudium, a joy that flies away at the years end. But O what desperate madnesse is it of sinners then, not to endure a little hardship here, but entaile on themselves the eternal wrath of God hereafter, for the short feast, and running banquet their lusts entertain them here withal: which often is not gaudium unius horae, a joy that lasts an hour.

Use 2 Secondly, let this encourage you, O Christian, in your conflict with Satan, the skirmish may be sharp, but it cannot be long. Let him tempt you, and his wicked instruments trounce you, 'tis but a little while, and you shalt be rid of both their evill neighbourhoods. The cloud while it drops is rolling over your head, and then comes faire weather, an eternal Sunshine of glory. Canst you not watch with Christ one hour or two? keep the field a few days? if yield, you are undone for ever; persevere but while the battel is

over, and yours enemy shall never rally more; bid faith look through the Key-hole of the promise, and tell you what it sees there laid up for him that overcomes: bid it listen and tell you whether it cannot hear the shout of those crowned Saints, as of those that are dividing the spoile, and receiving the reward of all their services and sufferings here on earth: and doest you stand on the other side, afraid to wet your foot with those sufferings and temptations, which like a little plash of water, run between you and glory?

SECT. II.

Secondly, the devils Empire is confined to place as well as time: he is the Ruler of this lower world, not of the heavenly. The highest the devil can go is the aire, call'd the Prince thereof, as being the utmost marches of his Empire, he has nothing to do with the upper world. Heaven feares no devil, and therefore its gates stand alwayes open; never durst this fiend look into that holy place since he was first expell'd, but rangs to and fro here below as a vagabond creature, excommunicated the presence of God, doing what mischief he can to Saints in their way to heaven; but is not this matter of great joy, that Satan has no power there, where the Saints happiness lies? What have you (Christian) which you needest value that is not there? Your Christ is there, and if you lovest him, your heart also, which lives in the bosome of its beloved. Your friends, and kindred in Christ are there, or expected; with whom you shalt have a merry meeting in your Fathers house, notwithstanding the snare on Tabor, the plots of Satan which lie in the way. O friends get a title to that Kingdom, and you are above the flight of this Kite. This made Job a happy man indeed, who when the devil had

plundered him to his skin, and worried him almost out of that too, could then vouch Christ in the face of death and devils to be his Redeemer, whom he should with those eyes, that now stood full with brinish teares, behold, and that for himself as his own portion. It is sad with him indeed, who is robbed of all he is worth at once, but this can never be said of a Saint. The devil took away Jobs purse, (as I may say) which put him into some straits, but he had a God in Heaven that put him into stock again. Some spending money you have at present in your purse, in the activity of your faith, the evidence of your son-ship, and comfort flowing from the same, enlargement in duty and the like, which Satan may for a time disturb, yea, deprive you of but he cannot come to the rolls, to blot your name out of the book of life; he cannot null your faith, make void your relation, dry up your comfort in the Spring, though dam up the stream; nor hinder you a happy issue of your whole war with sin, though worst you in a private skirmish; these all are kept in Heaven, among Gods own Crown-Jewels, who is said to keep us by his power through faith unto salvation.

SECT. III.

The third boundary of the devils Principality is in regard of his subjects, and they are described here to be the darkness of this world, that is, such who are in darkness. This word is used sometimes to express the desolate condition of a creature in some great distress, Isa 150. He that walks in darkness, and sees no light; sometimes to express the nature of all sin; so, Ephesians 5:1. sin is called the work of darkness; sometimes the particular sin of ignorance; often set out by the darkness of the night, blindness of the eye, all these I conceive may be mean't, but chiefly the latter; for

though Satan makes a foule stir in the soul; that is, in the dark of sorrow, whether it be from outward crosses or inward desertions; yet if the creature be not in the darkness of sin at the same time, though he may disturb his peace as an enemy, yet cannot be said to rule as a Prince. Sin only sets Satan in the Throne; so that I shall take the words in the two latter Interpretations.

First, for the darkness of sin in general.

Secondly, for the darkness of ignorance in special; and the sense will be, that the devils rule is over those that are in a state of sin and ignorance, not over those who are sinful or ignorant, so he would take hold of Saints as well as others; but over those who are in a state of sin, which is set out by the abstract, Ruler of the darkness, the more to express the fulnesse of the sin and ignorance that possesss Satans slaves; and the Notes will be two.

First, Every soul in a state of sin is under the rule of Satan.

Secondly, Ignorance above other sins enslaves a soul to Satan, and therefore all sins are set out by that which chiefly expresss this, viz. darkness.

Every soul in a state of sin is under the rule of Satan; under which point these two things must be enquired.

First, the reason why sin is set out by darkness.

Secondly, how every one in such a state appears to be under the devils rule. For the first,

First, sin may be called darkness, because the spring and common cause of sin in man is darkness. The external cause Satan, who is the great promoter of it, he is a cursed spirit held in chaines of darkness. The internal is the blindness and darkness of the soul:

we may say when any one sins, he does he knowes not what, as Christ said of his murtherers. Did the creature know the true worth of the soul, (which he now sells for a song,) the glorious amiable nature of God and his holy ways, the matchlesse love of God in Christ, the poisonfull nature of sin, and all these not by a sudden beam darted into the window at a Sermon, and gone again, like a flash of lightning, but by an abiding light; this would spoile the devils market, and poor creatures would not readily take this toad into their bosomes; sin goes in a disguise, and so is welcome.

Secondly, it is darkness, because it brings darkness into the soul, and that naturally and judicially.

First Naturally. There is a noxious quality in sin offensive to the understanding, which is to the soul what the eye and palate are to the body; It discernes of things, and distinguishs true from false, as the eye white from black: It tries words as the mouth tasts meats. Now as there are some things bad for the sight, and others bad for the palate vitiating it, so that it shall not know sweet from bitter; so here sin besots the creature, and makes it injudicious, that he who could see such a practice absurd and base in others before, when once he has drunk of this inchanting cup himself, (as one that has for done his understanding) is mad of it himself, not able now to see the evil of it, or use his reason against it. Thus Saul before he had debauch't his conscience, thinks the Witch worthy of death; but after he had trodden his conscience hard with other foule sins, goes to ask counsel of one himself.

Again, sin brings darkness judiciously; such have been threatened, whose eare God has been trying to open and instruct, and have run out of Gods school into the devils, by rebelling against

light, that they shall die without knowledge, Iob 36.10, 12. What should the candle burn were, when the creature has more minde to play then work?

Thirdly, Sin runs into darkness. Impostors bring in their damnable Heresies privily, like those who sell bad ware, loath to come to the Market, where the Standard tries all; but put it off in secret: so in moral wickedness, sinners like beasts go out in the night for their prey, loath to be seen, afraid to come where they should be found out. Nothing more terrible to sinners then light of truth, John 3:19. because their deeds are evil. Felix was so netled with what Paul spoke, that he could not sit out the Sermon, but flings away in haste, and adjourns the hearing of Paul till a convenient season, but he never could finde one. The Sun is not more troublesome in hot Countreys, then truth is to those who sit under the powerful preaching of it; and therefore as those seldome come abroad in the heat of the day, and when they must, have their devices over their heads to skreene them from the Sun; so sinners shun as much as may be the preaching of the Word; but if they must go to keep in with their relations, or for other carnal advantages, they, if possible, will keep off the power of truth, either by sleeping the Sermon away, or prating it away with any foolish imagination which Satan sends to beare them company and chat with them at such a time: or by choosing such a coole Preacher to sit under, whose toothlesse discourse shall rather flatter then trouble, rather tickle their fancy then prick their consciences; and then their sore eyes can look upon the light. Froreseentem amant veritatem qui non redarguentem: they dare handle and look on the sword with delight when in a rich scabbard, who would run away to see it drawn.

Fourthly, Sin is darkness for its uncomfortab'enesse, and that in a threefold respect.

First, Darkness is uncomfortable, as it shuts out of all imployment. What could the Egyptians do under the plague of darkness but sit still? and this to an active spirit is trouble enough. Thus in a state of sin man is an unserviceable creature, he can do his God no service acceptably, spoiles everything he takes in hand, like one running up and down in a shop when windows shut, does nothing right. It maybe writ on the grave of every sinner, who lives and dies in that state, Here lies the man, that never did God an hours work in all his life.

Secondly, Darkness is uncomfortable in point of enjoyment; be there never such rare pictures in the roome, if dark, who the better? A soul in a state of sin may possess much, but enjoyes nothing: this is a sore evil, and little thought of. One thought of its state of enmity to God, would drop bitternesse into every cup; all he has smells of hell fire, and a man at a rich feast would enjoy it sure but little, if he smelt fire, ready to burn his house and himself in it.

Thirdly, Darkness fills with terrours, fears in the night are most dreadfull; a state of sin is a state of fear. Men that owe much, have no quiet, but when they are asleep, and not then neither, the cares and fears of the day sink so deep, as makes their rest troublesome and unquiet in the night. The wicked has no peace, but when his conscience sleeps, and that sleeps but brokenly, awaking often with sick fits of terrour: when he has most prosperity, he is scared like a flock of birds in a corn-field at every piece going off He eats in fear, and drinks in fear; when afflicted, he expects worse behinde, and knows not what this cloud may spread to, and where it

may lay him; whether in hell or not he knows not, and therefore trembles (as one in the dark) not knowing but his next step may be into the pit.

Fifthly, sin leads to utter darkness; utter darkness is darkness to the utmost. Sin in its full height, and wrath in its full heat together; both universal, both eternal. Here's some mixture, peace and trouble, paine and ease; sin and thoughts of repenting, sin and hopes of pardon; there the fire of wrath shall burn without slacking, and sin run parallel with torment; hell-birds are no changelings; their torment makes them sin, and their sin feeds their torment, both unquenchable, one being fuel to another.

Secondly, let us see how it appears, that such as are under a state of sin, are under the rule of Satan. Sinners are call'd the children of the devil, 1 John 3:10. and who rules the child but the Father? they are slaves; who rules the slave but the Master? they are the very mansion-house of the devil; where has a man command, but in his own house? I will go to my house, Matthew 12:44. As if the devil had said, I have walk't among the Saints of God, to and fro, knocking at this door and that, and none will bid me welcome, I can finde no rest; well. I know where I may be bold; I'le even go to my own house, and there I am sure to rule the roste without controul; and when he comes, he findes it empty, swept and garnished; that is, all ready for his entertainment. Servants make the house trim and handsom against their Master come home, especially when he brings guests with him, as here the devil brings seven more. Look to the sinner, there is nothing he is or has, but the devil has dominion over it: He rules the whole man, their mindes blinding them. All the sinners apprehension of things are shaped by Satan: he looks on sin with the devils spectacles: he

reads the Word with the devils comment: he sees nothing in its native colours, but is under a continual delusion. The very wisdom of a wicked man is said to be devillish, James 3:15. [illegible], or devil-like, because taught by the devil, and also such as the devils is, wise only to do evil. He commands their Wills, though not to force them, yet effectually to draw them. His work (says Christ) ye will do. You are resolved on your way, the devil has got your hearts, and him you will obey: and therefore when Christ comes to recover his throne, he findes the soul in an uproare, as Ephesus at Pauls Sermon, crying him down, and Diana up. We will not have this man reigne over us, what is the Almighty that we should serve him? He rules over all their members, they are call'd weapons of unrighteousness, all at the devils service; as all the armes of a Kingdom, to defend the Prince against any that shall invade. The head to plot, the hand to act, the feet swift to carry the body up and down about his service; He rules over all he has. Let God come in a poor member, and beseech him to lend him a penny, or bestow a morsel to refresh his craving bowels; and the covetous wretch his hand of charity is withered, that he cannot stretch it forth; but let Satan call, and his purse flies open and heart also. Nabal that could not spare a few fragments for David and his followers, this churle could make a feast like a Prince, to satiate his own lust of gluttony and drunkennesse. He commands their time, when God calls to duty, to pray, to hear, no time all the week to be spared for that; but if the sinner hears there is a merry meeting, a knot of good fellows at the Alehouse; all is thrown aside to wait on his Lord and Master; calling left at six and sevens, yea, wife and children crying, (may be starving) while the wretch is pouring out their very blood, (in wasting their livelihood) at the foot of his lust. The sinner is in

the bond of iniquity, and being bound he must obey. He is said to go after his lust, as the fool to the stocks, Proverbs 7:22. The pinion'd malefactour can assoon untie his own armes and legs, and so run from his Keeper, as he from his lusts. They are servants, and their members instruments of sin: even as the Workman takes up his axe and it resists not; so does Satan dispose of them, except God says nay.

See here the deplored condition of every one in a state of sin. He is under the rule of Satan, and government of hell, What tongue can utter, what heart can conceive the misery of this state? It was a dismal day which Christ foretold, Matth. 24. When the abomination of desolation should be seen, standing in the Holy place; then (says Christ) let him that is in Judea flee into the mountains. But what was that to this? they were but men, though abominable; these devils. They did but stand in the material Temple, & defile and deface that: but these display their banners in the souls of men, pollute that throne, which is more glorious then the material heaven it self, made for God alone to sit in. They exercised their cruelties at furthest on the bodies of men, killing and torturing them: here the precious souls of men are destroyed. When David would curse to purpose the enemies of God, he prayes, that Satan may be at their right hand. 'Tis strange sinners should no more tremble at this, who should they see but their swine, or a beast bewitch't and possest of the devil run headlong into the sea, would cry out as half undone: and is not one foul more worth then all these? what a plague is it to have Satan possess your heart and spirit, hurrying you in the fury of your lusts to perdition? O poor man! what a sad change have you made? You who wouldest not sit under the meek and peaceful Government of

God your rightful Lord, are paid for your rebellion against him, in the cruelty of this Tyrant who writes all his Lawes in the blood of his subjects, and why will you sit any longer, (O sinners) under the shadow of this Bramble, from whom you can expect nothing but eternal fire, to come at last and devoure you? Behold, Christ is in the field, sent of God to recover his right, and your liberty. His royal Standard is pitch't in the Gospel, and Proclamation made, that if any poor sinners, weary of the devils Government, and heavy laden with the miserable chaines of his spiritual bondage, (so as these irons of his sins enter into his very soul to afflict it with the senfe of them) shall thus come, and repair to Christ: he shall have protection from Gods justice, the devils wrath, and sins dominion; In a word,he shall have rest, and that glorious. Usually when a people have been ground with the oppression of some bloody Tyrant, they are apt enough to long for a change, and to listen to any overture that gives them hope of liberty, though reached by the hand of a stranger, who may prove as bad as the other, yet bondage is so grievous, that people desire to change, (as sick men their beds) though they finde little ease thereby. Why then should deliverance be unwelcome to you, sinners? Deliverance brought not by a stranger whom you need feare, what his designe is upon you; but your near Kinsman in blood, who cannot mean you ill, but he must first hate his own flesh; and whoever did that? To be sure not he, who though he took part of our flesh, that he might have the right of being our Redeemer: yet would have no kindred with us in the sinfulnesse of our nature. And 'tis sin that makes us cruel, yea, to our own flesh. What can you expect from him but pure mercy, who is himself pure? They are the mercies of the wicked which are cruel. Believe it (Sirs) Christ counts it his honor, that he

is a King of a willing people, and not of slaves. He comes to make you free, not to bring you into bondage; to make you Kings, not vassals. None give Christ an evil word, but those who never were his subjects. Enquire but of those who have tried both Satans service and Christs; they are best able to resolve you what they are. You see when a soul comes over from Satans quarters unto Christ, and has but once the experience of that sweetnesse which is in his service, there is no getting him back to his old drudgery, as they say of those, who come out of the North, (which is cold and poor) they like the warme South so well, they seldome or never go back more. What more dreadful to a gracious soul then to be delivered into the hands of Satan? or fall under the power of his lusts? It would choose rather to leap into a burning furnace, then be commanded by them. This is the great request a child of God makes, that he would rather whip him in his house, then turne him out of it to become a prey to Satan. O sinners, did you know (which you cannot till you come over to Christ and embrace him as your Lord & Saviour) what the priviledges of Christs servants are, & what gentle usage Saints have at Christs hands, you would say those were the only happy men in the world, which stand continually before him. His lawes are writ, not with his subjects blood, (as Satans are) but with his own. All his commands are acts of grace; 'tis a favor to be employed about them. To you 'tis given to believe, yea, to suffer. Such an honor the Saints esteem it to do any thing he commands, that they count God rewards them for one piece of service, if he enables them for another. This I had, (says David) because I kept your Precepts, Psalms 119:56. what was the great reward he got? see, v. 55. I have remembred your Name, O Lord, in the night, and kept your Law; then followes, This I had: He got more

strength and skill to keep the Law for the future, by his obedience past, and was he not well paid (think you for his pains? There's fruit even in holiness, the Christian has in hand, which he eats while he is at work, that may stay his stomach until the full reward comes, which is eternal life, Romans 6:22. Jesus Christ is a Prince that loves to see his people thrive, and grow rich under his Government. This is he whom sinners are so afraid of, that when he sets open their prison, and bids them come forth, they choose rather to bore their eares to the devils post, then enjoy this blessed liberty. It is no wonder that some of the Saints have indeed) when tortured, not accepted deliverance,that they might obtain a better resurrection. But what a riddle is this, that forlorne souls bound with the chaines of their lusts, and the irresistible decree of God for their damnation, (if they believe not on the Lord Jesus,) should, as they are driving to execution, refuse deliverance? This may set heaven and earth on wondring. Surely, dying in their sins, they cannot hope for a better resurrection then they have a death. I am afraid rather, that they do not firmly believe they shall have any resurrection; and then no wonder they make so light of Christs offer, who think themselves safe, when once earth't in this burrough of the grave. But let sinners know, 'tis not the grave can hold them, when the day of Assize comes, and the Judge calls for the prisoners to the bar. The grave was never intended to be a Sanctuary to desend sinners from the hand of justice, but a close Prison to secure them against the day of trial, that they may be forth-coming. Then sinners shall be digg'd out of their burroughs, and dragg'd out of their holes to answer their contempt of Christ and his grace. O how will you be astonish't to see him become your Judge, whom you now refuse to be your King? to heare that Gospel

witnesse against you for your damnation, which at the same time shall acquit others for their salvation? what think you to do, sinners, in that day? will you cry and shream for mercy at Christs hands? Alas, when the sentence is past, your face will immediately be covered: condemned prisoners are not allowed to speak: teares then are unprofitable, when no place left for repentance, either in Christs heart or yours own. Or meanest you to apply your self to your old Lord, in whose service you have undone your soul, and cry to him, as she to Ahab, Help, O King: Alas, yours eye shall see him in the same condemnation with your self. Hadst you not better now renounce the devils rule, while you may be received into Christs Government? pour out your tears and cries now for mercy and grace when they are to be had, then to save them for another world to no purpose?

Quest. But possibly, you will say, How may I that am a homeborne slave to sin, yea, who have lived so many years under his cursed rule, get out of his dominion and power, and be translated into the Kingdom of Christ?

Answ. The difficulty of this great work lies not in prevailing with Christ to receive you for his subject, who refuss none that in truth of heart desire to come under his shadow. It does not stand with his designe to reject any such. Do Physicians use to chide their Patients away? Lawyers their Clients? or Generals discourage those who fall off from the enemy, and come to their side? surely no. When David was in the field, 'tis said, 1 Samuel 22:2. Every one that was in distress, in debt, or in discontent gathered themselves to him, and he became a Captain over them. And so will Christ be to every one that is truly discontented with Satans Government, and upon an inward dislike thereof repairs to him. But the maine

businesse will be to take you off from your engagements to your lusts and Satan, till which be done, Christ will not own you as a subject, but look on you as a Spy. It fares with sinners as with servants. There may be fallings out between them and their Masters, and high words passe between them, that you would think they would take up their pack and be gone in all haste: but the fray is soon over, and by next morning all is forgot, and the servants are as hard at their work as ever. O how oft are sinners taking their leave of their lusts, and giving warning to their old Masters, they will repent and reform, and what not? but in a few days they have repented of their repentance, and deformed their reformings, which shewes they were drunk with some passion, when they thought or spoke this; and no wonder they reverse all when they come to their true temper. Now because Satan has many policies, by which he useth to keep his hold of sinners; I shall discover some of them, which if you can withstand, it will be no hard matter to bring you out of his power and rule.

First, Satan does his utmost, that sinners may not have any serious thoughts of the miserable state they are in, while under his rule; or heare any thing from others, which might the least unsettle their mindes from his service. Consideration (he knowes) is the first step to repentance: He that does not consider his ways what they are, and where they lead him, is not like to change them in haste. Israel stirr'd not, while Moses came, and had some discourse with them about their woful slavery, and the gracious thoughts of God towards them; and then they begin to desire to be gone. Pharaoh soon bethought him what consequence might follow upon this, and cunningly labors to prevent by doubling their task: Ye are idle, ye are idle, therefore ye say, Let us go, and do sac-

rifice to the Lord. Go thorefore and work, Exodus 5:17, 18. As if he had said, Have you so much spare time to think of gadding into the wilderness, and have you your seditious Conventicles, (Moses and you) to lay your plots together? I'le break the knot, give them more work, scatter them all over the land to gather straw, that they may not meet to entice one anothers hearts from my service. Thus Satan is very jealous of the sinner, afraid every Christian that speaks to him, or Ordinance he hears should inveigle him. By his good-will he should come at neither, no, nor have a thought of heaven or hell from one end of the week to the other, and that he may have as few as may be, he keeps him full-handed with work. The sinner grindes, and he is filling the hopper, that the Mill may not stand still. He is with the sinner as soone as he wakes, and fills his wretched heart with some wicked thoughts, which as a morning draught may keep him from the infection of any favor of good, that may be breathed on him by others in the day-time. All the day long he watches him, as the Master would do his man, that he feares will run away. And at night he like a careful Jayler locks him up again in his chamber with more bolts and fetters upon him, not suffering him to sleep as he lies on his bed, till he has done some mischief. Ah, poor wretch! was ever slave so look't to? as long as the devil can keep you thus, you are his own sure enough. The Prodigal came to himselfe, before he came to his Father. He considered with himself what a starving condition he was in, his huskes were poor meat, and yet he had not enough of them neither, and how easily he might mend his commons, if he had but grace to go home and humble himself to his Father. Now and not till now he goes: Resolve thus poor sinner to sit down and consider what your state is, and what it might be, if you wouldest but

change the bondage of Satan for the sweet Government of Jesus Christ. First, ask your soul, whether the devil can, after you have worne out your miserable life herein his drudg'ry, prefer you to a happy state in the other world, or so much as secure you from a state of torment and wo? If he cannot, whether there be not one Iesus Christ, who is able and willing to do it? and if so, whether it be not bloody cruelty to your precious soul, to stay any longer under the shadow of this bramble, when you may make so blessed a change? A few of these thoughts abidingly laid home to your soul, (may God striking in with them) shake the foundations of the devils prison, and make you haste as fast from him, as one out of a house on fire about his eares.

2ly. Satan has his instruments to oppose the messengers and overtures, which God sends by them to bring the sinner out of Satans rule. When Moses comes to deliver Israel out of the Egyptian bondage, up start Iannes and Iambres to resist him. When Paul preaches to the Deputy, the devil has his Chaplain at Court to hinder him: Elymas, one that was full of all subtilty and mischief. Some or other (to be sure) he will finde, when God is parlying with a sinner, and perswading him to come over to Christ, that shall labor to clog the work. Either carnal friends, these he sends to plead his cause, or old companions in wickedness, these bestir them, one while labouring to jeer him out of his new way, or if that take not, by turning their old love into bitter wrath against him for playing the Apostate, and leaving him so. Or if yet he will not be stopt in his way, then he has his daubing Preachers, (still like Iobs messengers the last the worst) who with their soul-flattering, or rather murdering doctrine shall go about to heal his wound slightly. Now as ever you desire to get out of Satans bondage, have

a care of all these, harden your self against the entreaties of carnal friends and relations. Resolve, that if your children should hang about your knees to keep you from Christ, you will throw them away. If your father and mother should lie prostrate at your foot, rather than not go to Christ, to go over their very backs to him. Never can we part with their love upon such advantageous termes as these. And for your brethren in iniquity, I hope you doest not mean to stay while you have their good will, then even ask the devils also. Heaven is but little worth if you have not a heart to despise a little shame, and beare a few frumps from prophane Ishmaels for your hopes of it. Let them spit on your face, Christ will wipe it off; let them laugh so you winnest. If they follow not your example before they die, the shame will be their own; God himself shall spit it on their face before men and Angels, and then kick them into hell. And lastly, scape but the snare of those flatterers, who use their tongues only to lick sinners consciences whole with their placentia's soothing doctrine, and you are faire for a Christ; ask not counsel of them, they may go about to give you ease, but all those stitches with which they sowe up your wounds, must be ripp't open, or you diest for it.

Thirdly, Satan labors to while off the sinner with delayes. Floating, flitting thoughts of repenting he feares not, he can give sinners leave to talk what they will do; so he can beg time, and by his Art keep such thoughts from coming to a head, and ripening into a present resolution; few are in hell but thought of repenting; but Satan so handled the matter, that they could never pitch upon the time in earnest when to do it. If ever you meanest to get out of his clutches, flie out of his doors, and run for your life, whereever this warning findes you stay not, though in the midst of your joyes,

with which your lusts entertain you: As the paper which came to Brentius, (from that Senatour his dear friend) took him at supper with his wife and children, and bade him flee citò, citiùs, citissimè; which he did, leaving his dear company and sweet cheere; so do you or else you may repent your stay when 'tis too late. A vision charged the wise men to go back another way, and not so much as see Herod, though he had charged them otherwise. O go not back, drunkard, to your good fellows; adulterer to your Queanes; covetous wretch, to your usury and unlawful gaine: turne another way, and gratifie not the devil a moment. The command says, now repent; the Imperative has no future tense. God says, To day, while it is to day: The devil says, To morrow; which will you obey, God or him? You sayest, you meanest at last to do it, then why not now? Will you stand with God for a day or two, huckle with him for a penny? Heaven is not such a hard pennyworth, but you may come up to his termes: And which is the morrow you meanest? you have but a day in your life for ought you knowest, where then can you find a morrow for repentance? but shouldest you have as many days to come is Methuselah lived, yet know, sin is hereditary, and such sort of diseases grow more upon us with our years. 'Tis with long accustomed sinners, as with those who have sate long under a Government, they rather like to be as they are, (though but ill on it) then think of a change, or like those who in a journey have gone out of their way all the day, will rather take any new way, over-hedge and ditch, then think of going so far back to be set right.

Fourthly, Satan labors to comprimise the businesse, and bring it to a composition between him and Christ: when conscience will not be pacified, then Satan for quiets sake will yield to something, as Pharaoh with Moses: after much ado he is willing they should

go, Exodus 8:28. And Pharaoh said, I will let you go, that you may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness. But then comes in his caution, only you shall not go very farre away. Thus Satan will yield the sinner may pray, and heare the Word, and make a goodly Profession, so he does not go very far, but that he may have him again at night. If God has the mattins, he looks for the vigils, and thus he is content the day should be divided. Does conscience presse a reformation and change of the sinners course, rather than faile, he'll grant that also: yet as Pharaoh when he yielded they should go, he meant their little ones should stay behinde as a pledge for those that went, Exodus 10:11. So Satan must have some one sin that must be spared, and no matter though it be a little one. Now if ever you would get out of the devils rule, make no composition with him. Christ will be King or no King. Not a hoofe must be left behinde, or any thing which may make an errand for you afterwards to return. Take therefore your everlasting farewel of every sin, as to the sincere and fixt purpose of your heart, or you doest nothing. Paul joynes his faith and his purpose togethes, 2 Timothy 3:10. not the one without the other. At the promulgation of the Law in Sinai, God did, as it were, give Israel the oath of Allegiance to him; then he told them what law he would rule them by, and they gave their consent: this was the espousal which God puts them in minde of, Jerem. 2. in which they were solemnly married together, as King and subjects. Now mark, before God would do this, he will have them out of Egypt. They could not obey his lawes, and Pharaoh's idolatrous customs also, and therefore he will have them out, before he solemnly espouss them to be a Nation peculiarly his. You must be a widow before Christ marry you, he will not lie by the side of anothers wife. O that it were come to this!

then the match would soon be made between Christ and you. Let me ask you, poor soul, have you seriously considered who Christ is, and what his sweet Government is? and couldest you finde in your heart (out of an inward abhorrency of sin and Satan, and a liking to Christ) to renounce sin and Satan, and choose Christ for your Lord? Does your soul say as Rebecca, I will go, if I could tell how to get to him. But alas, I am here a poore prisoner, I cannot shake off my fetters, and set my self at liberty to come unto Christ. Well, poor soul, can you groan heartily under your bondage? then for your comfort know, your deliverance is at the door; he that heard the cry of Israel in Egypt, will hear yours also, yea, come and save you out of the hands of your lusts. He will not, as some, who entangle your affections by making love to you, and then give over the suit, and come at you no more. If Christ has won your heart, he'll be true to you, and be at all the cost to bring you out of your prison-house also, yea, take the paines to come for you himselfe, and bring with him these wedding-garments in which he will carry you from your prison to his Fathers house with joy, where you shalt live not only as a subject under his Law, but as a Bride in the bosome of his love, and what can be added to your happiness more? when your Prince is your husband, and that such a Prince to whom all other are vassals, even the Prince of the world himself; and yet so gracious, that his Majesty hinders not his familiar converse with you a poor creature, but addes to the condescent thereof, therefore God chooss to mixe names of greatness and relation together; the one to sweeten the other: Your Maker is your husband, your Redeemer the Holy One of Israel. The God of the whole earth shall he be called, Isaiah 54:5. And to usher in those promises with titles of greatest dread and terrour to the creature,

that hold forth the greatest condescensions of love; How can God stoop lower than to come and dwell with a poor humble soul? which is more, then if he had said such a one should dwell with him; for a beggar to live at Court is not so much as the King to dwell with him in this cottage. Yet this promise is usher'd in with the most magnificent titles; Thus says the high and lofty one, that inhabits eternity, whose Name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, Isaiah 57:15. and why such titles? but to take away the feares, which his Saints are prone to take up from them. Will the high and lofty One, (says the humble soul) look on me a poor worme? will the Holy God come near such an unclean creature, (says the contrite one?) Isaiah himself cried he was undone at the sight of God, and this attribute proclaim'd before him, Isa. 6. Now God prefixs these, that the creature may know his Majesty and holiness, which seems so terrible to us, are no prejudice to his love; yea, so gracious a Prince is your husband, that he delights rather his Saints should call him by names of love, then state. You shalt call me Ishi, and shalt no more call me Baali, Hosea 2:16. that is, my Husband, not my Lord.

SECT. IV.

The second point follows. Ignorance above other sins enslaves a soul to Satan, a knowing man may be his slave, but an ignorant one can be no other. Knowledge does not make the heart good, but it is impossible that without knowledge it should be good. There are some sins which an ignorant person cannot commit, there are more which he cannot but commit: Knowledge is the Key, Luke 11:52. Christ the door, John 15. Christ opens Heaven, Knowledge opens Christ. In three particulars the Point will appear more fully.

First, ignorance opens a doore for sin to enter.

Secondly, as ignorance lets sin in, so it locks it up in the soul, and the soul in it.

Thirdly, as it locks it up, so it shuts all meanes of help out.

First, Ignorance opens the door for Satan to enter in with his troops of lusts; where the watch is blinde, the City is soon taken: an ignorant man sins, and like drunken Lot, he knowes not when the tempter comes, nor when he goes: he is like a man that walks in his sleep, knowes not where he is, nor what he does. Father, forgive them, (said Christ) they know not what they do. The Apostle, 1 Cor. 15. having reproved the sensuality of some, verse 32. who made the consideration of death, by which others are awed from sin, a provocative to sin, Let us eat and drink for to morrow we shall die, he gives an account of this absurd reasoning; All have not the knowledge of God. An ignorant person is a man in shape, and a beast in heart. There is no knowledge in the land, says the Prophet, Hosea 4:2: and see what a regiment followes this blinde Captain, swearing; lying, killing, stealing, and what not? We reade, 2 Timothy 3:5. of some laden with sins; here are trees full of bitter fruit, and what dung shall we finde at the root, that makes them so fruitfull but ignorance? silly women, and such who never come to the knowledge of the truth.

Secondly, ignorance as it lets sin in, so it locks it up, and the soul in it, such a one lies in Satans inner dungeon, where no light of conviction comes, darkness inclines to sleep, a blinde minde and a drowsie conscience go together. When the storme arose, the mariners who were awake fell a praying to their God; but the sleeper feares nothing. Ignorance layes the soul asleep under the

hatches of stupidity. God has planted in the beast a natural feare of that which threatens hurt to it. Go to thrust a beast into a pit, and it hangs back, nature shewes its abhorrency. Man being of a nobler nature, and subject to more dangers, God has set a double guard on him, as a natural feare of danger, so a natural shame that covers the face at the doing of any unworthy action. Now an ignorant man has slipt from both these his Keepers: he sins and blushs not, because he knowes not his guilt: he wants that Magistrate within, which should put him to shame; neither is he afraid, because he knowes not his danger; and therefore he playes with his sin; as the child with the waves, that by and by will swallow him up. Conscience is Gods alarm to call the sinner up; It does not alwayes ring in his eare that has knowledge, being usually set by God to go off at some special hour; when God is speaking in an Ordinance, or striking in a Providence; but in an ignorant soul, this is silent. The Clock cannot go when the weights are taken off; Conscience is only a witnesse to what it knows.

Thirdly, ignorance shuts out the means of recovery. Friends and Ministers, yea, Christ himself stands without, and cannot help the creature, as such threatenings and promises, all of no use; he feares not the one, he desires not the other, because he knows neither: Heaven-way cannot be found in the dark, and therefore the first thing God does, is to spring in with a light, and let the creature know where he is, and what the way is to get out of his prison-house, without which all attempts to escape are in vain. There is some shimmering light in all, Non dantur purae tenebrae, I think, is good Divinity as well as Philosophy: and this night-light may discover many sins, produce inward prickings of conscience for them, yea, stir up the creature to step aside, rather than drown in

such broad waters. There are some sins so cruel and costly, that the most prostrate soul may in time be weary of their service for low ends: but what will all this come to, if the creature be not acquainted with Christ the true way to God, faith and repentance the only way to Christ? such a one after all this busle, in stead of making an escape from Satan, will run full into his mouth another way. There are some ways, which at first seem right to the traveller; yet winde about so insensibly, that when a man has gone far, and thinks himself near home, he is carried back to the place from whence he set forth. This will befall every soul ignorant of Christ, and the way of life through him; after many years travel, as they think, towards heaven by their good meanings, blinde devotions and reformation, when they shall expect to be within sight of heaven, they shall finde themselves even where they were at first, as very slaves to Satan as ever.

Use 1 This speaks to you that are Parents, see what need you have of instructing your children, and training them up betimes in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Till these chaines of darkness be knockt off their mindes, there is no possibility of getting them out of the devils prison; he has no such tame slave as the ignorant soul: such a one goes before Satan (as the silly sheep before the butcher) and knows not who he is, nor where he carries him; and can you see the devil driving your children to the shambles and not labor to rescue them out of his hands? Bloody parents you are, that can thus harden your bowells against your own flesh. Now the more to provoke you to your duty, take these considerations.

1. Your relation obligs you to take care of their precious souls. 'Tis the soul is the child rather than the body: and therefore in Scripture put for the whole man. Abraham and Lot went forth with all the souls they had gotton in Haran, Gen. 12. so All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, that is, all the persons. The body is but the sheath; and if one should leave his sword with you to be kept safely for him, would you throw away the blade, and onely preserve the scabbard? And yet parents do commonly judge of their care and love to their children by their providing for the outward man, by their breeding, that teaching them how to live like men (as they say) when they are dead and gone, and comport themselves to their civil place and rank in the world, These things indeed are commendable, but is not the most weighty businesse of all forgotten in the meane time, while no endeavour is used that they may live as Christians, and know how to carry themselves in duty to God and man as such? and can they do this without the knowledge of the holy rule they are to walk by? I am sure David knew no means effectual without this, and therefore propounds the question, Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? and he resolves it in the next words, By taking heed thereto according to your word, Psalms 119:9. And how shall they compare their way and the Word together, if not instructed? our children are not borne with Bibles in their heads or hearts. And who ought to be the instructer if not the parent? yea, who will do it with such natural affection? As I have heard sometimes a mother say in other respects, Who can take such pains with my child, and be so careful as my self that am its Mother? Bloody parents then they are who acquaint not their children with God or his Word; what do they but put them under a necessity of perishing, if God stirre not up some

to show more mercy then themselves to them. Is it any wonder to hear that ship to be sunk, or dasht upon the rock, which was put to sea without card or compasse? no more is it, they should ingulph themselves in sin and perdition, that are thrust forth into the world (which is a sea of temptation) without the knowledge of God or their duty to him. In the fear of God think of it parents: your children have souls, and these God set you to watch over; It will be a poor account at the last day, if you can only say, Lord, here are my children. I bred them compleat Gentlemen, left them rich and wealthy. The rust of that silver you left them will witnesse your folly and sin, that you would do so much for that which rusts, and nothing for the enriching their mindes with the knowledge of God, which would have endured for ever; happy if you had left them lesse money and more knowledge.

2. Consider it has ever been the Saints practice to instruct and teach their children the way of God. David we finde dropping instruction into his sonne Solomon, 1 Chronicles 28:9. Know you the God of your Father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing minde. Though a King, he did not put it off to his Chaplins, but whetted it on him with his own lips. Neither was his Queen Bathsheba forgetful of her duty, her gracious counsel is upon record, Prov. 31. and that she may do it with the more seriousnesse and solemnity, we finde her stirring up her motherly bowels, to let her sonne see, that she fetcht her words deep, even from her heart. What my son! and what the sonne of my womb! and what the sonne of my vows? Ver. 2. Indeed that counsel is most like to go to the heart, which comes from thence. Parents know not what impression such melting expressions of their love mingled with their instructions leave on their children. God bids draw forth our souls

to the hungry, that is more than draw our purse, which may be done, and the heart hard and churlish. Thus we should draw forth our souls with our instructions. What need I tell of Timothy's Mother and Grandmother who acquainted him with the Scripture from his youth? And truly I think, that man calls in question his own Saintship, that takes no care to acquaint his child with God, and the way that leads to him. I have known some, that though prophane themselves, have been very solicitous, their children should have good education; but never knew I a Saint that was regardlesse whether his child knew God or not.

3. It is an act of great unrighteousnesse not to instruct our children. We read of some that hold the truth in unrighteousnesse: among others those Parents do it, that lock up the knowledge of these saving truths from their children, which God has imparted to themselves. There is a double unrighteousnesse in it.

First they are unrighteous to their children, who may lay as much claime to their care of instructing them, as to their labor and industry in laying up a temporal estate for them. If he should do unrighteously with his child, that should not endeavour to provide for his outward maintenance, or having gathered an estate, should lock it up, and deny his child necessaries, then much more he that lives in ignorance of God, whereby he renders himself incapable of providing for his childes soul; but most of all, he that having gather'd a stock of knowledge, yet hides it from his child.

Secondly, they are unrighteous to God.

First, in that they keep that talent in their own hands which was given to be paid out to their children. When God reveal'd himself to Abraham, he had respect to Abraham's children, and there-

fore we finde God promising himself this at Abraham's hands, upon which he imparts his minde to him concerning his purpose of destroying Sodom; Shall I hide from Abraham (says God) that thing Which I do? I know that he will command his children, and his houshold after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, Genesis 18:17, 19. The Church began at first in a family, and was preserv'd by the godly care of Parents in instructing their children and houshold in the truths of God, whereby the knowledge of God was transmitted from generation to generation; and though now the Church is not confined to such strait limits, yet every private family is as a little nursery to the Church; if the nursery be not carefully planted, the Orchard will soon decay. O could you be willing, Christians, that your children when you are laid in the dust, should be turn'd into the degenerate plant of a strange vine; and prove a generation that do not know God? Atheisme needs not be planted, you do enough to make your children such, if you do not endeavour to plant Religion in their mindes. The very neglect of the Gardner to sowe and dresse his garden, gives advantage enough to the weeds to come up. This is the difference between Religion and Atheisme, Religion does not grow without planting, but will die even where it is planted without watering. Atheisme, irreligion, and profanenesse are weeds will grow without setting, but they will not die without plucking up, all care and means little enough to stub them up. And therefore you that are Parents, and do not teach your children, deale the more unrighteously with God, because you neglect the best season in their whole life for planting in them the knowledge of God, and plucking up the contrary weeds of atheisme and irreligion. Young weeds come up with

most ease, simple ignorance in youth becomes wilful ignorance, yea, impudence in age, you will not instruct them when young, and they will scorne their Ministers should when they are old.

Secondly, you deale unrighteously with God, that traine not up your children in the knowledge of God, because your children, if you be Christian Parents are Gods children; they stand in a foederal relation to him, which the children of others do not; and shall Gods children be nurtured with the devils education? Ignorance is that which he blindes the mindes of the children of disobedience withal. Shall Godschildren have no better breeding? The children of a Jew God made account were borne to him; Your sons and daughters whom you have borne to me, Ezekiel 16:20. God had by the Covenant which he made with that people, married them unto himself, and therefore as the wife bears her children to her husband, (they are his children) so God calls the children of the Jews his, and complains of it as an horrible wickedness in them, that they should not bring them up as his: but offer them up to Molech, They have slain my children, (says God) v. 21. And are not the children of a Christian his children as well as the Jewes were? has God recall'd or altered the first Covenant, and cut off the entaile; and darest you slay not only your children, but the Lords also? and is not ignorance that bloody knife that does it? My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge, Hosea 4:6. Do you not tremble to offer them not to Molech, but the devil, whom before you had given up to God, when you brought them to that solemn ordinance of Baptisme, and there desired before God and man that they might become Covenant-servants to the Lord? and have you bound them

to him, and never teach them, either who their Lord and Master is, or what their duty is as his servants? of your own mouth God will condemn you.

Fourthly, consider you who are Parents, that by not instructing your children, you entitle your selves to all the sins they shall commit to their death. We may sin by a proxy, and make anothers fact our own. You have (says God by Nathan to David concerning Uriah,) slaine him with the sword of the children of Ammon, 2 Samuel 12:9. So you may pierce Christ, and slay him over and over with the bloody sword of your wicked children▪ if you beest not the more careful to train them up in the feare of God: There might be something said for that Heathen, who when the Scholar abused him, fell upon the Master and struck him. Indeed 'tis possible he might be in the most fault. When the child breaks the Sabbath, it is his sin; but more the fathers, if he never taught him what the command of God was. And if the Parent be accessary to the sin of the child, it will be hard for him to escape a Partnership, yea, a Precedency in the punishment. O what a sad greeting will such have of their children at the great day! will they not then accuse you to be the murderers of their precious souls, and lay their blood at your door, cursing you to your face that taught them no better? But grant, that by the interposition of your timely repentance, you securest your soul from the judgement of that day; yet God can scourge you here for the neglect of your duty to them. How oft do we see children become heavy crosses to such Parents? It is just that they should not know their duty to you, who did not teach them their duty to God; or if you shouldest not live so long to see this, yet sure you can not but go in sorrow to your grave, to leave children behind you that are on their way to hell. Some think, that

Lots lingring so long in Sodom, was his loathnesse to leave his sons in law behinde him, to perish in the flames. No doubt (good man) it was very grievous to him, and this might make him stay pleading with them, till the Angel pull'd him away. And certainly nothing makes holy Parents more loath to be gone out of this Sodomitical world, then a desire to see their children out of the reach of that fire, (before they go) that God will rain upon the heads of sinners. You know not how soon the messenger may come to pluck you hence; do your best while you are among them to win them home to God.

Use. 2 To the Ministers of the Gospel. Let this stir up your bowels of compassion towards those many ignorant souls in your respective Congregations, who know not the right hand from the left. This, this is the great destroyer of the countrey, which Ministers should come forth against with all their care and strength. More are swept to hell with this plague of spiritual darkness then any other. Where the light of knowledge and conviction is, there commonly is a sense and pain that accompanies the sinner when he does evil, which forcs some now and then to enquire for a Physician, and come in the distress of their spirits to their Minister or others for counsel, but the ignorant soul feels no such smart; if the Minister stay till he sends for him to instruct him, he may sooner hear the bell go for him, then any messenger come for him; you must seek them out, and not expect that they will come to you. These are a sort of people that are afraid more of their remedy, then their disease, and study more to hide their ignorance, then how they may have it cured, which should make us pity them the more, because they can pity themselves so little. I confesse, it is no small unhappinesse to some of us, who have to do with a multi-

tude, that we have neither time nor strength to make our addresses to every particular person in our Congregations, and attend on them as their needs require, and yet cannot well satisfie our consciences otherwise. But let us look to it, that though we cannot do to the height of what we would, we be not found wanting in what we may. Let not the difficulty of our Province make us like some, who when they see they have more work upon their hands then they can well dispatch, grow sick of it, and sit down out of a lazy despondency, and do just nothing. He that has a great house running to ruine, and but a small purse; 'tis better for him to repair now a little, and then a little then let all fall down, because he cannot do it all at once. Many Ministers may complain of their Predecessours, that they left them their people more out of repair then their houses, and this makes the work great indeed. As the Jewes, who were to revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish, before they could build the wall, yet it went up, because the people had a minde to work. Nehem. 4. O if once our hearts were but fill'd with zeal for God, and compassion to our peoples souls, we would up and be doing, though we could but lay a brick a day, and God would be with us. May be you who finde a people rude and sottishly ignorant, like stones in the quarry, and trees unfell'd, shall not bring the work to such perfection in your days as you desire; yet as David did for Solomon, you may by your paines in teaching and instructing them, prepare materials for another who shall rear the Temple. Its very ordinary for one Minister to enter into the labors of another; to reap those by a work of Conversion, in whom a former Minister has cast the seed of knowledge and conviction: And when God comes to reckon with his Workmen, the Ploughman and Sower shall have his penny, as well as the Harvest-man

and Reaper. O its a blessed thing to be (as Job says he was,) eyes to the blinde, much more to blinde souls; such are the Ministers. God himself calls Pastours after his own heart, that feed his people with knowledge and understanding, Jeremiah 3:15. But wo to those that are accessary to their peoples ignorance. Now a Minister may be accessary to the ignorance of his people,

First, by his own ignorance. Knowledge is so fundamental to the work and calling of a Minister, that he cannot be one without it. Because you have rejected knowledge, I will also reject you, that you shalt be no Priest to me: seeing you have forgotten the Law of your God, I will also forget your children, Hosea 4:6. The want of knowledge in a Minister is such a defect, as cannot be supplied by any thing else; be he never so meek, patient, bountiful, unblameable, if he has not skill to divide the Word aright, he is not cut out for a Minister. Every thing is good, as its good for the end it is appointed to; a knife, though it had a haft of diamonds, yet if it will not cut 'tis no knife. A bell, if not sound, is no bell. The great work of a Minister is to teach others, his lips are to preserve knowledge, he should be as conversant in the things of God, as others in their particular trades. Ministers are called Lights; if the light then be darkness, how great is the darkness of that people like to be? I know these stars in Christs hands are not all of the same magnitude; there is a greater glory of gifts and graces shines in some then others; yet so much light is necessary to every Minister, as was in the star the wise men saw at Christs birth, to be able out of the Word to direct sinners the safe and true way to Christ and salvation. O Sirs, it is a sad way of getting a living by killing of men, as some unskilful Physicians do; but much more to get a temporal

livelihood by ruining souls, through our ignorance. He is a cruel man to the poor Passengers, who will undertake to be Pilot, when he never so much as learn't his Compasse.

Secondly, by his negligence. Its all one if the Nurse has no milk in her breasts, or having, drawes it not forth to her child. There is a wo to the Idol-shepherd, Zech. 11. such as have mouthes, but speak not; lips, but not to feed the people with knowledge. It shall be the peoples sin, if they feed not when bread is before them, but wo to us if we give them not meat in due season. O Sirs, what shall we say to our Lord that trusts us, if those abilities which he has given us as market-money to buy bread for our people, be found wrapt up in a napkin of sloth? if that time wherein we should have been teaching and instructing them, shall appear to be wasted in our pleasures, or employed about our carnal profits. That servant shall have but a sad welcome of his Master when he comes home, that shall be found out of the way with the Key, and the family starving in the mean time for want of provision.

Thirdly, by his unedifying preaching, when he preaches unsound doctrine, which does not perfect the understanding, but corrupt it. Better he did leave them in simple ignorance, then color their mindes with a false die; or when that he preaches is frothy and flashy, no more fit to feed their souls, then husks the Prodigals belly, which when they know they are little the wiser for their souls good. Or when his discourses are so high flown, that the poor people stand gazing, as those who have lost the sight of their Preacher, and at the end of the Sermon cannot tell what he would have. Or those who preach only truths, that are for the higher forme of Professours, who have their senses well exercised, excellent may be for the building up three or four eminent Saints in the

Congregation; but in the mean time, the weak ones in the family, (who should indeed chiefly be thought on, because least able to guide themselves, or carve for themselves) these are forgotten. He sure is an unwise builder, that makes a Scaffold as high as Pauls steeple, when his work is at the bottom, and he is to lay the foundation, whereas the Scaffold should rise as the building goes up. So Paul advancs in his doctrine, as his hearers do in knowledge; Hebrews 6:1. Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection. Let us. It is well indeed when the people can keep pace with the Preacher, To preach truths and notions above the hearers capacity, is like a Nurse, that should go to feed the child with a spoon too big to go into its mouth. We may by such preaching please our selves, and some of higher attainments, but what shall poor ignorant ones do in the mean time. He is the faithful steward that considers both. The Preacher is (as Paul says of himself) a debt or both to the Greek and to the Barbarian, to the wise and to the unwise, Romans 1:14. to prepare truths suitable to the degree of his hearers. Let the wise have their portion, but let them be patient to see the weaker in the family served also.

Fourthly, a Minister may be accessary to the ignorance of his people, when through the scandal of his life he prejudiced his doctrine, as a Cook, who by his nastiness makes others afraid to eat what comes out of his foule fingers; Or when through his supercilious carriage, his poor people dare not come to him. He that will do any good in the Ministers calling, must be as careful as the Fisher, that he does nothing to scare souls away from him, but all to allure and invite, that they may be toll'd within the compasse of his net.

Use. 3 Is the ignorant soul such a slave to Satan? Let this stirre you up that are ignorant from your seats of sloth, whereon like the blinde Egyptians you sit in darkness, speedily come out of this darkness, or resolve to go down to utter darkness. The covering of Hamans face did tell him, that he should not stay in the Kings presence. If you livest in ignorance, it shows you are in Gods black bill; he puts this cover before their eyes in wrath, whom he means to turne off into hell, 2 Cor. 4. If our Gospel be hid, it is to those that perish. In one place sinners are threatened, they shall die without knowledge; in another place,they shall die in their sins, John 8. He indeed that dies without knowledge, dies in his sins: and what more fearful doome can the great God passe upon a creature then this? better die in a prison, die in a ditch, then die in ones sins. It you die in your sins, you shalt rise in your sins: as you fallest asleep in the dust, so you awakest in the morning of the resurrection; if an ignorant Christlesse wretch, as such you shalt be araigned and judged. That God whom now sinners bid depart from them, will then be worth their acquaintance (themselves being Judges;) but alas! then he will throw their own words in their teeth, and bid them depart from him, he desires not the knowledge of them. O sinners, you shall see at last, God can better be without your company in heaven, then you could without his knowledge on earth: Yet, yet 'tis day, draw your curtains, and behold Christ shining upon your face with Gospel-light; hear wisdom crying in the streets, and Christ piping under your window in the voice of his Spirit and Messengers,How long will ye simple ones love simplicity, and fools hate knowledge? Turne you at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, and make known my words unto you. What can you say (sinners) for your sottish ignorance? Where

is your cloak for this sin? the time has been when the Word of the Lord was precious, and there was no open vision, not a Bible to be found in town or Countrey; when the tree of knowledge was forbidden fruit, and none might taste thereof without licence from the Pope; happy he that could get a leaf or two of the Testament into a corner, afraid to tell the wife of his bosome. O how sweet were these waters, when they were forced to steal them? but you have the Word, or may in your houses; you have those that open them every Sabbath in your Assemblies, many of you at least have the offers of your Ministers to take any paines with you in private, passionately beseeching you to pitie your souls, and receive instruction: yea, 'tis the lamentation they generally take up, you will not come unto them that you may receive light. How long may a poor Minister sit in his study, before any of the ignorant sort will come upon such an errand? Lawyers have their Clients, and Physicians their Patients: these are sought after, and call'd up at midnight for counsel: but alas! the soul, which is more worth then raiment and body too, that is neglected, and the Minister seldom thought on, till both these be sent away. Perhaps when the Physician gives them over for dead, then we must come and close up those eyes with comfort, which were never opened to see Christ in his truth, or be counted cruel, because we will not sprinkle them with this holy water, and anoint them for the Kingdom of Heaven, though they know not a step of the way which leads to it. Ah, poor wretches! what comfort would you have us speak to those, to whom God himself speaks terrour? Is heaven ours to give to whom we please? or is it in our power to alter the lawes of the most High, and save those whom he condemns? Do you not remember the curse that is to fall upon his head, that makes the blinde to wander

out of the way? Deuteronomy 27:18. what curse then would be our portion, if we should confirm such blinde souls, that are quite out of the way to heaven, encouraging you to go on and expect to reach heaven at last, when God knows your feet stand in those paths that lead to eternal death? No, 'tis written, we cannot, and God will not reverse it; you may reade your very names among those damned souls which Christ comes in flaming fire to take vengeance on, who the Apostle tells us are such, that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 Thes. 1.8. And therefore in the feare of God, let this provoke you, of what age or sexe, rank or condition soever in the world, to labor for the saving knowledge of God in Christ, whom to know is life eternal. Are you young? Enquire after God betimes, while your parts are fresh, and memory strong, before the throng of worldly cares divert you, or lusts of youth debauch you. The feet of those lusts which have buried millions of others in perdition, stand ready to carry you the same way, if preventing grace come not and deliver you out of their hands, by seasoning your mindes with the knowledge of God. This morning-draught may prevent your being infected with the ill savours you may receive from the corrupt examples of others. Nay, how long your stay may be in the world you knowest not, see whether you can not finde graves of your length in the burial place; and if you shouldest die ignorant of God and his Law, what would then become of you? The small brush and the old logs, young sinners, and those that are withered with age meet and burn together. Or if you shouldest stay a while longer here, may be because you will not learn now, God will not teach you then: Or if you shouldest in your old age get acquaintance with God, yet 'tis sad to be sowing your seed, when you shouldest be reaping your sheaves, learning to

know God, when you might be comforting your self from the old acquaintance you have enjoyed with him. Are you old and ignorant? Alas, poor creatures! your life in the socket, and this candle of the Lord not set up and lighted in your understanding? your body bowing to the dust, and nature tolling the passing bell, as it were, and you (like one going into the dark) know not where death will lead you or leave you. 'Tis like the infirmities of age, make you wish your bones were even laid at rest in the grave: but if you should dye in this condition, your poor souls would even wish they were here again with their old burdens on their back; aches and diseases of old age are grievous, but damned souls would thank God, if he would blesse them with such a heaven, as to lie in these paines to escape the torments of the other: O bethink you before you go hence; the lesse time you have, the more diligence you must use to gain knowledge; we need not be earnest, (one would think) to bid the poor prisoner learne his book, that cannot reade, when he knows he shall be hang'd if he read not his neck-verse. 'Tis not indeed the bare knowing the truths of the Gospel, saves; but the grosse ignorance of them to be sure will damn souls. Are you poor? It is not your poverty is your sin or misery, but your ignorance where the true treasure lies. Were you Gods poor, rich in knowledge and faith, you were happy, Eccles. 4.13. Better is a poor and wise child, then a foolish King, who will no more be admonish't; yea, so happy, that did the Princes of the world understand themselves aright, they would wish themselves in your clothes, how ragged soever they are, rather than be in their own robes; there are better making for you in heaven which you shall put on, when theirs shall be pull'd off to their shame: It will not then trouble you

that you were, while in the world, poor; but it will torment them that they were so rich and great, and so poore to God and beggarly in their souls.

Are you rich? Labor for the knowledge of the most high. Solomon had more of the worlds treasure then a thousand of you have, and yet we finde him hard at prayer, tugging with God for knowledge, 1 Chronicles 1:10. All these outward enjoyments are but vaginae bonorum, as afflictions are vaginae malorum. I am afraid many men think themselves priviledged by their worldly greatness from this duty, as if God were bound to save them, because rich. Alas, Sirs, there are not so many of you like to come there. I must confesse, it would make one tremble to think what a small number those among the great ones that shall be saved, are summed up into. Not many great, not many rich; Why so few saved? Because so few have saving knowledge. O the Atheisme, the ignorance, the sottish barbarisme that is to be found even in those that the world applaud, and even worship because of their lands and estates, who yet are not able to give any account of their faith? A poore leather-coat Christian will shame and catechize a hundred of them. If heaven were to be purchased with house and lands, then these would carry it away from the poore Disciples of Jesus Christ, they have their hundreds and thousands ly by them for a purchase alwayes, but this money is not currant in heavens exchange. This is life eternall, to know you, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

Quest. But how may an ignorant soul attaine to knowledge?

Answ. First, Be deeply affected with the ignorance. Some are blind, as Ladicea, and know it not. Revelation 3:17. As Ignorance blinds the minde, so pride is a blind before their ignorance, that

they know it not. These have such a high opinion of themselves, that they take it ill any should suspect them as such; these of all men are most out of the way, to knowledge they are too good to learne of man as they think, and too bad to be taught of God. The gate into Christs Schoole is low, and these cannot stoop. The Master himselfe is so humble and lowly, that he will not teach a proud Scholar. Therefore first become a foole in your owne eye. A wiser man then your selfe has confessed as much, Proverbs 30:2, 3. I am more brutish then any man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the Holy. When you are come to your selfe to owne and blush at the brutish ignorance of your minde, you are fit to be admitted into Christs School. If they be ashamed, then show them the patterne of the house, Ezekiel 43:10.

Secondly, be faithful with that little knowledge you have. Art you convinced this is a sin, and that is a duty? Follow the light close, you know not what this little may grow to; We use to set up our children with a little stock at first, and as they use it, so we adde. The Kingdom of God comes of small beginnings. God complains of Israel, they were brutish in their knowledge, Jeremiah 10:14. he does not say brutish in their ignorance, had they sinned because they did not know better, this would have excused à tanto, but they did that which was brutish and unreasonable, as their worshiping graven images notwithstanding they knew to the contrary. That man shall not excel in knowledge who prostitutes it to sin, Job 36:12. If they obey not, they shall perish by the sword, and shall die without knowledge. A candle pent up close in a dark lanthorn, swailes out apace: and so does light shut up in the conscience, and not suffered to come forth in the conversation. Those

Heathens that are charged for holding the truth in unrighteousnesse, Romans 1:18. the next news you hear of them is, that they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkned, ver. 21.

Thirdly, ply the throne of grace. Bene orasse est bene studuisse; he is the best student in divinity, that studies most upon his knee. Knowledge is a divine gift, all light is from heaven. God is the Father of light, and prayer puts the soul under the pupillage of God. If any one lack wisdom, let him ask it of God. This is more than naked knowledge, wisdom how to use it. Study may make one a great Scholar in the Scriptures, but prayer makes a wise Christian, as it obtains sanctified knowledge, without which it is no perfect gift, but [illegible], a gift and no gift. Pray then with an humble boldness, God gives it to all that ask, and that [illegible], candidly, liberally; not like proud man who will rather put one to shame who is weak for his ignorance, then take the paines to teach him. Your petition is very pleasing to God. Remember how Solomon sped upon the like occasion, and promise your self the same success. Christs School is a free School; he denies none that come to him, so they will submit to the orders of the School; and though all have not an answer in the same degree of knowledge (it is not needful that all should be Solomons in knowledge, except all were to be Solomons in place) yet the meanest disciple that Christ sends forth shall be furnished with saving knowledge, enough to fit him for his admittance into heavens Academy. You shalt guide me with your counsel, and after bring me to glory.

Fourthly, you must bestow some time for your diligent search after truth. Truth lies deep, and must be digged for. Since man was turned out of Paradise he can do nothing without labor, except sin

(this follows his hand indeed) but this treasure of knowledge calls for spade and Mattock. We are bid search the Scripture, and Daniel 12:4. Many shall runne to and fro, and knowledge shall be encreased; a Metaphor from Merchants, who bestirre themselves to get an estate, runne to and fro, first in one land, then in another, where-ever they hear of any thing to be got, there they post, though to the ends of the earth: Thus must the soul runne from one duty to another, one while read, and anon meditate of what he has read, then pray over his meditations, and aske counsel after all. What is the meaning of this, and how understand you that? Non schola Epicuri fecit magnos viros sed contubernium. There is more light got sometimes by a short conference with the Preacher, then by his whole Sermon. Be sure you compasse all the means for knowledge within the walk of your endeavour. In this your search for knowledge observe three things.

First, the end you proposest that it be pure and holy, not meerly to know, as some do, who labor for knowledge, as many for estates, and when they have got it look on their notions, as they on their bags of money, but have not a heart to use their knowledge for their own or others good; this is a sore evil. Speculative knowledge like Rachel is faire, but barren. Not to be known and admired by others for your stature in knowledge above your Brethren, verily it is too base an end to aime at in seeking knowledge, especially such as is the knowledge of God and Christ. To see a Heathen study for knowledge in Philosophy, and then carry all his labor to this market, and think himself rewarded with obtaining the name for a wise man, is though base, yet more tolerable: but for one that knows God, and what it is to enjoy him, for such a one to content himself with a blast or two of sorry mans vain breath, this is folly

with a witnesse, look you fliest higher in your end then so. Labor for knowledge that you may fear God whom you knowest, thus David, Psalms 119:33. Teach me, O Lord, the way of your statutes, and I shall keep it unto the end. The Word of God is called a light unto our feet, not to our tongues meerly to talk of, but feet to walk by; Endeavour for it, not that you may'st spread your own name, but celebrate Gods As David promiss, when he understands the precepts of God, then he will talk of his wondrous works, he will trumpet the fame of them, and thereby awaken others to enquire after God.

Secondly, when your end is right set, then you must be constant in your endeavour after it. The mysteries of Christ are not learnt in a day. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord, Hosea 6:3. Some are in a good mood (may be) and they will look into the Bible, and read a chapter or two, and away they go for a week, and never practise it more; like some boyes if at School one day truant all the week after: is it any wonder such thrive not in knowledge? It is a good speech of Bernard, Tantum distat studium à lectione, quantum amicitia ab hospitio, socialis affectio à fortuit â salutatione. The study of the Word, and the reading of it differs as much, as the friendship of such who every day converse lovingly together, does from the acquaintance one has with a stranger at an Inne, or whom he salutes as he passs by in the street. If you will get knowledge indeed, you must not onely salute the Word now and then, but walk with it, and enter into daily converse with it. The three men (who were indeed Angels) that stood by Abraham, as he sat at his Tent-door, were reserved, and strange, till Abraham invited them into his Tent, and entertain'd them friendly; and then Christ who was one among them (as appears by the Name Jehovah

given him in several verses, and also by what he promised he would do for Sarah, ver. 10. not what God would do, which if a created Angel he would) begins to discover himself to Abraham, and reveale his secrets to him. That soul above others shall be acquainted with the secrets of God in his Word, that does not slightly read the Word, and as it were complement with it, at his tent-doore, but desires more intimacy with it, and therefore entertaines it within his soul by frequent meditating of it. David compares the Word for sweetnesse to the honey and the honey-combe. Indeed it is so full, that at first reading some sweetnesse will now and then drop from it, but he that does not presse it by meditation, leaves the most behinde.

Thirdly, Be sure you takest the right order and method. Arts and Sciences have their rudiments, and also their more abstruse and deep notions; and sure the right end to begin at, is first to learn the principles: he (we say) is not like to make a good Scholar in the University, that never was good Grammar-Scholar. And they cannot be solid Christians, that are not instructed in the grounds of Christianity. The want of this is the cause why many are so unstedfast. First, of this way and then of that, blown like glasses into any shape, as false Teachers please to breath. Alas, they have no center to draw their lines from; think it no disgrace you who have runne into error, and lost your selves in the labyrinths of deep points (which now are the great discourse of the weakest professors) to be set back to learn the first principles of the Oracles of God better; too many are as Tertullian says in another case, pudoris magìs memores quàm salutis, more tender of their reputation then their salvation, who are more ashamed to be thought ignorant, then careful to have it cured.

Fifthly, If you would attain to divine knowledge, wait on the Ministery of the Word. As for those who neglect this, and come not where the Word is Preacht, they do like one that should turn his back on the Sunne that he may see it; if you would know God, come where he has appointed you to learn. Indeed, where the meanes is not, God has extraordinary ways, as a Father if no School in Town, will teach his child at home, but if there be a publick School, there he sends him: God makes manifest (says Paul) the savor of his knowledge by us in every place, 2 Corinthians 2:14. Let men talk of the Spirit what they please. He will at last be found a quencher of the Spirit, that is, a despiser of Prophecy; they both stand close together, 1 Thes. 5.19, 20. Quench not the Spirit. Despise not Prophesying. But it is not enough, to sit under the meanes; Wofull experience teaches us this, there are some no Sun will tan, they keep their old complexion under the most shining and burning light of the Word preached, as ignorant and prophane as those that never saw Gospel-day; and therefore if you will receive any spirituall advantage by the Word, take heed how you hearest.

First, Look you beest a wakefull hearer. Is it any wonder he should go away from the Sermon no wiser than he came, that sleeps the greatest part of it away, or heares betwixt sleeping and waking? It must be in a dreame sure, if God reveales any thing of his mind to him. So indeed God did to the Fathers of old, but it was not as they prophanely slept under an Ordinance. O take heed of such irreverence. He that composs himselfe to sleep (as some do) at such a time, or he that is not humbled for it, and that deeply; both of them betray a base and low esteeme they have of the Ordinance. Surely you thinkest but meanly of what is delivered, if

it will not keep you awake, yea, of God himselfe, whose message it is. See how you are reproved by the awfull carriage of a Heathen, and that a King. Ehud did but say to Eglon, I have a message from God unto you, And he arose out of his seate, Judge 3.20. And you clapest downe on your seat to sleep; O how darest you put such an affront upon the great God? How oft did you fall asleep at dinner, or telling your money? And is not the Word of God worth more than these? I should wonder if such Sermon-sleepers do dreame of any thing but hell-fire. 'Tis dangerous you know to fall asleep with a candle burning by our side; some have been so burnt in their beds; but more dangerous to sleep while the candle of the Word is shining so neare us. What if you should sinke downe dead like Eatychus? here is no Paul to raise you as he had; and that you shall not, where is your security?

Secondly, You must be an attentive hearer. He that is awake, but wanders with his eye or heart, what does he but sleep with his eyes open? It were as good the servants should be asleep in his bed, as when up, not to minde his Masters businesse. When God intends a soul good by the Word, he drawes such a one to listen and hearken heedfully to what is delivered; as we see in Lydia, who ('tis said) attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And those, Luke 1948. The people were attentive to heare him. They did hang on him as you shall see Bees on some sweet flower, or as young birds on the bills of their dammes as they feed them; that is, the soul which shall get light and life by the Word. Heare ye children, and attend to know understanding, Proverbs 4:1. Labor therefore in hearing the Word to fixe your quicksilver-minde, and set your selfe to heare, as 'tis said Jehosaphat did to pray; and that you maiest, before you goest, get your heart into some deep sense

of your spirituall wants, especially of your ignorance of the things of God, and your deplored condition by reason of it; till the heart be toucht, the minde will not be fixt. Therefore you may observe, 'tis said, God open'd the heart of Lydia, that she attended, Acts 16:14. The Minde goes of the Wils errand; we spend our thoughts upon what our hearts propose. If the heart has no sense of its ignorance, or no desires after God, no wonder such a one listens not what the Preacher says; his heart sends his mind another way. They sit before you as my people (says God) but their heart goes after their covetousnesse; They do not come out of such an intent or desire to heare for any good to their souls, then they would apply themselves wholly to the work; no, it is their covetousnesse has their hearts; and therefore as some idle servant, when he has waited on his Master; brought him to his pew, then he goes out to his good fellowes at the Alehouse, and comes no more till Sermon be almost done: so do the thoughts of most when they go to the Ordinance, they slip out in the street, market or shop, you may finde them any where but about the duty before them, and all because these have their hearts more than God and his Word.

Thirdly, You must be a retentive hearer, without this the worke will ever be to begin againe. Truths to a forgetfull hearer are as a seale set on water, the impression lasts no longer than the seale is on; the Sermon once done, and all is undone; be therefore very carefull to fasten what you hearest on your memory; which that you maiest do,

First, receive the truth in the love of it, An affectionate hearer will not be a forgetfull hearer. Love helpes the memory; Can a woman forget her child, or a maide her ornaments, or a bride her attire? No, they love them too well: Were the truths of God thus

precious to you, you wouldest with David, think of them day and night. Even when the Christian through weakness of memory cannot remember the very words he heares, to repeate them; yee then he keeps the power and savor of them in his spirit; as when sugar is dissolved in wine, you cannot see it, but you may taste it; when meat is eaten and digested, it is not to be found as it was received, but the man is cheered and strengthened by it, more able to walke and work then before, by which you may know it is not lost: so you may taste the truths the Christian heard in his spirit, see them in his life. Perhaps if you aske him what the particulars were the Minister had about faith, mortification, repentance, and the like, he cannot tell you; yet this you may finde, his heart is more broken for sin, more enabled to rely on the promises, and now weaned from the world. As that good woman answered one, that coming from Sermon, ask't her what she remembred of the Sermon? said, she could not at present recal much, but she heard that which should make her reforme some things as soon as she came home.

Secondly, meditate on what you hearest; by this David got more wisdom then his teachers. Observe what truth, what Scripture is cleared to you in the Sermon more than before, take some time in secret to converse with it, and make it thereby familiar to your understanding. Meditation to the Sermon is what the harrow is to the seed, it covers those truths, which else might have been pickt or washt away. I am afraid there are many proofs turned down at a Sermon, that are hardly turned up, and lookt on any more, when the Sermon is done; and if so, you make others believe you are greater traders for your souls, then you are indeed;

as if one should come to a shop and lay by a great deal of rich ware, and when he has done, goes away, and never calls for it. O take heed of such doings. The hypocrite cheats himself worst at last.

Thirdly, discharge your memory of what is sinful. We wipe our table-book, and deface what is there scribled, before we can write new. There is such a contrariety betwixt the truths of God and all that is frothy and sinful, that one puts out the other; if you would retain the one, you must let the other go.

Chapter 6. Of the Spirituality of the Devil's Nature and Their Extreme Wickedness

• • •

These words are the fourth branch in the deseription, Spiritual wickednesses, and our contest or combate with them as such exprest by the adversative particle [Against] in the Greek, [illegible] word for word; Against the Spirituals of wickedness, which is, say some, against wicked spirits; that is, true, but not all. I conceive with many Interpreters, not only the spiritual nature of the devil, and the wickedness thereof to be intended, but also, yea, chiefly the nature and kinde of those sins, which these wicked spirits do most usually and vigourously provoke the Saints unto, and they are the spirituals of wickedness, not those grosse fleshly sins, which the herd of beastly sinners like swine wallow in; but sin spirituallized, and this, because it is not [illegible], but [illegible], not spirits, but spirituals. The words present us with these three doctrinal Conclusions.

First, the devils are spirits.

Secondly, the devils are spirits extremely wicked.

Thirdly, these wicked spirits do chiefly annoy the Saints with, and provoke them to spiritual wickednesses. First, of the first.

SECT. I.

First, they are spirits. Spirit is a word of various acception in Scripture. Amongst other used often to set forth the essence and nature of Angels good and evil, both which are called spirits. The holy Angels, Hebrews 1:14. Are they not all ministring spirits? The evil: There came forth a spirit and stood before the Lord, and said, I will perswade him, 1 Kings 22:21. that spirit was a devil. How oft is the devil call'd the unclean spirit, foule spirit, lying spirit, &c. Sin did not alter their substance, for then, as one says well, that nature and substance which transgrest could not be punish't.

First, the devil is a spirit, that is, his essence is immaterial and simple, not compounded (as corporal beings are) of matter and forme: Handle and see me (says Christ to his disciples, that thought they had seen a Spirit) a Spirit has not flesh and bones, as ye see me have, Luke 24:39. If they were not thus immaterial, how could they enter into bodies and possess them, as the Scripture tells us they have, even a legion into one man? Luke 8:30. one body cannot thus enter into another.

Secondly, the devils are spiritual substances, not qualities, or evil motions, arising from us, as some have absurdly conceived. So the Sadduces, and others following them deny any such being, as Angel good or evil: but this is so fond a conceit, that we must both forfeit our reason, and deny the Scriptures to maintain it, where we finde their Creation related, Colossians 1:18. the fall of some from their first estate, Jude 6. and the standing of others called the Elect Angels; The happiness of the one, who behold Gods face; and their employment, are sent out to attend on the Saints as servants on their Masters heirs, Heb. 1. The misery of the other, reserved in

chaines of darkness unto the judgement of the great day; and their present work, which is to do mischief to the souls and bodies of men, as far as they are permitted; all which show their subsistence plain enough. But so immerst is sorry man in flesh, that he will not easily believe what he sees not with his fleshly eyes; upon the same account we may deny the being of God himself, because invisible.

Thirdly, they are entire spiritual substances, which have every very one proper existence: and thus they are distinguish't from the souls of men, which are made to subsist in a humane body; and together with it to make one perfect man; so that the soul, though when separated from the body, it does exist, yet has a tendency to union with its body again.

Fourthly, they are, though entire spiritual substances, yet finite, being but creatures. God only is the uncreated, infinite, and absolutely simple Spirit, yea Father of all other spirits.

Now from this spiritual nature of the devil, we may further see what a dreadful enemy we have to grapple with.

First, as spirits they are of vast intellectual abilities. Sorry man, while in this dark prison of the body, has not light enough to know what Angelical perfections are; that they excel in knowledge all other creatures we know, because as Spirits they come nearest by Creation to the Nature of God that made them; the heavens are not lift higher from the earth, then Angels by knowledge from man, while on earth. Man by Art has leatn't to take the height of the stars of heaven, but where is he that can tell how far in knowledge Angels exceed man? 'Tis true, they have lost much of that knowledge they had, even all their knowledge as holy Angels, what now they know of God has lost its savor, and they have no power to use

it for their own good. What Jude says of wicked men, may be said of them; What they know naturally in these things they corrupt themselves. They know the holiness of God, but love him not for it, as the Elect Angels do, and themselves by Creation did. They know the evil of sin, and love it not the lesse; but though they are such fooles for themselves, yet have subtilty too much for all the Saints on Earth, if we had not a God to play our game for us.

Secondly, as spirits they are invisible, and their approaches also. They come and you see not your enemy. Indeed this makes him so little feared by the ignorant world, whereas it is his greatest advantage if rightly weighed. O if men have an apparition of the devil, or heare a noise in the night, they cry, The devil, the devil, and are ready to runne out of their wits for feare; but they carry him in their hearts, and walk all the day long in his company, and feare him not. When your proud heart is clambering up to the pinacle of honor in your ambitious thoughts, who sets you there but the devil? When your adulterous heart is big with all manner of uncleannesse and filthinesse, who but Satan has been there, begetting these brats on your whorish spirit? When you are raging in your passion, throwing burning coales of wrath and fury about with your inflamed tongue, where was it set on fire but of hell? When you are hurried like the swine into the precipice, and even choakt with your own drunken vomit, who but the devil rides you?

Thirdly, as spirits they are immortal. Of other enemies you may hear news at last that they are dead which sought your life, as the Angel told Joseph of Herod. Persecuting men walk a turne or two upon the stage, and are call'd off by death, and there is an end

of all their plots; but devils die not, they will hunt you to your grave, and when you diest they will meet you in another world, to accuse and torment you there also.

Fourthly, they are unwearied in their motions. When the fight is over among men; the Conquerour must sit down and breathe, and so loseth the chase, because not able to pursue it in time. Yea, some have given over their Empires, as glutted with the blood of men, and weary of the work, when they cannot have their will as they desired: Thus Dioclesian, because he saw he did but mowe a medow, that grew the thicker for the cutting down (as Tertullian speaks of the Christians martyred) he throws away his Scepter in a pet. Charles the fifth did the like (some say) upon the same reason, because he could not root out the Lutherans. But the devils spirit is never cowed, nor he weary of doing mischief, though he has never stood still since first he began his walk to and fro the world. O what would become of us if a God were not at our back, who is infinitely more the devils odds then he ours?

SECT. II.

Secondly, they are wicked spirits; wicked in the abstract, as in the Text, and call'd by way of eminency in sin, The wicked one, Matthew 13:19. As God is called the holy one, because none holy as the Lord. So, the devil the wicked one, because he is a none such in sin. In a few particulars let us endeavour to take the height of the devils sin, and the rather that we may judge of the degrees of sins, and sinners among the sons of men, the neerer God in holiness, the more holy; the liker the devil, the more wicked.

First, these Apostate Angels are the inventers of sin; the first that sounded the Trumpet of rebellion against their Maker, and led the dance to all that sin which since has filled the world. Now what tongue can accent this sin to its full? for such a noble creature whom God had set on the top as it were of all the creation neerest to himself, from whom God had kept nothing but his own royal diadem, for this Peere and Favorite of the Court without any cause or solicitation from any other, to make this bold and blasphemous attempt to snatch at Gods own Crown, this paints the devil blacker then the thoughts of men and Angels can conceive. He is called the father of lies, as those who found out any Art, are called the father of it. Jubal the father of all such as handle the harp, and organ; he invented Musick; and this is a dreadful aggravation, because they sinned without a Tempter. And though man is not in such a degree capable of this aggravation, yet some men sin after the very similitude of the devils transgression in this respect, who as Saint Paul, Romans 1:30. stiles them, are inventers of evil things. Indeed sin is an old trade, found out to our hand; but as in other trades and arts, some famous men arise, who adde to the inventions of others, and make trades and arts (as it wtre) new; so there ever are some infamous in their generation, that make old sins new by superadding to the wickedness of others. Uncleannesse is an old sin from the beginning, but the Sodomites will be filthy in a new way, and therefore it carries their name to this day. Some invent new errors, others new oathes, such as are of their own coyning, hot out of the mint, they scorne to sweare after the old fashion. Others new devices of perseuting, as Julian had a way by himself different from all before him; and to the end of the world every age will exceed other in the degrees of sinning Ishmael and the mockers of

the old world, were but children and bunglers to the scoffers and cruel mockers of the last time. Well take heed of showing your wit in inventing new sins, lest you stirre up God to invent new punishments. Is not destruction to the wicked, and a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity? Job 31:3. Sodom sinned after a new mode, and God destroys them after a new way, sends hell from above upon them. Some have invented new opinions, Monstrous errors, and God has suited their monstrous errors with births as monstrous of their own body.

Secondly, they were not onely the inventers of sin, but are still the chief tempters to, and promoters of sin in the world, therefore call'd [illegible], the tempter; and sin called the work of the devil, whoever commits it; as the house goes by the name of the Masterworkman, though he useth his servants hands to build it. O take heed of soliciting others to sin; you takest the Devils office (as I may say) out of his hand: let him do it himself if he will; make not your self so like him. To tempt another is worse then to sin your self. It speaks sin to be of great growth in that man, that does it knowingly and willingly. Herbs and flowers shed not their seed till ripe, creatures propagate not, till of stature and age. What do those, that tempt others, but diffuse their wicked opinions and practices, and as it were raise up seed to the devil; thereby-to keep up the name of their infernal Father in the world? this shows sin is mighty in them indeed. Many a man though so cruel to his own soul as to be drunk or sweare, yet will not like this in a child or servant; what are they then but devils incarnate, who teach their children the devils Catechisme, to sweare and lie, drink and drab? If you meet such, be not afraid to call them (as Paul did Elymas, when he would have perverted the Deputy) children of the devil,

full of all subtilty and mischief, and enemies of all righteousnesse. O do you not know what you do, when you tempt? I'le tell you. you do that, which you cannot undo by your own repentance; you poisonest one with errour, initiatest another in the devils School, (Alehouse I mean) but afterwards may be you seest your mistake, and recantest your errour, your folly, and givest over your drunken trade; are you sure now to rectifie and convert them with your selfe? alas poor creatures! this is out of your power, they may be will say as he (though he did it upon a better account) that was solicited to turne back to popery by him, who had before perswaded him to renounce the same, You have given me one turn, but shall not give me another. And what a grief to your spirit will it be, to see these going to hell on your errand, and you not able to call them back? you may cry out as Lamch, I have slaine a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt. Nay, when you are asleep in your grave, he whom you seducedst may have drawn in others, and your name may be quoted to commend the opinion and practice to others, by which (as it is said, though in another sense, Abel being dead, yet speaks) you may, though dead, sin in those that are alive, generation after generation. A little spark kindled by the errour of one, has cost the pains of many ages to quench it, and when thought to be out, has broke forth again.

Thirdly, They are not barely wicked, but maliciously wicked. The Devill has his name [illegible], to denote his spightfull nature, his desire to vex and mischief others. When he drawes souls to sin, it is not because he tastes any sweetnesse, or findes any profit therein; he has too much light to have any joy or peace in sin: he knows his doome, and trembles at the thought of it, and yet his spightful nature makes him vehemently desire and uncessantly en-

deavour the damnation of souls. As you shall see a mad dogge run after a flock of sheep, kill one, then another, and when dead, not able to eate of their flesh, but kills to kill: so Satan is carried out with a boundlesse rage against man, especially the Saints, he would not, if he could, leave one of Christs flock alive; such is the height of his malice against God whom he hates with a perfect hatred, and because he cannot reach him with a direct blow, therefore he strikes him at second hand through his Saints; that wicked arme which reaches not to God, is extended against these excellent on the earth, well knowing the life of God is in a manner bound up in theirs. God cannot outlive his honor, and his honor speeds as his mercy is exalted or depressed; this being the attribute God meanes to honor in their salvation so highly, and therefore maligned above the rest by Satan. And this is the worst that can be said of these wicked spirits, that they maliciously spite God, and in God the glory of his mercy.

Use 1 First this may help us to conceive more fully what the desperate wickedness of mans nature is, which is so hard to be known, because it can never be seen at once, it being a fountain whose immensity consists not in the streame of actual sin (that is visible, and may seem little) but in the spring that uncessantly feeds this, but here is a glasse that will give us the shape of our hearts truly like themselves. Seest you the monstrous pitch and height of wickedness that is in the devil, all this there is in the heart of every man, there is no lesse wickedness potentially in the tamest sinner on earth, then in the devils themselves, and that one day you whoever you are will show to purpose, if God prevent you not by his renewing grace, you are not yet fledg'd, your wings are not grown to make you a flying Dragon▪ but you are of the same

brood, the seed of this serpent is in you, and the devil begets a child like himselfe; you yet standest in a soile not so proper for the ripening of sin, which will not come to its fulnesse till transplanted unto hell. You who are here so maidenly and modest, as to blush at some sins out of shame, and forbear the acting of others out of fear: when there you shalt see your case as desperate as the devil does his, then you will spit out your blasphemies with which your nature is stuft, with the same malice that he does. The Indians have a conceit that when they die, they shall be transform'd into the deformed likenesse of the devil, therefore in their language they have the same word for a dead man and the devil; sin makes the wicked like him before they come there, but indeed they will come to their countenance more fully there, when those flames shall wash off that paint, which here hides their complexion. The Saints in heaven shall be like the Angels in their alacrity, love and constancy to serve God, and the damned like the devils in sin as well as punishment. This one consideration might be of excellent use to unbottome a sinner, and abase him so as never to have high thought of himself. It is easie to runne down a person whose life is wicked, and convince him of the evil of his actions, and make him confesse what he does is evil; but here is the thicket we lose him in, he will say, 'tis true, I am overseen, I do what I should not, God forgive me: but my heart is good. Your heart good, sinner? and so is the devils, his nature is wicked and yours as bad as his. These pimples in your face show the heat of your corrupt nature within, and without Gospel-physick, the blood of Christ applied to you, you will die a Leper; none but Christ can give you a new heart, till

which you will every day grow worse and worse. Sin is an hereditary disease that encreass with age. A young sinner will be an old devil.

Use 2 Again, it would be of use to the Saints, especially those in whom God by his timely call forestall'd the devils market; as sometimes the Spirit of God takes sin in its quarters before it comes into the field, in the sins of youth: now such a one finding not those daring sins committed by him that others have been left unto, may possibly not be so affected with his own sin or Gods mercy. O let such a one behold here the wickedness of his heart in this glasse of the devils nature, and he will see himself as a great debtor to the mercy of God as Manasses, or the worst of sinners, as in pardoning, so in preventing the same cursed nature with theirs, before it gave fire on God with those bloody sins which they committed. That you did not act such outragious sins, you are beholden to Gods gracious surprize, and not the goodnesse of your nature which has the devils stamp on it, for which God might have crusht you, as we do the brood of Serpents before they sting, knowing what they will do in time. Who will say that Faux suffered unjustly, because the Parliament was not blown up? it was enough that the materials for that Massacre were provided, and he taken there with match and fire about him ready to lay the traine; and can you say when God first took hold on you, that you had'st not those weapons of rebellion about you, a nature fully charged with enmity against God, which in time would have made its own report of what for present lay like unfired ponder silent in your bosome, O Christian, think of this, and be humbled for your villainous nature,

and say, Blessed be God that sent his Spirit and grace so timely to stay your hand, (as Abigail to David) while your nature meditated nothing but warre against God and his laws.

Use 3 Again. Thirdly, are the devils so wickedly malicious against God himself? O Sirs, take the right notion of sin, and you will hate it. The reason why we are so easily perswaded to sin is, because we understand not the bottome of his designe in drawing a creature to sin. It is with men in sinning as it is with Armies in fighting; Captains beat their drummes for Voluntiers, and promise all that list pay and plunder, and this makes them come trowling in: but few consider what the ground of the Warre is; against whom, or for what. Satan entics to sin, and give golden promises what they shall have in his service with which silly souls are won: but how few ask their souls, Whom do I sin against? what is the devils designe in drawing me to sin? Shall I tell you? do you think 'tis your pleasure, or profit he desires in your sinning? alas, he means nothing lesse, he has greater plots in his head then so. He has by his Apostasie proclaim'd warre against God, and he brings you by sinning to espouse his quarrel, and to jeopard the life of your soul in defense of his pride and lust; which that he may do, he cares no more for the damnation of your soul, then the great Turk does to see a company of his slaves cut off for the carrying on of his designe in a siege: And darest you venture to go into the field upon his quarrel against God? O Earth, tremble you at the presence of the Lord. This bloody Joab sets you, where never any came off alive. O stand not where Gods bullets fly, throw down your armes, or you are a dead man. Whatever others do, O ye Saints, abhorre

the thoughts of sinning willingly, which when you do, you help the devil against God, and what more unnatural then for a child to be seen in armes against his father?

Chapter 7. Of Satan's Plot to Defile the Christian's Spirit with Heart-Sins

• • •

That these wicked Spirits do chiefly annoy the Saints with, and provoke them to spiritual sins. Sins may be called spiritual upon a double account; either from the subject wherein they are acted, or from the object about which they are conversant.

First, in regard of the subject; when the spirit or heart is the stage whereon sin is acted, this is a spiritual sin; such are all impure thoughts, vile affections and desires; though the object be fleshly lust, yet are spiritual sins, because they are purely acts of the soul and spirit, and break not forth unto the outward man.

Secondly, in regard of the object, when that is spiritual and not carnal, such as are idolatry, errour, spiritual pride, unbelief, &c. both which Paul calls the filthinesse of the spirit, and distinguishs them from filthinesse of the flesh, 2 Corinthians 7:1.

SECT. I.

First, of the first, Satan labors what he can to provoke the Christian to heart-sins▪ to stirre up and foment these inward motions of sin in the Christians bosome; hence it is he can go about no duty but these (his Impes I may call them) haunt him, one motion or other darts in to interrupt him, as Paul tells us of himselfe, When he would do good, evil was present with him; if a Christian should turne back, when ever these crosse the way of him, he should never go on his journey to heaven. It is the chief game the devil has left to play against the children of God; now his field-army is broken, and his commanding power taken away which he had over them, to come out of these his holds where he lies sculking, and fall upon their rear with these suggestions. He knows his credit now is not so great with the soul, as when it was his slave; then no drudgery work was so base that it would not do at his command, but now the soul is out of his bondage, and he must not think to command anothers servant as his own: No, all he can do is to watch the fittest season (when the Christian least suspects) and then to present some sinful motion handsomely drest up to the eye of the soul, that the Christian may (before he is aware) take this brat up and dandle it in his thoughts, till at last he makes it his own by embracing it; and this he knowes will defile the soul, and may be this boy sent in at the window may open the door to let in a greater thief; or if he should not so prevaile, yet the guilt of these heart-sins, yea their very neighbor-hood will be a sad vexation to a gracious heart, whose nature is so pure that it abhorres all filthinesse (so that to be haunted with such motions is, as if a living man should be chain'd to a stinking carcase, that where ever he goes he must draw that after him) and whose love is so dear to Christ that it cannot bear the company of those thoughts without

amazement and horrour, which are so contrary and abusive to his beloved. This makes Satan so desirous to be ever raking in the unregenerate part, that as a dunghil stirr'd it may offend them both with the noisome streames which arise from it.

SECT. II.

Use 1 First, let this be for trial of your spiritual state. What entertainment findes Satan when he comes with these spirituals of wickedness, and solicites you to dwell on them? can you dispense with the filthinesse of your spirit, so your hands be clean? or do you wrestle against these heart-sins as well as others? I do not ask whether such guests come within your door, for the worst of sins may be found in the motions of them, not only passing by the door of a Christian, but looking in also, as holy motions may be found stirring in the bosome of wicked men: but I ask you whether you can finde in your heart to lodge these guests and bid them welcome. 'Tis like you would not be seen to walk in the street with such company, not lead a whore by the hand through the Town, not violently break open your neighbors house to murder or rob him: but can you not under your own roofe, in the withdrawing room of your soul let your thoughts hold up an unclean lust, while your heart commits speculative folly with it? can you not draw your neighbor into your den, and there rend him limb from limb by your malice, and your heart not so much as cry murder, murder? In a word can you hide any one sin in the vance roofe of your heart, there to save the life of it when enquired after by the Word and Spirit, as Rahab hid the spies, and sent the King of Jerichoes messengers to pursue them, as if they had been gone? Perhaps you can say, the adulterer, the murderer is not here, you have sent

these sins away long ago, and all this while you hidest them in the love of your soul; know it or you shalt another day know it to your cost, you are stark naught. If there were a spark of the life of God or the love of Christ in your bosome, though you could not hinder such motions in your soul, yet you would not conceale them, much lesse nourish them in your bosome; when over-powered by them you would call in help from heaven against these destroyers of your soul.

Use 3 Secondly, show your loyalty, O ye Saints, to God by a vigorous resistance of, and wrestling against these spirituals of wickedness. First, consider, Christian, heart-sins are sins as well as any; The thought of foolishnesse is sin, Proverbs 24:9. Mercury is poison in the water distill'd, as well as in the grosse body. Uncleannesse, covetousnesse, murder, are such in the heart as well as in the outward act; every point of hell, is hell. Secondly, consider your spirit is the seat of the holy Spirit. He takes up the whole heart for his lodging, and 'tis time for him to be gone when he sees his house let over his head. Defile not your spirit, till you are weary of his company. Thirdly, consider, there may be more wickedness in a sin of the heart, then of the hand and outward man; for the aggravation of these is taken from the behavior of the heart in the act. The more of the heart and spirit is let out, the more malignity is let in to any sinfull act. To back-slide in heart, is more than to back-slide; 'tis the comfort of a poor soul when tempted and troubled for his relapses, that though his foot slides back, yet his heart turnes not back, but faceth Heaven and Christ at the same time; so to erre in the heart, is worse then to have an errour in the head; therefore God aggravates Israels sin with this, They do alwayes erre in their heart. Their hearts runne them upon the errour, they

liked idolatry, and so were soon made to believe what pleased them best. As on the contrary, the more of the heart and spirit is in any holy service, the more real goodnesse there is in it, though it fll short of others in the outward expression. The widowes two mites surpassed all the rest, Christ himselfe being judge; so in sin, though the internal acts of sin in thoughts and affections seem light upon mans balance if compared with outward acts, yet these may be so circumstanciated that they may exceed the other in Gods account; Peter layes the accent of Magus his sin on the wicked thought, which his words betrayed to be in his heart, Pray God, if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven, Act. 8.22. Sauls sin in sparing Agag, and saving the best of the sheep and oxen, which he was commanded to destroy, was materially a farre lesse sin then Davids adultery and murder, yet it is made equal with a greater than both, even witchcraft it selfe, 1 Samuel 15:23. and whence receiv'd his sin such a dye, but from the wickedness of his heart, that was worse then Davids when deepest in the temptation? Fourthly, if Satan get into your spirit and defile it, O how hard will you finde it to stay there? you have already sipt of his broth, and now are more likely to be overcome at last to sit down and make your full meale of that, which by tasting has vitiated your palate already. It were strange if while you are musing and your heart hot with the thoughts of lust, the fire should not break forth at your lips, or worse.

Quest. But what help have we against this sort of Satans temptations?

Answ. I suppose you a Christian, that makest this question; and if you do it in the plainnesse of your heart it proves you one. Who besides will, or can desire in earnest to be eased of these

guests? even when a carnal heart prayes for deliverance from them, he would be loath his prayer should be heard. Not yet Lord, the heart of such a one cries, as Austin confessed of himself. Sin is as truly the off-spring of the soul as children are of our bodies, and it findes as much favor in our eyes, yea more, for the sinner can slay a son to save a sin alive, Micah 6:7. and of all sins none are more made on then these heart sins.

First, because they are the first-born of the sinful heart, and the chiefest strength of the soul is laid out upon them.

Secondly, because the heart has more scope in them then in outward acts. The proud man is staked down oft to a short state, and cannot ruffle it in the world, and appear to others in that pomp he would; but within his own bosome he can set up a stage, and in his own foolish heart present himself as great a Prince as he pleass. The malicious can kill in his desires as many in a few minutes, as the Angel smote in a night of Senacheribs host. Nero thus could slay all Rome on the block at once.

Thirdly, these sins stay with the soul when the other leave it; when the sinner has cripled his body with drunkennesse and filthinesse. and proves miles emeritus, cannot follow the devils campany longer in those ways, then these cursed lusts will entertain the sinner with stories of his old pranks and pleasures. In a word, these inward lusts of the heart have nothing but the conscience of a Deity to quell them. Other sins put the sinner to shame before men, and as some that believed on Christ, durst not confesse him openly because they loved the praise of men, so there are sinners who are kept from vouching their lusts openly, for the same tenderness to their reputation; but here is no feare of that, if they can but forget that heaven sees them, or perswade themselves there is

no danger from thence; the coast then is clear, they may be as wicked as they please. These make inward sins so hugg'd and embraced. If you therefore can find your heart set against these, I may venture to call you a Christian, and for your help against them,

First, be earnest with God in prayer to move and order your heart in its thoughts and desires. If the tongue be such an unruly thing that few can tame; O what is the heart where such a multitude of thoughts are flying forth as thick as bees from the hive, and sparks from the furnace! It is not in man, not in the holiest on earth to do this without divine assistance. Therefore we finde David so often crying out in this respect to order his steps in his Word, to unite his heart to his feare, to en[••]ine his heart to his testimonies. As a servant, when the child he tends is troublesome, and will not be ruled by him, calls out to the father to come to him, who no sooner speaks but all is whist with him; No doubt holy David found his heart beyond his skill or power, that makes him so oft do its errand to God. Indeed God has promised thus much to his children, to order their steps for them, Psalms 37:22. only he looks they should bring their hearts to him for that end. Commit your work to the Lord, and your thoughts shall be established, Proverbs 16:3. or ordered. Art you setting your face towards an Ordinance, where you are sure to meet Satan, who will be disturbing you with worldly thoughts, and may be worse? Let God know from your mouth where you are going, and what your feares are; never does the soul march in so goodly order, as when it puts it self under the conduct of God.

Secondly, set a strong guard about your outward senses: these are Satans landing places, especially the eye and the eare. Take heed what you importest at these; vaine discourse seldome passs

without leaving some tincture upon the heart, as unwholesome aire inclines to putrefaction things sweet in themselves: so unsavoury discourse to corrupt the minde that is pure; look you breathest therefore in a clear aire. And for your eye, let it not wander, wanton objects cause wanton thoughts. Job knew his eye and his thoughts were like to go together, and therefore to secure one, he covenants with the other, Job 31, 1.

Thirdly, often reflect upon your self in a day, and observe what company is with your heart. A careful Master will ever and anon be looking into his work-house, and see what his servants are doing, and a wise Christian should do the same. We may know by the noise in the school, the Master is not there: much of the mis-rule in our bosomes ariss from the neglect of visiting our hearts. Now when you are parlying with your soul, make this threefold enquiry.

First, whether that which your heart is thinking on be good or evil. If evil and wicked, such as are proud, unclean, distrustful thoughts, show your abhorrency of them, and chide your soul sharply for so much as holding conference with them, of which nought can come, but dishonour to God, and mischief to your own soul, and stirre up your heart to mourn for the evil neighbor-hood of them, and by this you shalt give a testimony of your faithfulness to God. When David mourn'd for Abner, all Israel 'tis said understood that day, that it was not of the King to stay Abner: Your mourning for them will show these thoughts are not so much of you, as of Satan.

Secondly, if they be not broadly wicked, enquire whether they be not empty, frothy, vaine imaginations, that have no subserviency to the glory of God, your own good or others; and if so, leave not till you have made your selfe apprehensive of Satans de-

signe on you in them; though such are not for your purpose, yet they are for his, they serve his turne to keep you from better. All the water is lost that runnes beside the mill, and all your thoughts are waste which help you not to do Gods work withal in your general or particular calling. The Bee will not sit on a flower where no honey can be suckt, neither should the Christian. Why sittest you here idle (you shouldest say to your soul) when you have so much to do for God and your soul, and so little time to dispatch it in?

Thirdly, if you findest they are good for matter your heart is busied about, then enquire whether they be good for time and manner, which being wanting they degenerate,

First, for the season; that is good fruit which is brought forth in its season. Christ liked the work his mother would have put him upon as well as her self, John 2. but his time was not come. Good thoughts and meditations misplaced, are like some interpretations of Scripture, good truths, but bad expositions; they fit not the place they are drawn from, nor these the time. To pray when we should hear, or be musing on the Sermon when we should pray, this is to rob God one way to pay him another.

Secondly, tarefully observe the manner. Your heart may meditate a good matter, and spoile it in the doing. You are may be musing of your sins, and affecting your heart into a sense of them, but so, that while you are stirring up your sorrow you weakenest your faith on the promise, that is your sin. He is a bad Chirurgion, that in opening a veine goes so deep that he cuts an artery, and lames the arme if not kills the man. Or you are thinking of your family and providing for that, this you oughtest to do and wert worse then an infidel if you neglectest, but may be these thoughts are so distracting and distrustfull as if there were no promise, no providence

to relieve you. God takes this ill, because it reflects upon his care of you; O how near does our duty here stand to our sin! so much care is necessary ballast to the soul, a little more sinks it under the waves of unbeliefe; like some things very wholesome, but one degree more of hot or cold would make them poison.

Chapter 8. How Satan Labors to Corrupt the Christian's Mind with Error

• • •

THe second sort of spiritual sins are such as are not only acted in the spirit, but are conversant about spiritual objects proper to the souls nature that is a spirit, and not laid out in carnal passions of fleshly lusts, in which the soul acts but as a Pander for the body, and partakes of their delights only by way of sympathy; for as the soul feels the bodies pains no other way then by sympathy, so neither does it share in the pleasures of the flesh by any proper taste it has of them, but only from its neer neighbourhood with the body does sympathize with its joy; but in spiritual wickednesses that corrupt the minde, here the soul moves in its own sphere, with a delight proper to it selfe; and there are no lesse of these then the other. There is hardly a fleshly lust, but has some spiritual sin analogical to it, as they say there is no species of creatures on the land but may be pattern'd in the sea: Thus the heart of man can produce spiritual sins answering carnal lusts; for whoredom and uncleannesse of the flesh, there is idolatry call'd in Scripture spiritual adultery, from which the seat of Antichrist is call'd spiritual Sodom; for sensual drunkennesse, there is a drunk-

ennesse of the minde intoxicating the judgement with errour, a drunkennesse of the heart in cares and feares; for carnal pride in beauty, riches, honor, there is a spiritual pride of gifts graces, &c. Now Satan in an especial manner assaults the Christian with such as these; it would require a larger discourse then I can allow to runne over the several kindes of them; I shall of many pick out two or three. As first, Satan labors to corrupt the mind with erroneous principles, he was at work at the very first plantation of the Gospel, sowing his darnel, assoon almost as Christ his wheate, which sprung up in pernicious errours, even in the Apostles times, which made them take the weeding-hook into their hands, and in all their Epistles labor to countermine Satan in this design. Now Satan has a double design in this his endeavour to corrupt the mindes of men, especially Professours, with errour.

SECT. I.

First, he does this in despite to God, against whom he cannot vent his malice at a higher rate then by corrupting his truth, which God has so highly honoured, Psalms 138:2. You have magnified your Word above all your Name. Every creature bears the Name of God, but in his Word and truth therein contained 'tis writ at length, and therefore he is more choice of this, then of all his other works; he cares not much what becomes of the world and all in it, so he keeps his Word, and saves his truth. Ere long we shall see the world on a light flame, the heavens and earth shall passe away, but the Word of the Lord endures for ever. When God will, he can make more such worlds as this is, but he cannot make another truth, and therefore he will not lose one iota thereof. Satan knowing this, sets all his wits on work to deface this truth, and disfigure it by un-

sound doctrine. The Word is the glasse in which we see God, and seeing him are changed into his likenesse by his Spirit. If this glasse be crackt, then our conceptions we have of God will misrepesent him unto us, whereas the Word in its native clearnesse sets him out in all his glory unto our eye.

Secondly, he endeavours to draw into this spiritual sin of errour, as the most subtil and effectual means to weaken, if not destroy the power of godliness in them. The Apostle joynes the Spirit of power and a sound minde together, 2 Tim 1:7. Indeed the power of holiness in practice depends much on the foundnesse of judgement. Godliness is the child of truth, and it must be nurst, if we will have it thrive with no other milk then of its own mother. Therefore we are exhorted to desire the sincere milk of the Word, that we may grow, 1 Peter 2:2. [illegible], if this milk be but a little dash't with errour, it is not so nutritive All errour, how innocent soever any may seem, (like the Ivy) draws away the strength of the souls love from holiness. Hosea tells us, Whoredom and wine take away the heart; now errour is spiritual adultery. Paul speaks of his espousing them to Christ; when a person receives an errour, he takes a stranger into Christs bed, and it is the nature of adulterous love to take away the wises heart from her true husband, that she delights not in his company so much as of her adulterous lover: and do we not see it at this day fulfill'd? do not many show more zeal in contending for one errour, then for many truths? how strangely are the hearts of many taken off from the ways of God, their love cool'd to the Ordinances and Messengers of Christ? and all this occasioned by some corrupt principle got into their bosomes, which controuls Christ and his truth, as Hagar and her son did Sarah and her child. Indeed Christ will never enjoy true conju-

gal love from the soul, till like Abraham he turns these out of doors. Errour is not so innocent a thing as many think it; it is as unwholesome food to the body, that poisons the spirits and surfeits the whole body, which seldom passs away and not break out into sores. As the knowledge of Christ carries a soul above the pollutions of the world, so errour entangles and betrayes it to those lusts, whose hands it had escaped.

Thirdly, Satan in drawing a soul into this spiritual sin has a designe to disturb the peace of the Church, which is rent and shattered when this fire-ship comes among them. I hear (says Paul) there are divisions among you, and I partly believe it, for there must be heresies, 1 Corinthians 11:18, 19. implying that divisions are the natural issue of heresie. Errour cannot well agree with errour, except it be against the truth, then indeed (like Pilate and Herod) they are easily made friends, but when truth seems to be overcome, and the battel is over with that, then they fall out among themselves, and therefore it is no wonder if it be so troublesom a neighbor to truth. O Sirs, what a sweet silence and peace was there among Christians a dozen years ago; me thinks the looking back to those blessed days in this respect, (though they had also another way their troubles, yet not so uncomfortable, because that storme united, this scatters the Saints spirits) is joyous to remember in what unity and love Christians walk't, that the Persecutors of those times might have said, as their Predecessours did of the Saints in primitive times, See how they love one another; but now alas they may jeere and say, See how they that loved so dearly are ready to pluck one anothers throats out.

SECT. II.

The application of this shall be only in a word of exhortation to all, especially you who bear the Name of Christ by a more eminent Profession of him. O beware of this soul-infection, this leprosie of the head. I hope you do not think it needlesse, for 'tis the disease of the times. This plague is begun, yea, spreads apace; not a flock, a Congregation hardly that has not this scab among them. Paul was a Preacher the best of us all may write after, and he presses this home upon the Saints, yea, in the constant course of his preaching it made a piece of his Sermon, Acts 20:30, 31. he sets us Preachers also on this work: Take heed to your selves, and to all the flock; for I know this, that after my departure shall grievous wolves enter; also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things; therefore watch. And then he presents his own example, that he hardly made a Sermon for several years, but this was part of it to warn every one night and day with teares. We need not prophesie what Impostors may come upon the stage, when we go off: There are too many at present above board of this gang, drawing disciples after them. And if it be our duty to warn you of them, surely 'tis yours to watch, lest you by any of them be led into temptation in this hour thereof, wherein Satan is let loose in so great a measure to deceive the Nation. May you not as easily be sowered with this leaven, as the disciples whom Christ bids beware? Are you priviledged above those famous Churches of Galatia and Corinth, many of which were bewitched with false teachers, and in a manner turned to another Gospel? Is Satan grown Orthodox, or have his instruments lost their cunning, who hunt for souls? In a word, is there not a sympathy between your corrupt heart and errour? Have you not a disposition, which like the fomes of the earth, makes it natural for these weeds to grow in your soile. Seest you

not many prostrated by this enemy, who sate upon the mountain of their faith, and thought it should never have been removed, surely they would have tooke it ill to have been told you are the men and women that will decry Sabbaths, which now ye count holy; you will turn Pelagians, who now defie the name; you will despise Prophecie it self, who now seem so much to honor the Prophets; you will throw family-duties out of doors, who dare not now go out of doors, till you have prayed there. Yet these, and more than these are come to passe, and does it hot behove you (Christian) to take heed lest you fallest also? and that you may not,

First, make it your chief care to get a through change of your heart. If once the root of the matter be in you, and you beest bottom'd by a lively faith on Christ, you are then safe, I do not say wholly free from all errour, but this I am sure, free from ingulphing your soul in damning errour. They went out from us, (says Saint John) but they were not of us, for if they had been of us they would no doubt have continued with us, 1 John 2:19 As if he had said, they had some outward Profession, and common work of the Spirit with us, which they have either lost or carried over to the devils quarters, but they never had the unction of the sanctifying Spirit. By this, verse 20. he distinguishs them, and comforts the sincere ones, who possibly might feare their own fall by their departure: But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. 'Tis one thing to know a truth, and another thing to know it by unction. An hypocrite may do the former, the Saint only the latrer It is this unction which gives the soul the savor of the knowledge of Christ; those are the fit prey for Impostors, who are enlightened, but not enlivened. O it's good to have the heart

establish't with grace, this as an anchor will keep us from being set a drift, and carried about with divers and strange doctrines, as the Apostle teaches us, Hebrews 13:9.

Secondly, ply the work of mortification. Crucifie the flesh daily. Heresie though a spiritual sin, yet by the Apostle reckon'd among the deeds of the flesh, Galatians 5:20. because it is occasioned by fleshly motives, and nourisht by carnal food and fuel. Never any turn'd Heretick, but flesh was at the bottome, either they serv'd their belly, or a lust of pride; 'twas the way to Court, or secur'd their estates, and saved their lives, as sometimes the reward of truth is fire and fagot; some pad or other is in the straw when least seen, and therefore it's no wonder that heresies should end in the flesh, which in a manner sprang from it. The rheume in the head ascends in fumes from the stomach, and returnes there, or unto the lungs which at last fret and ulcerate: Carnal affections first send up their fumes to the understanding, clouding that, yea, bribing it to receive such and such principles for truths, which imbraced, fall down into the life corrupting that with the ulcer of profanenesse. So that, Christian, if once you can take off your engagements to the flesh, and become a free-man, so as not to give your vote to gratifie your carnal fears or hopes, you will then be a sure friend to truth.

Thirdly, waite conscionably on the Ministery of the Word. Satan commonly stops the eare from hearing sound Doctrine, before he opens it to embrace corrupt. This is the method of souls apostatizing from truth, 2 Timothy 4:3, 4. They shall turn their eares from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. Satan like a cunning thief drawes the soul out of the road into some lane or corner, and there robs him of the truth. By rejecting of one

Ordinance we deprive our selves of the blessing of all other: say not that you prayest to be led into truth, he will not hear your prayer if you turnest yours eare from hearing the law. He that loves his child, when he sees him play the truant, will whip him to school: If God loves a soul, he will bring him back to the Word with shame and sorrow.

Fourthly, When you hearest any unusual Doctrine, though never so pleasing, make not up the match hastily with it: have some better testimony of it before you open your heart to it. The Apostle indeed bids us entertain strangers, for some have entertain'd Angels unawares, Hebrews 13:3. but he would not have us carried about with strange Doctrine, vers. 9. by this I am sure some have entertained devils. I confesse. 'tis not enough to reject a doctrine, because strange to us, but ground we have to wait and enquire. Paul marvelled that the Galatians were so soon removed from him, who had called them unto the grace of Christ, unto another Gospel; they might sure have stayed till they had acquainted Paul with it, and asked his judgement; what, no sooner an Impostour come into the countrey and open his pack, but buy all his ware at first sight? O friends, were it not more wisdom to pray such new notions over and over again, to search the Word and our hearts by it, yea, not to trust our own hearts, but call in counsel from others. If your Minister have not such credit with you, yet the most holy, humble and establish't Christians you can finde. Errour is like fish, which must be eaten new, or it will stink, When those dangerous errours sprung up first in New England, O how unsettled were many of the Churches? what an outis was made, as if some mine of gold had been discovered; but in a while, when those errours came to their complexion, and it was perceived where they

were bound, to destroy Churches, Ordinances, and Power of Godliness: then such as feared God, who had stept aside, returned back with shame and sorrow.

Chapter 9. Of Pride of Gifts and How Satan Tempts the Christian Thereto

• • •

THe second spiritual wickedness which Satan provokes unto, especially the Saint, is spiritual pride. This was the sin made him of a blessed Angel a cursed devil, and as it was his personal sin, so he chiefly labors to derive it to the sons of men: and he so far prevailed on our first Parents, that ever since this sin has and does claim a kinde of regency in the heart, making use both of bad and good to draw her chariot. First, of evil; Pride enters into the labors of other sins, they do but work to make her brave, as subjects to uphold the state and grandure of their Prince: Thus you shall see some drudge and droile, cheat, cosen, oppress; and what mean they? O 'tis to get an estate to maintain their pride. Others fawn and flatter, lie, dissemble, and for what? to help pride up some mount of honor. Again, it makes use of that which is good, it can work with Gods own tooles, his Ordinances, by which the holy Spirit advancs his Kingdom of grace in the hearts of his Saints. These often are prostituted to pride. A man may be very zealous in prayer and painful in preaching, and all the while pride is the Master whom he serves, though in Gods livery. It can take

Sanctuary in the holiest actions, and hide it self under the skirt of vertue it self. Thus while a man is exercising his charity pride may be the idol in secret for which he lavishs out his gold so freely. It is hard starving this sin, because there is nothing almost but it can live on; nothing so base that a proud heart will not be lift up with, and nothing so sacred but it will profane, even dare to drink in the bowles of the Sanctuary, nay, rather than starve it will feed on the carcases of other sins; Difficilè valde vitatur peccatum, quod ex victoriâ vitiorum nascitur. This minion pride will stir up the soul to resist, yea, in a manner kill some sins, that she may boastingly show the head of them, and blow the creature up with the conceit of himself above others; as the Pharisee who through pride bragged that he was not as the Publicane; so that pride, if not look't to, will have to do every where, and has a large sphere it moves in. Nothing indeed (without divine assistance) the creature has or does, but will soon become a prey to this devourer; but I am not to handle it in its latitude. Pride is either conversant about carnal objects, as pride of beauty, strength, riches and such like, or about spiritual; the latter we shall speak a little to. I confesse for the former, possibly a Saint may be catched in them, no sin to be slighted, yet not so commonly, for ordinarily pride is of those perfections which are suitable, if not proper to the state and calling we are in: thus the Musician, he is proud of the skill he has in his Art, by which he excells others of his rank. The Scholar, though he can play perhaps as well, yet is not proud of that, but looks on it as beneath him; no, he is proud of his learning and choice notions, and so of others. Now the life of a Christian as a Christian, is superiour to the life of man as a man; and therefore does not value himself by these which are beneath him, but in higher and more raised

perfections, which suit a Christians calling. As a natural man is proud of perfections suitable to his natural estate, as honor, beauty; so the Christian is prone chiefly, to be puffed up with perfections suitable to his life; I shall name three: pride of Gifts, pride of Grace, pride of Priviledges; these are the things which Satan chiefly labors to entangle him in.

SECT. I.

First, Pride of Gifts. By Gifts I mean those supernatural abilities, with which the Spirit of God does enrich and endow the mindes of men, for edification of the body of Christ; of which gifts the Apostle tells us there is great diversity, and all from the same Spirit, 1 Corinthians 12:4. There is not greater variety of colours, and qualities in plants and flowers, with which the earth like a carpet of needle-work is variegated fOr the delight and service of man, then there is of gifts in the mindes of men, natural and spiritual to render them useful to one another, both in civil societies and Christian fellowship. The Christian as well as man is intended to be a sociable creature, and for the better managing this spiritual Common-wealth among Christians; God does wisely and graciously provide and impart gifts, suitable to the place every one stands in to his brethren, as the vessels are larger or lesse in the body natural, according to their place therein. Now Satan labors what he can to taint these gifts, and fly-blow them with pride in the Christian, that so he may spoile the Christians trade and commerce, which is mutually maintained by the gifts and graces of one another. Pride of gifts hinders the Christians trade, at least thriving by their commerce two ways.

First, pride of gifts is the cause why we do so little good with them to others.

Secondly, why we receive so little good from the gifts of others.

First, pride of gifts hinders the doing of good by them to others, and that upon a threefold account.

First, pride diverts a man from aiming at that end; so far as pride prevails the man prayes, preaches, &c. rather to be thought good by others, then to do good to others; rather to enthrone himself then Christ, in the opinions and hearts of his hearers. Pride carries the man aloft, to be admired for the height of his parts and notions, and will not suffer him to stoop so low as to speak of plain truths, or if he does, not plainly; he must have some fine lace, though on a plain stuffe, such a one may tickle the eare, but very unlikely to do real good to the souls: alas, it is not that he attends.

Secondly, if this painted Jezabel of pride be perceived to look out at the window in any exercise, whether of preaching, prayer, or conference, it does beget a disdain in the spirits of those that heare such a one both good and bad. 'Tis a sin very odious to a gracious heart, and oft-times makes the stomach go against the food; though good, through their abhorrency of that pride they see in the instrument. It is indeed their weakness, but wo to them that by their pride lead them into temptation! nay, those that are bad and may be in the same kinde, like not that in another which they favor in themselves, and so prejudiced, return as bad as they went.

Thirdly, pride of gifts robs us of Gods blessing in the use of them. The humble man may have Satan at his right hand to oppose him, but be sure the proud man shall finde God himself there to resist him, whenever he goes about any duty. God proclaims so

much, and would have the proud man know whereever he meets him he will oppose him; he resists the proud. Great gifts are beautiful as Rachel, but pride makes them also barren like her. Either we must lay self aside, or God will lay us aside.

Secondly, pride of gifts hinders the receiving of good from others. Pride fills the soul, and a full soul will take nothing from God, much lesse from man to do it good. Such a one is very dainty; It is not every Sermon, though wholesom food, nor every prayer, though savoury, will go down, he must have a choice dish, he thinks he has better than this of his own, and is such a one like to get good? And truly we may see it, that as the plain Plowman that can eate of any homely food if wholesome; has more health, and is able to do more work in a day, then many enjoy or can do in their whole life, that are nice, squeamish, and courtly in their fare; so the humble Christian that can feed on plain truths, and Ordinances which have not so much of the Art of man to commend them to their palate, enjoy more of God, and can do more for God, then the nicer sort of Professours, who are all to be served in a lordly dish of rare gifts. The Church of Corinth was famous for gifts above other Churches, 1 Cor. 1. but not in grace; none so charged for weakness in that, 1 Corinthians 3:2. he calls them carnal, babes in Christ, so weak, as not able to digest mans meat; I havé fed you, says Paul, with milk and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to beare it, neither yet now are ye able. Why? what is the matter? the reason lies, verse 3. Ye are carnal, there is among you envie and strife, v.4. One says, I am of Paul; another, I am of Apollos. Pride makes them take parts, and make sides, one for this Preacher, another for that, as they fancied one to excel another. And this is not the way to thrive. Pride destroyes love, and love

wanting edification is lost. The devil has made foul work in the Church by this engine. Zanchy tells of one in Geneva, who being desired to go hear Viretus, that preach't at the same time with Calvin, answered his friend, If Paul were to preach relicto Paulo Calvinum audirem: I would leave Paul himself to heaCalvin, And will pride in the gifts of another so far transport, even to the borders of blasphemy? what work then will pride make, when the gifts are a mans own?

SECT. II.

Use 1 Does Satan thus stir up Saints to this spiritual pride of gifts? first, here is a word to you that have mean gifts, yet truth of grace, be content with your condition. Perhaps when you hearest others, how enlargedly they pray, how able to discourse of the truths of God, and the like, you are ready to go into a corner, and mourn to think how weak your memory, how dull your apprehension, how straitened your spirit, hardly able (though in secret) to utter and express your minde to God in prayer. O you are ready to think those the happy men and women, and almost murmur at your condition well, can you not say, though I have not words I hope I have faith, I cannot dispute for the truth, but I am willing to suffer for it; I cannot remember a Sermon, but I never hear the Word, but I hate sin and love Christ more than ever: Lord, you knowest I love you? Truly (Christian) you have the better part; you little think'st what a mercy may be wrapt up even in the meannes of your gifts, or what temptations their gifts expose them to, which God for ought I know may in mercy deny you. Josephs coat made him finer then his brethren, but this caused all his trouble, this set the Archers a shooting their arrows into his side; thus great gifts lift a

Saint up a little higher in the eyes of men, but it occasions many temptations which you meetest not with, that are kept low, what with envie from their brethren, malice from Satan, and pride in their own hearts; I dare say, none finde so hard a work to go to heaven as such, much ado to bear up against those waves and windes, while you creepest along the shore under the winde to heaven. It is with such as with some great Lord of little estate, a meaner man oft has money in his purse, when he has none, and can lnd his Lordship some at a need: great gifts and parts are titles of honor among men, but many such may come and borrow grace and comfort of a mean gifted brother; possibly the Preacher of his poor neighbor. O poor Christian, do not murmur or envy them, but rather pity and pray for them, they need it more than others his gifts are yours; your grace is for your self; you are like a Merchant that has his Factour goes to sea but he has his Adventure without hazard brought home. You joynest with him in prayer, have the help of his gifts, but not the temptation of his pride.

Use 2 Secondly, does Satan labor thus to draw to pride of gifts? this speaks a word to you to whom God has given more gifts then ordinary, beware of pride, that is now your snare. Satan is at work, if possible he will turne your Artillery against your selfe; your safety lies in your humility, if this lock be cut the legions of hell are on you. Remember whom you wrestlest with, spiritual wickedness, and their play is to lift up, that they may give the sorer fall. Now the more to stir up your heart against it, I shall adde some soul-humbling considerations.

First, consider these spiritual gifts are not your own, and will you be proud of anothers bounty? Is not God the Founder, and can he not soon be the Confounder of your gifts? you that are proud of

your gourd, what will you be when it is gone? surely then you will be peevish and angry, and truly you takest the course to be strip't of them. Gifts come on other termes then grace. God gives grace as a free-hold, it has the promise of this and another world, but gifts come on liking; though a father will not cast off his child, yet he may take away his fine coat and ornaments, if proud of them.

Secondly, gifts are not meerly for your self. As the light of the Sun is ministeriall, it shines not for it self: so all your gifts are for others; Gifts for the edifying of the body. Suppose a man should leave a chest of money in your hands to be distributed to others, what folly is it in this man to put this into his own Inventory, and applaud himself that he has so much money? Poor soul, you are but Gods Executour, and by that time you have paid all the Legacies, you will see little left for you to brag and boast of.

Thirdly, know (Christian) you shalt be accountable for these talents; now with what face can a proud soul look on God? Suppose one left an Executor to pay Legacies, and this man should pay them not as Legacies of another, but gifts of his own. Christ at his ascension gave gifts, that his children should receive, you have some in your hand; now a proud soul gives out all, not as the Legacy of Christ, but as his own, he assumes all to himselfe. O how abominable is this to entitle our selves to Christs honor!

Fourthly, your gifts commend you not to God. Man may be taken with your expression and notion in prayer: but these are all pared off when your prayer comes before God; O woman, (says Christ) great is your faith! not compt and flourishing▪ your language. It were good after our duties, to sort the Ingredients of which they are made up, what grace contributed, and what gifts,

and what pride, and when all the heterogeneal stuffe is sever'd, you shall see in what a little compasse the actings of grace in our duties will lie.

Fifthly, consider while you are priding in your gifts, you are dwindling and withering in your grace. Such are like corne that runs up much into straw, whose eare commonly is but light and thin. Grace is too much neglected, where gifts are too highly prized; we are commanded to be clothed with humility. Our garments cover the shame of our bodies, humility the beauty of the soul; and as a tender body cannot live without cloathes, so neither can grace without this cloathing of humility. It kills the Spirit of praise, when you shouldest blesse God you are applauding your self. It destroys Christian love, and stabs our fellowship with the Saints to the heart: A proud man has not room enough to walk in company, because the gifts of others he thinks stand in his way. Pride so distempers the palate, that it can relish nothing that is drawen from anothers vessel.

Sixthly, it is the fore-runner of some great sin, or some great affliction. God will not suffer such a weed as pride to grow in his garden, without taking some course or other to root it up; may be he will let you fall into some great sin, and that shall bring you home with shame. God useth sometimes a thorn in the flesh, to prick the bladder of pride in the Spirit; or at least some great affliction; the very end whereof is to hide pride from man. As you do with your hot-metall'd horses, ride them over plowed lands to tame them, and then you can sit safely on their back. If Gods honor be in danger through your pride, then expect a rod, and most likely the affliction shall be in that, which will be most grievous to you, in the thing you are proud of. Hezekiah boasted of his

treasure, God sends the Chaldeans to plunder him, Jonah fond of his gourd, and that is smitten: and if your Spirit be blown up with pride of gifts, you are in danger of having them blasted, at least in the opinion of others, whose breath of applause (possibly) was a means to overset your unballast spirit.

SECT. III.

Quest. But how would you direct us against this?

Answ. Arguments you have had before; I shall only therefore point to two or three doors, where your enemy comes forth upon you, and surely the very sight thereof, if you beest loyal to Christ, will stirre you up to fall upon it.

First, pride discovers it self in dwelling upon the thoughts of our gifts, with a secret kinde of content to see our own face, till at last we fall in love with it. We read of some whose eyes are full of the adulteresse, and cannot cease from sin; a proud heart is full of himself, his own abilities cast their shadow before him, they are in his eye wherever he goes, the great subject and theam of his thoughts is what he is, and what he has above others, applauding himself as Bernard confesses, that (when one would think he had little leisure for such thoughts) even in preaching, pride would be whispering in his eare Bene fecisti Bernarde, O well done Bernard. Now have a care (Christian) of chatting with such company. Run from such thoughts as from a Beare. If the devil can get you to stand on this pinacle, while he presents you with the glory of your spiritual attainments and endowments for you to gaze on them, your weak head wll soon turn round in pride: and therefore labor to keep the sense of your own infirmities lively in your soul to di-

vert the temptation. As those who are subject to some kinde of fits, carry about them things proper for the disease, that when the fit is coming, (which oft is occasioned with a sweet perfume) they may use them for their help. Sweet sents are not more dangerous for them, then any thing that may applaud you is to your soul: Have a care therefore not only of wearing such thoughts in your own bosome, but also of sitting by others, that bring the sweet sent of your perfections to you by their flattery.

Secondly, this kinde of pride appears in a forwardnesse to expose it self to view.Davids brethren were mistaken in him in deed, but oft the pride and naughtinesse of the heart breaks out at this door. Christs carnal friends bid Christ show himselfe; pride loves to climbe up, not as Zaecheus, to see Christ, but to be seen himself. The fool (Solomon tells us) has no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover it self, Proverbs 18:2. Pride would be some body, and therefore comes abroad to court the multitude, whereas humility delights in privacy; as the leaves do cover and shade the fruits, that some hand must gently lift up them before they can see the fruit: so should humility and a holy modesty conceal the perfections of the soul, till a hand of Providence by some call invites them out. There is a pride in naked gifts as well as in naked breasts and backs: humility is a necessary veile to all other graces; and therefore first, Christian, look whenever you comest forth to publike duty, that you have a call; it is obedience to be ready to answer, when God calls you forth, but it's pride to run before God speaks. Secondly, when call'd earnestly implore divine strength against this enemy: shun not a duty for feare of pride, you

may show it in the very seeming to escape it, but go in the strength of God against it; there is more hope of overcoming it by obedience then disobedience.

Thirdly, in envying the gifts of others, when they seeme to blinde our own, that they are not so faire a prospect as we desire. This is a weed may grow too rank in a good soile. Aaron and Miriam could not bear Moses his honor, Numb. 12.1. that was the businesse, though they pick a quarrel with him about his wife, (because an Ethiopian) as appears plainly, v. 2. Has the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? has he not spoken also by us? They thought Moses went away with too much of the honor, and did repine that God should use him more than themselves. And 'tis observable, that the lusting for flesh broke out among the mixt multitude and baser sort of people, Numb. 11.4, 5. but this of pride and envie took fire in the bosomes of the most eminent for place and Piety. O what need then have we, poor creatures, to watch our hearts when we see such precious servants of God led into temptation? The Spirit that dwells in us lusts to envy, James 4:5. Our corrupt nature is ever putting on to this sin. 'Tis as hard to keep our hearts and this sin asunder, as it is to hinder two lovers from meeting together: Thatch is not more ready to be fired with every flash of lightening, then the heart to be kindled at the shining forth of any excelling gift or grace in another. It was one of the first windows that corrupt nature look't out at, a sin that shed the first blood; Cains envy hatcht Abels murder. Now if ever you meanest to get the mastery of this sin;

First, call in help from heaven. No sooner has the Apostle set forth, how big and teeming full the heart of man is with envy, but he shows where a fountain of grace is infinitely exceeding that of

lust; The Spirit within us lusts to envie, but he gives more grace, v. 5. And therefore sit not down tamely under this sin, it is not unconquerable. God can give you more grace then you have sin, more humility then you have pride. Be but so humble as cordially to beg his grace, and you shalt not be so proud, as wickedly to envy his gifts or grace in others.

Secondly, make this sin as black and ugly as you can possibly to your thought, that when it is presented to you you may abhor it the more. Indeed there needs no more than its own face, (wouldest you look wishly on it) to make you out of love with it. For first, this envying of others gifts, casts great contempt upon God, and that more ways then one.

First, when you enviest the gifts of your brethren, you takest upon you to teach God, what he shall give, and to whom; as if the great God should take counsel or ask leave of you before he dispenss his gifts, and darest you stand to your own envious thoughts with this interpretation? such a one you findest Christ himself give, Matth. 20.15. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own? as if Christ had said, what has any to do to cavil at my disposure of what is not theirs but mine to give?

Secondly, you malignest the goodnesse of God. It troubles you, it seems, that God has a heart to do good to any besides your selfe: your eye is evil because his is good. Wouldest not you have God be good? you had as good speak out and say, you would not have him God, he can assoon cease to be God as to be good.

Thirdly, you are an enemy to the glory of God, as you defacest that which should set it forth. Every gift is a ray of divine excellency; and as all the beams declare the glory of the Sunne, so all

the gifts God imparts declare the glory of God: Now envy labors to deface and fully the representations of God; it has ever something to disparage the excellency of another withal. God showed Miriam her sin by her punishment, she went to bespatter Moses, that shone so eminently with the gifts and graces of God, and God spits in her sace, Numb. 12. yea, fills her all over with a noisome scab. Doest you cordially wish well to the honor of God? why then hangest you your head, and doest not rather rejoyce to see him glorified by the gifts of others? Could a Heathen take it so well, when himself was passed by, and others chosen to places of honor and government, that he said, he was glad his City could finde so many more worthy then himself? and shall a Christian repine that any are found fit to honor God besides himself?

Secondly, you wrongest your brother, as you sinnest against the law of love, which obligs you to rejoyce in his good as your owne, yea, to prefer him in honor before your self. You can not love and envy the same person; envy is as contrary to love, as the hectical feavourish fire in the body is to the kindly heat of nature. Charity envis not, 1 Cor. 13. How can it when it lives where it loves? and when you ceasest to love, you beginnest to hate and kill him, and doest not you tremble to be found a murderer at last?

Thirdly, you consultest worst of all for your self. God is out of your reach, what you spittest against heaven, you are sure to have fall on your own face at last, and your brother whom you enviest God stands bound to defend him against your envy, because he is maligned for what he has of God in him. Thus did God plead Josephs cause against his envious brethren, and Davids against wicked Saul. Your selfe only have real hurt.

First, you deprivest your self of what you might reap from the gifts of others. That old saying is true, Tolle invidiam, mea tua sunt, & tua mea: What you have is mine, and what I have yours; when envy is gone. Whereas now, like the leach, (which they say draws out the worst blood) you suckest nothing, but what swells your minde with discontent, and is after vomited out in strife and contention. O what a sad thing is it, that one should go from a precious Sermon, a sweet prayer, and bring nothing away but a grudge against the instrument God used; as we see in the Pharisees and others at Christs preaching.

Secondly, you robbest your self of the joy of your life; He that is cruel troubles his own flesh, Proverbs 11:17. The envious man does it to purpose, he sticks the honor and esteem of others as thornes in his own heart, he cannot think of them without paine and anguish, and he must needs pine that is ever in paine.

Thirdly, you throwest your self into the mouth of temptation, you needest give the devil no greater advantage; it is a stock any sin almost will grow upon. What will not the Patriarchs do, to rid their hands of Joseph whom they envied? that very pride which made them disdain the thought of bowing to his sheaf, made them stoop far lower, even to debase themselves as low as hell, and be the devils instruments to sell their dear brother into slavery, which might have been worse to him, (if God had not provided otherwise,) then if they had slan him on the place. What an impotent minde and cruel did Saul show against David, when once envy had envenomed his heart? from that day which he heard David preferr'd in the womens Songs above himself, he could never get that sound out of his head, but did ever after devote this innocent man to death in his thoughts, who had done him no other wrong,

but in being an instrument to keep the crown on his head, by the hazard of his own life with Goliah. O it is a bloody sin. It is the wombe wherein a whole litter of other sins are formed, Romans 1:29. full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, &c. and therefore except you be resolved to bid the devil welcom and his whole train, resist him in this, that comes before to take up quarters for the rest.

Chapter 10. Of Pride of Grace

• • •

Secondly, pride of grace. This is another way Satan assaults the Christian. 'Tis true, grace cannot be proud, yet 'tis possible a Saint may be proud of his grace, there is nothing the Christian has or does, but this worme of pride will breed in it. The world we live in is corruptible, and all here is subject to putrefie, as things kept in a rafty muggish room, subject them to mould. It is not the nature of grace, but the salt of the Covenant keeps and preserves the purity of it; in heaven indeed we shall be safe. But how can a Saint be said to be proud of his grace? Then a soul is proud of his grace, when he trusts in his grace. Trust and confidence is an incommunicable flower of Gods Crown as Soveraign Lord, even among men it goes along with royalty. Set up a King, and as such he expects you should give him this, as the undoubted Prerogative of his place, and therefore to seek protection from any other, is (as it were) to set up another King, Judges 9:15. If indeed you anoint me King over you, then come and put your trust under my shadow; therefore when a soul puts his trust in any thing beside God, he sets up a Prince, a King, an Idol, to which he gives Gods glory away. Now it does not make the sin lesse, that it is the grace of God we crown, then if it were a lust we crowned. 'Tis idolatry to worship a holy Angel as well as a cursed devil, to make our grace a god,

as well as our belly our god, nay rather it addes to it, because that is now used to rob him of his glory, which should have brought him in the greatest revenue of glory; certainly the more treasure you put into your servants hands, the greater wrong to you for him to run away with it. I doubt not but David could have borne it better to have seen a Philistine drive him from his throne then a sonne, an Absalom. But how can or may a Saint be said to trust in his grace?

First, by trusting to the strength of his grace.

Secondly, by trusting on the worth of his grace. Indeed a professed trust in grace, I conceive, cannot stand with grace: but there is an oblique kinde of trust, or that which by interpretation may savor of it. Satan is slie in his assaults.

SECT. I.

First, of the first, to trust in the strength of grace is to be proud of grace. This is opposed to that poverty of spirit so commended by our Saviour, Matth. 5. by which a man lives in the continual sense of his spiritual beggery and nothingnesse, and so has his recourse to Christ, as the poor to the rich mans door, knowing he has nothing at home to maintain him. Such a one was Paul, not able to do any thing of himself; he is not ashamed to let the world know that Christ carries his purse for him. Our sufficiency is of God, yea, after many years trading, this holy man sees nothing he has got, Philippians 3:13. I count not my self to have apprehended: he is still pressing forward; ask him how he lives, he'll tell you who keeps house for him; I live, yet not I, Galatians 2:20▪ as ask a beggar where he has his meat, cloathes, &c. he'll say, I thank my good

Master; Now Satan chiefly labors to puffe the soul up with an overweening conceit of his own ability, as the readiest means to bring him into his snare; Satan knows 'tis Gods method to give his children into his hands, when once they grow proud and self-confident: Hezekiah was left to a temptation, 2 Chronicles 32:31. to try him. Why? God had tried him to purpose a little before in an affliction; what needs this? O Hezekiahs heart was lift up after his affliction. It was time for God to let the tempter alone a little to foile him; probably now Hezekiah had high thoughts of his grace; O he would never do as he had done before, and God will let him see what a weak creature he is. Peter makes a whip for his own back in that bravado; Though all should forsake you, yet will not I. Christ now in meer mercy must set Satan on him, to lay him on his back; that seeing the weakness of his faith, he might be dismounted from the height of his pride. All that I shall say from this, is to enteat you (Christian) to have a care of this kinde of pride. You know what Joah said to David, when he perceived his heart lift up with the strength of his Kingdom, and therefore would have the people numbered; The Lord God adde unto your people, how many soever they be, a hundred fold; but why does my Lord the King delight in this thing? 2 Samuel 24:3. The Lord adde to the strength of your grace a hundred fold, but why delightest you in this? why shouldest you be lift up? is it not grace? shall the Groom be proud because he rides on his Masters horse? or the mud wall because the Sun shines on it? may you not say of every dram of grace, as the young man of his hatchet, Alas, Muster, it is borrowed? nay, not only borrowed, but you can not use it without his skill and strength that lends it you. O beware of this, let not those vain

thoughts lodge in you, left you enter into temptation. It is a breach a whole troop of sins may enter at, yea will, except speedily fill'd up.

First, it will make you soon grow loose and negligent in your duty. 'Tis sense of insufficiency keeps a soul at work, to pray and heare, as want in the house and hutch holds up the market, no man comes there to buy what he has at home. Up, says Jacob, go down to Egypt for corne, that we live and not die. Thus says the needy Christian, Up soul to your God, your faith is weak, your patience almost spent, ply you to the throne of grace, go with your homer to the Ordinances, and get some supplies. Now a soul conceited of his store, has another song; Soul, take yours ease, you are richly laid in for many days. Let the doubting soul pray, your faith is strong; let the weake lie at the breast, you are well grown up; nay, 'tis well if it goes not further to a despising of Ordinances, except they have some more courtly fate then ordinary: such a passe were the Corinthians come to, 1 Corinthians 4:8. Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye reign like Kings without us. I pray observe how he layes the accent on the particle now; now ye are rich, as if he had said, I knew the time, if Paul had been come to town, and newes spread abroad in the City that Paul was to preach, you would have flock't to hear him, and blessed God for the season, but then you were poor and empty; now ye are full, you have got to a higher attainment; Paul is a plain fellow now, he may carry his cheere to a hungry people if he will, we are well apaid. And when once the heart is come to this, 'tis easie to judge what will follow.

Secondly, this trusting to the strength of grace will make the soul bold and venturous. The humble Christian is the wary Christian, he knows his weakness, and this makes him afraid. I

have a weak head, says he, I may be soon disputed into an errour and heresie, and therefore I dare not come where such stuffe is broach't, lest my weak head should be intoxicated: the confident man he'll sip of every cup, he fears none; no, he is stablish't in the truth, a whole team of hereticks shall not draw him aside. I have a vain light heart, says the humble soul; I dare not come among wicked debautch't company, left I should at last bring the naughty man home with me: but one trusting to the strength of his grace, dares venture into the devils quarters. Thus Peter into the rout of Christs enemies, and how he came off you know; there his faith had been slain on the place, had not Christ founded a retreat, by the seasonable look of love he gave him. Indeed I have read of some bragging Philosophers, who did not think it enough to be temperate, except they had the object for intemperance present; and therefore they would go into Taverns and Whore-houses, as if they meant to beat the devil on his own ground; but the Christian knows an enemy nearer then so, which they were ignorant of; and that he need not go over his own threshold to challenge the devils He has lust in his bosome that will be hard enough for him all his days, without giving it the vantage ground. Christian, I know no sin, but you may be left to commit it, except one. It was a bold speech of him, and yet a good man (as I have heard,) If Clapham die of the plague, say Clapham had no faith, and this made him boldly go among the infected. If a Christian, you shalt not die of spiritual plagues, yet such may have the plague-sores of grosse sins running on them for a time, and is not this sad enough? therefore walk humbly with your God.

Thirdly, this high conceit of the strength of your grace will make you cruel and churlish to your weak brethren in their infirmities, a sin that least becomes a Saint, Galatians 6:1. If any one be overtaken, you that be spiritual, restore such a one with meekness; but how shall a soul get such a meek spirit? It follows, considering your self, lest you also be tempted. What makes men hard to the poor? they think they shall never be so themselves. Why are many so sharp in their censures, but because they trust too much to their grace, as if they could never fall? O you are in the body, and the body of sin in you, therefore feare. Bernard used to say, when he heard any scandalous sin of a Professour; Hodie illi, cras mihi. He fell to day, I may stumble tomorrow.

SECT. II.

The second way a soul may be proud of his grace, is by resting on it for his acceptance with God. The Scripture calls inherent grace our own righteousnesse, (though God indeed be the efficient of it) and opposs it to the righteousnesse of Christ, which alone is called the Righteousnesse of God, Romans 10:1. Now to rest on any grace inherent, is to exalt our own righteousnesse above the righteousnesse of God; and what pride will this amount to? If this ware so, then a Saint when he comes to heaven might say, This is Heaven which I have built, my grace has purchased; and thus the God of Heaven should become tenant to his creature in Heaven. No, God has cast the order of our salvation into another method, of grace, but not of grace in us, but grace to us. Inherent grace has its place and office to accompany salvation, Hebrews 6:9. but not procure it. This is Christs work, not graces. When Israel waited on the Lord at Mount Sinai, they had their bounds, not a man must come up

besides Moses to treat with God, no, not touch the Mount lest they die: thus all the graces of the Spirit wait on God, but none come up to challenge any acceptance of God besides faith, which is a grace that presents the soul not in its own garments. But you will say, what needs all this? where is the man that trusts in his grace? Alas, where is the Christian that does fully stand clear, and freely come his off his own righteousnesse? he is a rare Pilot indeed, that can steere his faith in so direct a course, as not now and then to knock upon this duty, and run on ground upon that grace. Abraham went in to Hagar; and the children of Abrahams faith are not perfectly dead to the Law, and may be found sometimes in Hagars armes, witnesse the fluxe and refluxe of our faith, according to the various aspect of our obedience: when this seems full, then our faith is at a spring-tide, and covers all the mountains of our fears; but let it seem to wain in any service or duty, then the Jordan of our faith flies back, and leaves the soul naked. The devils spight is at Christ, and therefore since he could not hinder his landing, which he endeavoured all he could, nor work his will on his person when he was come; he goes now in a more refined way to darken the glory of his sufferings, and the sufficiency of his righteousnesse, by blending ours with his; this doctrine of Justification by faith, has had more works and batteries made against it, then any other in the Scripture. Indeed many other errours were but his slie approaches to get nearer to undermine this; and lastly, when he connot hide this truth, (which now shines in the Church like the Sun in its strength) then he labors to hinder the practical improvement of it, that we (if he can help it) shall not live up to our own principles, making us at the same time, that in our judgement we professe acceptance only through Christ, in our practice confute our

selves. Now there is a double pride in the soul he makes use of for this end, the one I may call a mannerly pride, the other a self-applauding pride.

First, a mannerly pride, which comes forth in the habit and guise of humility, and that discovers it self, either at the souls first coming to Christ, and keeps him from closing with the promise, or afterward in the daily course of a Christians walking with God, which keeps him from comfortable living on Christ.

First, when a poor soul is staved off the promise by the sense of his own unworthinesse and great unrighteousnesse; tell him of a pardon, alas, he is so wrapt up with the thoughts of his own vilenesse, that you cannot fasten it upon him. What, will God ever take such a toad as he is into his bosome, discount so many great abominations at once, and receive him into his favor, that has been so long in rebellious armes against him? he cannot believe it, no, though he heares what Christ has done and suffered for sin, he refuss to be comforted. Little does the soul think what a bitter root such thoughts spring from, you thinkest you doest well thus to declaim against your self, and aggravate your sins; indeed you can not paint them black enough, or entertain too low and base thoughts of your selfe for them: But what wrong has God and Christ done you, that you shouldest so unworthily reflect upon the mercy of the one, and merit of the other? Mayest you not do this, and be tender of the good Name of God also? Is there no way to show your sense of your sin, except you asperse your Saviour? Canst you not charge your self, but you must condemn God, and put Christ and his blood to shame before Satan, who triumphs more in this then all your other sins? In a word, though you like a wretch have undone your self, and damned your soul by your sins,

yet are you not willing God should have the glory of pardoning them, and Christ the honor of procuring the same? or are you like him in the Gospel, Luke 16:3. who could not dig, and to beg was ashamed. You can not earne heaven by your own righteousnesse, and is your spirit so stout that you will not beg it for Christs sake, yea, take it at Gods hands, who in the Gospel comes a begging to you, and beseechs you to be reconciled to him? Ah soul, who would ever have thought there could have lien such pride under such a modest veile? and yet none like it. 'Tis horrible pride for a beggar to starve, rather than take an alms at a rich mans hands: a malefactour rather to choose his halter then a pardon from his gracious Princes hand: but here is one infinitely surpassing both; a soul pining and perishing in sin, and yet rejecting the mercy of God, and the helpng hand of Christ to save him, Though Abigail did not think her self worthy to be Davids wife, yet she thought David was worthy of her, and therefore she humbly accepted his offer, and makes haste to go with the messengers: That's the sweet frame of heart indeed, to lie low in the sense of your own vilenesse, yet to believe; to renounce all conceit of worthinesse in our selves, yet not therefore to renounce all hope of mercy, but the more speedily to make haste to Christ that wooes us. All the pride and unmannerlinesse lies in making Christ stay for us, who bids his messengers invite poor sinners to come and tell them all things are ready. But may be you will say still, it is not pride that keeps you off, but you can not believe that ever God will entertain such as you art. Truly, you mendest the matter but little with this, either you keepest some lust in your heart, which you will not part with to obtain the benefit of the promise, and then you are a notorious hypocrite, who under such an out-cry for your sins, can drive a secret trade

with hell at the same time; or if not so, you doest discover the more pride in that you darest stand out, when you have nothing to oppose against the many plain and clear promises of the Gospel, but your peremptory unbelief. God bids the wicked forsake his ways, and turne to him, and he will abundantly pardon him; but you sayest you can not believe this for your own self. Now who speaks the truth? One of you two must be the liar, either you must take it with shame to your self, for what you have said against God and his promise, (and that is your best course) or you must proudly, yea, blasphemously cast it upon God, as every unbeliever does, 1 John 5:10. Nay, you makest him forsworn for God, to give poor sinners the greater security in flying for refuge to Christ, who is that hope set before them, Hebrews 6:17, 18. has sworn they should have strong consolation: O beatos quorum causâ Deus jurat! O miserrimos si nec juranti credamus. Tertul. de poenit. O happy we, for whose sake God puts himself under an oath; but O miserable we, who will not believe God, no, not when he sweares!

Secondly, when the soul has shot the great gulfe, and got into a slate of peace and life by closing with Christ, yet this mannerly pride Satan makes use of in the Christians daily course of duty and obedience, to disturb him and hinder his peace and comfort. O how unchearfully, yea, joylesly do many precious souls passe their days! If you enquire what is the cause, you shall finde all their joy runs out at the crannies of their imperfect duties and weak graces; they cannot pray as they would, and walk as they desire with evennesse and constancy; they see how short they fall of the holy rule in the Word, and the patterne which others more eminent in grace do set before them, and this though it does not make them throw the Promises away, and quite renounce all hope in Christ, yet it begets

many sad fears and suspitions, yea, makes them sit at the feast Christ has provided, and not know whether they may eat or not. In a word, as it robs them of their joy, so Christ of that glory which he should receive from their rejoycing in him, I do not say, (Christian) you oughtest not to mourn for those defects you findest in your graces and duties, nay, you couldest not approve your self to be sincere, if you did not. A gracious heart, seeing how far short his renewed state (forthe present) falls of mans primitive holiness by Creation, cannot but weep and mourn, (as the Jewes to behold the second Temple▪) yet (Christian even while the tears are in your eyes for your imperfect graces, (for a soul riseth with his grave-clothes on) you shouldest rejoyce, yea, triumph over all these your defects by faith in Christ, in whom you are compleat, Colossians 1:10. while imperfect in your selfe. Christs presence in the second Temple, (which the first had not) made it (though comparatively mean) more glorious then the first Hag. 2.9 how much more does his presence in this spiritual temple of a gracious heart, imputing his righteousnesse to cover all its uncomelinesse, make the soul glorious above man at first? This is a garment for which (as Christ says of the lilie) we neither spin nor toile; yet Adam in all his created royalty was not so clad, as the weakest believer is with this on his soul. Now, Christian, consider well what you doest, while you sittest languishing under the sense of your own weaknesses, and refusest to rejoyce in Christ, and live comfortably on the sweet priviledges you are interessed in by your marriage to him. Doest you not bewray some of this spiritual pride working in you? O, if you couldest pray without wandering, walk without limping, believe without wavering, then you couldest rejoyce and walk chearfully, It seems, soul, you stayest to bring the ground of your com-

fort with you, and not to receive it purely from Christ. O how much better were it if you wouldest say with David: Though my house, my heart, be not so with God, yet he has made with me a Covenant ordered in all things and sure; and this is all my desire, all my confidence; Christ I oppose to all my sins, Christ to all wants, he is my all in all and all above all. Indeed all those complaints of our wants and weaknesses, so far as they withdraw our hearts from relying chearfully on Christ, they are but the language of pride hankering after the Covenant of works. O 'tis hard to forget our mother-tongue, which is so natural to us, labor therefore to be sensible of it, how grievous it is to the Spirit of Christ. What would a husband say, if his wife in stead of expressing her love to him, and delight in him, should day and night do nothing but weep and cry to think of her former husband that is dead? The Law (as a Covenant) and Christ are compared to two husbands, Romans 7:4. Ye are become dead to the Law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead. Now your sorrow for the defect of your own righteousnesse, when it hinders your rejoycing in Christ, is but a whining after your other husband, and this Christ cannot but take unkindely, that you are not as well pleased to lie in the bosome of Christ, and have your happiness from him as with your old husband the Law.

Secondly, a self applauding pride, when the heart is secretly lift up, so as to promise it self acceptation at Gods hands, for any duty or act of obedience it performes, and does not when most assisted go out of his own actings, to lay the weight of his expectation entirely upon Christ; every such glance of the souls eye is adulterous, yea, idolatrous. If your heart, Christian, at any time he secretly enticed, (as Job sath of another kinde of idolatry) or your mouth does

kisse your hand, that is, dote so farre on your own duties or righteousnesse, as to give them this inward worship of your confidence and trust, this is a great iniquity indeed; for in this you deniest the God that is above, who has determined your faith to another object. You comest to open heaven-gate with the old key, when God has set on a new lock. Doest you not acknowledge tnat your first entrance into your justified state was of pure mercy? you wert justified freely by hit grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, Romans 7:24. And whom are you beholden to, now you are reconciled for your further acceptance in every duty or holy action? to your duty, your obedience, your self, or Christ? The same Apostle will tell you, Romans 5:2. By whom we have accesse by faith into this grace wherein we stand. If Christ should not lead you in and all you doest, you are sure to finde the door shut upon you: there is no more place for desert now you are gracious, then when you wert gracelesse, Romans 1:17. The righteousnesse of God is revealed from faith to faith, for the just shall live by faith. We are not only made alive by Christ but we live by Christ; faith sucks in continual pardoning, assisting, comforting mercy from him, as the lungs suck in the aire. Heaven way is paved with grace and mercy to the end.

Be exhorted above all, to watch against this play of Satan, beware you restest not in your own righteousnesse; you standest under a tottering wall, the very cracks you seest in your graces and duties, when best ▪ bid you stand off, except you wouldest have them fall on your head; the greatest step to heaven, is out of our own doors, over our own threshold. It has cost many a man his life when his house on fire, a grippleneſse to save some of the stufte, which venturing among the flames to preserve, they have perished

themselves; more have lost their souls by thinking to carry some of their own stuffe with them to heaven. Such a good work or duty, while they, like lingring Lot, have been loath to leave in point of confidence, have themselves perish't. O Sirs, come out, come out, leave what is your own in the fire, flie to Christ naked, he has cloathing for you better than your own: poor to Christ, and he has gold, not like yours, which will consume and be found drossy in the fire but such as has in the fiery trial past in Gods righteous judgment for pure and full weight; you cannot be found in two places at once; choose whether you will be found in your own righteousnesse or in Christs. Those who have had more to show then your selfe have thrown away all, and gone a begging to Christ. Reade Pauls Inventory, Phil. 3. what he had, what he did, yet all drosse and losse: give him Christ, and take the rest who will. So Job, as holy a man as trod on earth, (God himself being witnesse) yet says; Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my own soul, I would despise my life. He had acknowledged his imperfection before, now he makes a supposition, (indeed quod non est supponendum:) If I were perfect, yet would I not know my own soul; I would not entertain any such thoughts as should puffe me up into such a confidence of my holiness, as to make it my plea with God, like to our common phrase; We say, Such a one has excellent parts, but he knows it, that is, he is proud of it. Take heed of knowing your own grace in this sense, you can not give a greater wound both to your grace and comfort then by thus priding your self in it.

SECT. III.

First, your grace cannot thrive so long as you thus restest on it. A legal spirit is no friend to grace, nay, a bitter enemy against it, as appeared by the Pharisees in Christs time. Grace comes not by the Law, but by Christ; you may stand long enough by it, before you gettest any life of grace into your soul, or further life into your grace. If you wouldest have this, you must set your self under Christs wings by faith; from his Spirit in the Gospel alone, comes this kindly natural heat to hatch your soul to the life of holiness, and increase what you have and you can not come under Christs wings, till you comest from under the shadow of the other, by renouncing all expectation from your own works and services. You know Reubens curse, that he should not excel, because he went up into his fathers bed; when other tribes encreased, he stood at a little number. By trusting in your own works you doest worse by Christ, and shalt you excel in grace? Perhaps some of you have been long Professours, and yet come to little growth in love to God, humility, heavenly-mindednesse, mortification, and 'tis worth the digging to see what lies at the root of your Profession, whether there be not a legal principle that has too much acted you. Have you not thought to carry all with God from your duties and services, and too much laid up your hopes in your own actings? Alas, this is as so much dead earth, which must be thrown out, and Gospelprinciples laid in the room thereof; try but this course, and see whether the spring of your grace will not come on apace. David gives an account how he came to stand and flourish, when some that were rich and mighty, on a sudden withered and came to nothing. Lo, (says he) this is the man that made not God his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his riches. But I am like a green olive-tree in the House of God; I trust in the mercy of God

forever and ever, Psalms 52:7, 8. While others trust in the riches of their own righteousnesse and services and make not Christ their strength, do you renounce all, and trust in the mercy of God in Christ, and you shalt be like a green olive when they fade and wither.

Secondly, Christian, you will not thrive in true comfort so long as you rest in any inherent work of grace, and do not stand clear of your own actings and righteousnesse. Gospelcomfort springs from a Gospel-root, which is Christ, Philippians 3:3. We are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoyce in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. Now a soul that rests on any holiness in himself; he graffs his comfort upon himself, not Christ; he sucks his own breast, not Christs; and so makes Christ a dry nurse: and what comfort can grow on that dry tree? The Spirit is our Comforter as well as our Teacher and Counsellour. Now as the Spirit when he teaches comes not with any new or strange truth, but takes of Christs owne; (what he findes in the Word) so where he comforts, he takes of Christs own, his righteousnesse, not our own: Christ is the matter and ground of his comfort: all cordials are but Christ distill'd, and made up in several promises: his acting, not ours; his suffering, not ours; his holiness, not ours; he does not say, Soul, rejoyce, you are holy; but, Soul, triumph, Christ is righteous, and is the Lord your righteousnesse; Not, Soul, you prayest sweetly, feare not; but you have an Advocate with the Father, Christ the righteous: so that the first step to the receiving of comfort from the Spirit, is to send away all Comforters of our own. As in learning of the Spirit, he that will be taught by him, must first become a fool, (that is, no way lean to his own understanding,) so he that would be comforted, must first be emptied of

all self-supports, must not lean to his owne comforts. As a Physician first bids his Patient cast off all others he has tampered with, he asks what Physick he has had from them, takes off their plaisters, throws away their Physick, and goes about the work de novo: So the Spirit when he comes to comfort a poor soul; First, perswades the soul to send away all its old Physicians. O, says the soul, I have been in the hand of such a duty, such a course of obedience, and have thought sure now I shall be well, and have comfort now I do this duty, set upon such a holy course. Well, says the Spirit, if you will have me do any thing, these must all be dismist in point of confidence. Now, and not till how, is the soul a subject fit to receive the Spirits comforts. And therefore, friends, as you love your inward peace, beware what vessel you draw your comfort from. Grace is finite, and so cannot afford much. 'Tis leaking, and so cannot hold long; you drinkest in a riven dish, that have your comfort from your grace. 'Tis mixt, and so weak; and weak grace cannot give strong consolation, and such you needest, especially in strong conflicts; Nay lastly, your comfort which you drawest from it is stollen, you doest not come honestly by it, and stollen comforts will not thrive with you. Oh, what folly is it for the child to play the thief for that which he may have freely and more fully from his Father, who gives and reproachs not? that comfort which you wouldest filch out of your own righteousnesse and duties; behold, it is laid up for you in Christ, from whose fulnesse you may carry as much as your faith can hold, and none to check you, yea, the more you improvest Christ for your comfort, the more heartily welcome; we are bid to open our mouth wide, and he will fill it.

Chapter 11. The Third Kind of Spiritual Pride — Pride of Privileges

• • •

THe third kinde of pride, (spiritual pride I mean) is pride of Priviledges, with which these wicked spirits labor to blow up the Christian; to name three,

First, when God calls a person to some eminent place, or useth him to do some special piece of service.

Secondly, when God honours a Saint to suffer for his truth or cause.

Thirdly, when God flowes in with more than ordinary manifestations of his love, and fills the soul with joy and comfort. These are Priviledges not equally dispensed to all, and therefore where they are, Satan takes the advantage of assaulting such with pride.

SECT. I.

First, when God calls a person to some eminent place, or useth him to do some special piece of service: Indeed it requires a great measure of grace to keep the heart low, when the man stands high. The Apostle speaking how a Minister of the Gospel should be qual-

ified, 1 Timothy 3:6. says, he must not be a Novice, or a young Convert, lest he should be lift up with pride, and fall into the condemnation of the devil; as if he had said, this calling is honorable; if he be not well ballast with humility, a little gust from Satan will tople him into this sin; The Seventy that Christ first sent out to preach the Gospel, and prevailed so miraculously over Satan, even these while they trod on the Serpents head, he turn'd again, and had like to have stung them with pride, which our Saviour perceived, when they return'd in triumph, and told what great miracles they had wrought, and therefore he takes them off that glorying, left it should degenerate into vain glory, and bids them not rejoyce that devils were subjest to them, but rather that their names were writ in Heaven. As if he had said, It is not the honor of your calling, and success of your Ministery will save you; there shall be some cast to the devils, who shall then say, Lord, Lord, in your name we have cast out devils; and therefore value not your selves by that, but rather evidence to your souls that ye are of mine elect ones, which will stand you more in stead at the great day then all this.

SECT. II.

A second Priviledge is, when God honours a person to suffer for his truth, this is a great Priviledge. Unto you it is given not only to believe, but to suffer for his sake. God does not use to give worthless gifts to his Saints, there is some preciousnesse in it which a carnal eye cannot see. Faith you will say is a great gift, but perseverance greater, without which faith would be little worth, and perseverance in suffering this above both honorable; This made John Carelesse. our English Martyr, (who though he died not at the

stake, yet in prison for Christ,) say, Such an honor 'tis, as Angels are not permitted to have, therefore God forgive me mine unthankfulnesse. Now when Satan cannot scare a soul from prison, yet then he will labor to puffe him up in prison; when he cannot make him pity himself, then he will flatter him till he prides in himself; Affliction from God exposs to impatience, for God to pride; and therefore (Christians) labor to fortifie your selves against this temptation of Satan, how soon you may be called to suffering work you know not, such clouds oft are not long arising. Now to keep your heart humble when you are honoured to suffer for the truth; Consider,

First, though you doest not deserve those sufferings at mans hand, (you can and may in that regard glory in your innocency, you sufferest not as an evil doer) yet you can not but confesse it is a just affliction from God in regard of sin in you, and this methinks should keep you humble; the same suffering may be Martyrdome in regard of man, and yet a fatherly chastising for sin in regard of God: none suffered without sin but Christ, and therefore none may glory in them but he; Christ in his own, we in his; God forbid that I should glory save in the Crosse of Christ, Gal. 6. This kept Mr. Bradford humble in his sufferings for the truth, none more rejoyced in them and blessed God for them, yet none more humble under them then he; and what kept him in this humble frame? reade his godly letters, and you shall finde almost in all how he bemoans his sins, and the sins of the Protestants under the reign of King Edward: It was time (says he) for God to put his rod into the Papists hands we were grown so proud, formal, unfruitful, yea, to loath and despise the means of grace, when we enjoyed the liberty

therof, and therefore God has brought the wheele of persecution on us. As he look't at the honor to make him thankful, so to sin to keep him humble:

Secondly, consider who bears you up, and carries you through your sufferings for Christ: Is it your grace or his that is sufficient for such a work? your spirit or Christs, by which you speakest, when call'd to bear witnesse to his truth? how comes it to passe you are a sufterer, and not a persecutour; a confessour, and not a denier; yea, betrayer of Christ and his Gospel? This you owest for to God; he is not beholden to you, that you will part with estate, credit, or life it self for his sake. If you had a thousand lives, you wouldest owe them all to him: but you are beholden to God exceedingly, that he will call for these in this way, which has such an honor and reward attending it. He might have suffered you to live in your lusts, and at last to suffer the losse of all these for them. O how many die at the Gallowes as Martyrs in the devils cause, for felonies, rapes and murders! Or he might withdraw his grace, and leave you to your own cowardise and unbelief, and then you wouldest soon show your self in your colours. The stoutest Champions for Christ, have been taught how weak they are if Christ steps aside. Some that have given great testimony of their faith and resolution in Christs cause, even to come so near dying for his Name, as to give themselves to be bound to the stake, and fire to be kindled upon them, yet then their hearts have failed, as that holy man Mr. Benbridge in our English Martyrol. who thrust the faggots from him, and cried out, I recant, I recant. Yet this man, when re-inforc't in his faith, and indued with power from above, was able within the space of a week after that sad foile, to die at the stake cheerfully: Qui pro nobis mortem semel vicit, sem-

per in nobis vincit: He that once overcame death for us, 'tis he that alwayes overcame death in us. And who should be your Song, but he that is your strength? applaud not your selfe, but blesse him. 'Tis one of Gods Names, he is call'd the glory of his peoples strength, Psalms 89:17. The more you gloriest in God that gives you strength to suffer for him, the lesse you will boast of your self: A thankful heart and a proud cannot dwell together in one bosome.

Thirdly, consider what a foule blot pride gives to all your sufferings, where it is not bewailed and resisted, it alters the case. The old saying is, that 'tis not the punishment, but the cause makes the Martyr; we may safely say further, it is not barely the cause, but the sincere frame of the heart in suffering for a good cause, that makes a man a Martyr in Gods sight. Though you shouldest give your body to be burnt, if you have not an humble heart of a sufferer for Christ, you turnest Merchant for your self. You deniest but one self to set up another, runnest the hazard of your estate and life to gain some applause, may be, and reare up a monument to your honor in the opinions of men; you doest no more in this case then a souldier, who for a name of valour will venture into the mouth of death and danger, only you shewest your pride under a religious disguise, but that helps it not, but makes it the worse. If you will in your sufferings be a sacrifice acceptable to God, you must not only be ready to offer up your life for his truth, but sacrifice your pride also, or else you may tumble out of one fire into another, suffer here from man, as a seeming champion for the Gospel, and in another world from God, for robbing him of his glory in your sufferings.

SECT. III.

A third priviledge is, when God flowes in with more than ordinary manifestations of his love, then the Christian is in danger of having his heart secretly lift up in pride. Indeed the genuine and natural effect, which such discoveries of divine love have on a gracious soul, is to humble it. The sight of mercy encreass the sense of sin, and that sense dissolves the soul kindely into sorrow, as we see in Magdalen. The heart which possibly was hard and frozen in the shade, will give and thaw in the Sun-shine of love, and so long all pride is hid from the creatures eye. Then (says God) Ezekiel 36:31. ye shall remember your ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loath your selves in your own sight, &c. And when shall this be, but when God would save them from all their uncleannesses, as appears? v. 25. yet notwithstanding this, there remain such dregs of corruption unpurged out of the best, that Satan findes it not impossible, to make the manifestations of Gods love an occasion of pride to the Christian: and truly God lets us see our pronenesse to this sin in the short stay he makes, when he comes with any greater discoveries of his love. The Comforter ('tis true) abides for ever in the Saints bosome, but his joyes they come, and are gone again quickly. They are as exceedings, with which he feasts the believer, but the cloth is soon drawn; and why so, but because we cannot bear them for our every day food? A short interview of heaven, and a vision of love now and then upon the mount of an ordinance or affliction, cheeres the spirits of drooping Christians, who might they have leave to build Tabernacles there, and dwell under a constant shine of such manifestations, would be prone to forget themselves, and think they were Lords of their own comforts. If holy Paul was in danger of falling into this distemper of pride from his short rapture, to prevent which God saw it need-

ful to let him blood with a thorne in the flesh, would not our blood much more grow too rank, and we too crank and wanton, if we should feed long on such luscious food? And therefore, if ever (Christian) you had need to watch, then is the time when comforts abound, and God dandles you most on the knee of his love, when his face shines with clearest manifestations, lest this sin of pride (as a thief in the candle) should swaile out your joy. To prevent which you shouldest do well; First, to look that you measurest not your grace by your comfort, lest so you beest led into a false opinion, that your grace is strong, because your comforts are so. Satan will be ready to help forward such thoughts as a fit medium to life you up, and slacken your care in duty for the future. Such discoveries do indeed bear witnesse to the truth of your grace, but not to the decree and measure of it; the weak child may be, yea, is oftner in the lap then the strong. Secondly, do not so much applaud your self in your present comfort, as labor to improve it for the glory of God. Up and eate, says the Angel to the Prophet, because the journey is too great for you. The manifestations of Gods love are to fit us for our work. It is one thing to rejoyce in the light of our comfort, and another to go forth in the power of the Spirit comforting us (as Giants refreshed with this wine) to run our race of duty and obedience with more strength and alacrity. He shows his pride, that spends his time in telling his money meerly to see how rich he is; but he his wisdom, that layes out his money and trades with it. The boaster of his comforts will lose what he has, when he that improves his comforts in a fuller trade of duty shall adde more to what he has. Thirdly, remember you dependest on God for the continuance of your comfort. They are not the smiles you had yesterday can make you joyous to day, any more than the bread you

did then eate can make you strong without more; you needest new discoveries for new comforts: let God hide his face, and you will soon lose the sight, and forget the taste of what you even now had. It is beyond our skill or power to preserve those impressions of joy, and comfortable apprehensions of Gods favor on our spirits, which sometimes we finde; as Gods presence brings those, so when he goes he carries them away with him, as the setting-Sun does the day. We would laugh heartily at him, who when the Sun shines in at his window, should think by shutting that to imprison the Sun-beams in his chamber; and doest you not show as much folly, who thinkest because you now have comfort, you therefore shalt never be in darkness of Spirit more? The believers comfort is like Israels Manna: 'tis not like our ordinary bread and provision; we buy at market and lock up in our Cupboards where we can go to it when we will; no, it is rained as that was from heaven. Indeed God provided for them after this sort to humble them, Deuteronomy 8:16. Who fed you in the wilderness with Manna which your fathers knew not, that he might humble you. It was not because such mean food, that God is said to humble them; for it was delicious food; therefore call'd Angels food, Psalms 78:25. Such as if Angels did eate, might serve them. But the manner of the dispensing it, from hand to mouth, every day their portion and no more, so that God kept the key of their Cupboard, they stood to his immediate allowance; and thus God communicates our spiritual comforts for the same end to humble us. So much for this second sort of spiritual wickedness.

I had thought to have instanced in some other, as hypocrisie, unbelief, formality; but possibly the subject being general, what I have already said may be thought but a digression, and that too

long.

I shall therefore conclude this branch of spiritual wickedness, in a word to those who are yet in a natural and unsanctified state, which is to stir them up from what I have said (concerning Satans assaulting beleevers with such temptations;) to consider seriously, how that Satans chief designe against them also lies in the same sins. These are the wickednesses he labors to ingulph you in above all others. If ever you perish, it will be by the hand of these sins. 'Tis your feared conscience, blinde minde, and dedolent impenitent heart, will be your undoing if you miscarry finally. Other sins, the devil knowes, are preparatory to these, and therefore he drawes you into them to bring you into these. Two ways they prepare a way to spiritual sins; First, as they naturally dispose the sinner to them; 'tis the nature of sin to blinde the minde, stupifie the conscience, harden the heart, as is implied, Hebrews 3:13. Lest your heart be hardened through the deceitfulnesse of sin. As the feet of Travellers beat the high way hard, so does walking in carnal grosse sins the heart; they benumbe the conscience, so that in time the sinner loses his feeling, and can carry his lusts in his heart, (as Bedlams their pins in their very flesh) without pain and remorse. Secondly, as they do provoke God by a judiciary act to give them up to these sins, Lam. 3.65. Give them obstinacy of heart, (so 'tis in your margin) your curse unto them; and when the devil has got sinners at this passe, then he has them under lock and key. They are the fore-runners of damnation; if God leave your heart hard and unbroken up, 'tis a sad signe he means not to sowe the seed of grace there. O sinners pray, (as he did request Peter for him) that none of these things may come upon you; which that they may not, take heed you rejectest not the offers he makes to soften you. Gods

hardening is a consequent of, and a punishment for our hardening our own hearts. 'Tis most true what Prosper says, Potest homo invitus amittere temporalia, non nisi volens amittere spiritualia: A man may lose temporals against hia will, but not spirituals; God will harden none, damn none against their will.

Chapter 12. Showing What the Prize Is Which Believers Wrestle for Against Principalities, Powers, and Spiritual Wickedness in High Places

• • •

SECT. I.

THese words contain the last Branch in the description of our grand enemy, which have in them some ambiguity, the Adjective being only exprest in the Original; [illegible], that is, in heavenlies; the phrase being defective, our Translatours read it in high or heavenly places, as if the Apostle intended to set out the advantage of place, which this our enemy, by being above us has of us Indeed this way most Interpreters go, yet some both ancient and modern reade the words not in heavenly places, but in heavenly things, interpreting the Apostles mind to set out the matter about which, or prize for which we wrestle with Principalities and Powers, to be heavenly things.[illegible], (says Oecumenius) is as much as if the Apostle had said, [illegible]: We wrestle not for small and trivial things, but for yea, for heaven it self, and our

Adoption, as he goes on. The same way Chrysostome carries it, in coelestibus, id est, pro coelestibus Dei. And after him Musculus, and other modern Writers. The Reasons which are given for this Interpretation are weighty.

First, the word elsewhere indefinitely set down, is taken for things, not places, Hebrews 8:5. nay, one observes this word to be used almost twenty times in the New Testament, and never for any aërial place, but alwayes for things truly heavenly and spiritual; the word indeed properly signifies supercelestial, and if applied to places, would signifie that where the devil never came since his fall.

Lastly, there seems no great argument to render Satan formidable by his being above us in place; 'tis some advantage indeed to men, togain the hill, or be above their enemies in some place of strength, but none at all to spirits; but now take it of things, and then it addes weight to all the other branches of the description. We wrestle with Principalities and Powers, and Spiritual wickedness, and against all these, not for such toyes and trifles as the earth affords, which are inconsiderable whether to keep or lose; but for such as heaven holds forth, such an enemy, and such a prize makes it a matter of our greatest care, how to manage the combate. The word thus opened, the note will be this:

SECT. II.

The chief prize for which we wrestle against Satan is heavenly. Or thus, Satans main designe is to spoil and plunder the Christian of all that is heavenly. Indeed all the Christian has, or desires as a Christian is heavenly; the world is extrinsecal, both to his being

and happiness; it is a stranger to the Christian, and intermeddles not with his joy nor grief. Heap all the riches and honours of the world upon a man, they will not make him a Christian; heap them on a Christian, they will not make him a better Christian. Again, take them all away, let every bird have his feather, when stript and naked he will still be a Christian, and may be a better Christian. It was a notable speech of Erasmus, if spoken in earnest, and his wit were not too quick for his conscience; Nihilo magìs ambio opes & dignitates, quàm elumbis equus graves sarcinas: He said he desired wealth and honor no more than a feeble horse does a heavy cloak-bag. And I think every Christian in his right temper would be of his minde. Satan should do the Saint little hurt, if he did bend his forces only or chiefly against his outward enjoyments; alas, the Christian does not value them, or himself by them: this were as if one should think to hurt a man by beating of his clothes when he has put them off. So far as the Spirit of grace prevails in the heart of a Saint, he has put off the world in the desire of it, and joy in it; so that these blowes are not much felt: and therefore they are his heavenly treasures, which are the booty Satan waits for.

SECT. III.

First, the Christians nature is heavenly, borne from above; As Christ is the Lord from heaven, so all his off-spring are heavenly and holy: now Satans design is to debase and deflower this; 'tis the precious life of this new creature that he hunts for; he has lost that beauty of holiness which once shone so gloriously on his Angelical nature; and now like a true Apostate he endeavours to ruine that in the Christian which he has lost himself. The seeds of this warre are sowen in the Christians nature; you are holy, that he cannot en-

dure; Milet feri faciem, was Caesars speech, when to fight with the Romane Citizens, he bade his souldiers strike at their face, these Citizens (said he) love their beauty, marre that and marre all. The soul is the face whereon Gods image is stamp't: holiness is the beauty of this face, which makes us indeed like God, this Satan knowes God loves, and the Saint is chary of; and therefore he labors to wound and disfigure this, that he may at once glory in the Christians shame, and pour contempt upon God in breaking his image; and is it not worth engaging limbe and life in battel against this enemy, who would rob us of that which makes us like God himself? Have you forgot the bloody Articles of peace that Nahash offered to the men of Jabesh-Gilead? no peace to be had, except they would let him thrust out their right eyes, and lay it for a reproach upon all Israel, which how it was entertained reade, 1 Sam 11.6. The face is not so deformed that has lost its eye, as the soul is that loseth its holiness; and no peace to be expected at Satans hands except he may deprive us of this: Me thinks at the thought of this, the Spirit of the Lord should come upon the Christian, and his anger should be kindled much more against this cursed spirit, then Sauls and the men of Israels was against Nahash

Secondly, the Christians trade is heavenly; the merchandize he deals for is of the growth of that heavenly Countrey, Philippians 3:20. Our conversation is in heaven. Every mans conversation is suitable to his calling; he whose trade lies in the earth minds earthly things: and he whose trade is heavenly followes that close. Every man mindes his own businesse, the Apostle tells us. You may possibly finde a Tradesman out of his shop now and then, but he is as a fish out of the water, never in his element till he be in his calling again. Thus when the Christian is about the world, and the

worldling about heavenly matters, both are men out of their way, not right girt, till they get into their employment again. Now this heavenly trade is that which Satan does in an especial manner labor to stop. Could the Christian enjoy but a free trade with heaven a few years without molestation, he would soon grow a rich man, too rich indeed for earth; but what with losses sustained by the hands of this Pyrate Satan, and also the wrong he receives by the treachery of some in his own bosome, (that like unfaithful servants hold correspondence with this robber) he is kept but low in this life, and much of his gaines are lost. Now the Christians heavenly trade lies either within doors or abroad; he can be free in neither, Satan is at his heels in both.

First, within doores. This I may call his home-trade which is spent in secret between God and his own soul, here the Christian drives an unknown trade: he is at heaven and home again, richly laden in his thoughts with heavenly meditations before the world knows where he has been. Every creature he sees is a text for his heart to raise some spiritual matter and observations from: Every Sermon he heares cuts him out work to make up and enlarge upon when he gets alone. Every Providence is as winde to his sailes, and sets his heart a moving in some heavenly affection or other suitable to the occasion. One while he is wrap't up with joy in the consideration of mercy, another while melted into godly sorrow from the sense of his sins. Sometimes exalting God in his praises, anon abusing himself before God for his own vilenesse. One while he is at the breast of the Covenant, milking out the consolations of the Promises; at another time working his heart into a holy awe and feare of the threatenings. Thus the Christian walks aloft, while the base worldling is licking the dust below. One of these heavenly

pearles which the Christian trades for, is more worth then the worldling gets with all his sweat and travel in his whole life. The Christians feet stand where other mens heads are; he treads on the Moon, and is clothed with the Sun; he looks down on earthly men (as one from a high hill does upon those that live in some fenne or moore) and sees them buried in a fog of carnal pleasures and profits, while he breaths in a pure heavenly aire, but yet not so high as to be free from all stormes and tempests; many a sad gust he has from sin and Satan without. What else mean those sad complaints and groans, which come from the children of God, that their hearts are so dead and dull, their thoughts so roving and unfixt in duty, yea, many times so wicked and filthy, that they dare hardly tell what they are, for feare of staining their own lips, and offending the eares of others by naming them? Surely, the Christian findes it in his heart to will and desire he could meditate, pray, heare, and live after another sort then this, does he not? yes, I durst be his surety he does. But so long as there is a devil tempts, and we continue within his walk, it will be thus more or lesse, as fast as we labor to clear the spring of our hearts, he will be labouring to royle or stop it again; so that we have two works to do at once, to performe a duty, and watch him that opposs us, trowel and sword both in our hands. They had need work hard indeed, who have others continually endeavouring to pull down, as they are labouring to rear up the building.

Secondly, that part of the Christians trade, which lies abroad, is heavenly also. Take a Christian in his relations, calling, neighbourhood, he is a heavenly trader in all; the great businesse of his life is to be doing or receiving some good; that company is not for him that will neither give nor take this. What should a Merchant be

where there is no buying nor selling? Every one labors (as his calling is) to seat himself where trade is quickest, and he is likest to have most takings. The Christian (where he may choose) takes such in relations near to himself, (husband, wife, servants) as may suite with his heavenly trade, and not such as will be a pull-back to him; he falls in with the holiest persons as his dearest acquaintance: if there be a Saint in the town where he lives, he'll finde him out, and this shall be the man he will consort with; and in his conversation with these and all else, his chief work is for heaven, his heavenly principle within inclines him to it. Now, this alarums hell. What, not contented to go to heaven himself, but by his holy example, gracious speeches, sweet counsels, seasonable reproofs, will he be trading with others, and labor to carry them along with him also? This brings the Lion fell and mad out of his den, such to be sure shall finde the devil in their way to oppose them. I would have come, (says Paul) but Sacan hindered me. He that will vouch God, and let it appear by the tenure of his conversation that he trades for him, shall have enemies enough if the devil can help him to such.

Thirdly, the Christians hopes are all heavenly, he lots not upon any thing the world has to give him. Indeed he would think himself the most miserable man of all others, if here were all he could make of his Religion. No, 'tis heaven and eternal life that he expects; and though he be so poor as not to be able to make a Will of a groat, yet he counts himself a greater heire, then if he were child to the greatest Prince on earth. This inheritance he sees by faith, and can rejoyce in the hope of the glory which it will bring him. The masquery and cheating glory of the great ones of this world, moves him not to envy their fanciful pomp, but when on the

dunghil himself, he can forget his own present sorrowes to pity them in all their bravery, knowing that within a few days the crosse will be off his back, and the crowns off their heads together, their portion will be spent when he shall be to receive all his. These things entertain him with such joy that they will not suffer him to acknowledge himself miserable, when others think him and the devil tells him, he is such. This, this torments the very soul of the devil, to see the Christian under saile for heaven, fill'd with the sweet hope of his joyful entertainment when he comes there, and therefore he raiss what stormes and tempests he can, either to hinder his arrival in that blessed Port, (which he most desires, and does not wholly despair of) or at least to make it a troublesome winter-voyage, (such as Pauls was, in which they suffered so much losse,) and this indeed very often he obtains in such a degree, that by his violent impetuous temptations beating long upon the Christian, he makes him throw over much precious lading of his joyes and comforts; yea, sometimes he brings the soul through stresse of temptation to think of quitting the ship, while for the present all hope of being saved seems to be taken away. Thus you see what we wrestle with devils for. We come to Application.

SECT. IV.

Use 1 This is a word of reproof to four sorts of persons.

First, to those that are so far from wrestling against Satan for this heavenly prize, that they resist the offer of it. In stead of taking heaven by force, they keep it off by force. How long has the Lord been crying in our streets, Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand? how long have Gospel-offers rung in our ears? and yet to this day many devil-deluded souls furiously drive on towards hell,

and will not be perswaded back, who refuse to be called the children of God, and choose rather the devils bondage then the glorious liberty with which Christ would make them free, esteeming the pleasures of sin for a season greater treasures then the riches of heaven. 'Tis storied of Cato (who was Caesars bitter enemy) that when he saw Caesar prevail, rather than fall into his hand and stand to his mercy, he laid violent hands on himself, which Caesar hearing of, passionately broke out into these words, O Cato, cur invidisti mihi salutem tuam? O Cato, why did you envie me the honor of saving your life? And do not many walk as if they grudged Christ the honor of saving their souls? what other account can you give sinners of rejecting his grace? Are not heaven and happiness things desirable, and to be preferr'd before sin and misery? Why then do you not embrace them? or are they the worse, because they come swimming to you in the blood of Christ? oh how ill must Christ take it to be thus used, when he comes on such a gracious ambassage? may he not say to you as once he did to those officers sent to attach him, Do you come out against me as a thief with swords and staves? If he be a thief, 'tis only in this, that he would steal your sins from you, and leave heaven in the room: O, for the love of God think what you do, 'tis eternal life you put away from you, in doing of which, you judge your selves unworthy of it, Acts 13:46.

Secondly, it reproves those who are Satans instruments, to rob souls of what is heavenly. Among thieves there are some ye call Setters, who enquire where a booty is to be had, which when they have found, and know such a one travels with a charge about him, then they employ some other to rob him, and are themselves not seen in the businesse. The devil is the grand Setter, he observes the

Christian how he walks, what place and company he frequents, what grace or heavenly treasure he carries in his bosome; which when he has done, he has his instruments for the purpose to execute his designe. Thus he considered the admirable graces of Job, and casts about how he might best rob him of his heavenly treasure: and who but his wife and friends must do this for him? (well knowing that his tale would receive credit from their mouths.) O friends, ask your consciences, whether you have not done the devil some service of this kinde in your days. Possibly you have a child or servant who once look't heaven-ward, but your brow-beating of them scared them back, and now (may be) they are as carnal as you would have them: or possibly your wife before acquainted with you, was full of life in the ways of God, but since she has been transplanted into your cold soile, what by your frothy speeches and unsavoury conversation, at best your worldlinesse and formality, she is now both decayed in her graces, and a loser in her comforts. O man, what an enditement will be brought against you for this at Gods bar? you would come off better, were it for robbing one of his money and jewels, then of his graces and comforts.

Thirdly, it reproves the woful negligence most show in labouring for this heavenly prize. None but would be glad their souls might be saved at last, but where is the man or woman that makes it appear by their vigourous endeavour that they mean in earnest? what warlike preparation do they make against Satan, (who lies between them and home?) where are their armes, where their skill to use them, their resolution to stand to them, and conscionable care to exercise themselves daily in the use of them? Alas, this is a rarity indeed, not to be found in every house, where the Profession of Religion is hang'd out at the door; if woulding and wishing will

bring them to heaven, then they may come there; but as for this wrestling and fighting, this making Religion our businesse, they are as far from these, as at last they are like to be from heaven. They are of his minde in Tully, who in a Summers day, as he lay lazing himself on the grasse, would say, O utinam hoc esset laborare! O that this were to work, that I could lie here and do my day-labor! Thus many melt and waste their lives in sloth, and say in their hearts, O that this were the way to heaven! but will use no means to furnish themselves with grace for such an enterprise; I have read of a great Prince in Germany, invaded by a more potent enemy then himself, yet from his friends and Allies, (who flock't in to his help) he soon had a goodly Army, but had no money (as he said) to pay them, but the truth is, he was loath to part with it, for which some in discontent went away, others did not vigourously attend his businesse, and so he was soon beaten out of his Kingdom; and his coffers (when his Palace was rifled) were found thrack't with treasure. Thus he was ruined, as some sick men die, because unwilling to be at cost to pay the Physician. It will adde to the misery of damned souls, when they shall have leisure enough to consider what they have lost in losing God, to remember what means, offers and talents they once had, towards the obtaining of everlasting life, but had not a heart to use them.

Fourthly, it reproves those who make a great busle and noise in Religion, who are forward in Profession, very busie to meddle with the strictest duties, as if heaven had monopolized their whole hearts; but like the Eagle, when they tower highest, their prey is below where their eye is also. Such a generation there ever was and will be, that mingle themselves with the Saints of God, who pretend heaven, and have their outward garb faced and fringed (as it

were) with heavenly speeches and duties, while their hearts are lined with hypocrisie, whereby they deceive others, but most of all themselves; such may be the worlds Saints, but devils in Christs account. Have not I chosen twelve, one of you is a devil? And truly of all devils none so bad as the professing devil, the preaching, praying devil. O Sirs, be plain-hearted; Religion is as tender as your eye, it will not be jested with; Remember the vengeance which fell on Belshazzar, while he carowsed in the bowles of the Sanctuary. Religion and the duties of it are consecrated things, not made for you to drink your lusts out of God. has remarkably appeared in discovering and confounding such as have prostituted sacred things to worldly ends. Jezabel fasts and prayes the better, to devoure Naboths vineyard, but was devoured by it. Absalom was as sick till he had ravish't his fathers Crown, as his brother Amnon till he had done the like to his sister, and to hide his treason he puts on a religious cloak, and therefore begs leave to go and pay his vow in Hebron, when he had another game in chase, and did he not fall by the hand of his hypocrisie? of all men their judgement is endorst with most speed, who silver over worldly or wicked enterprises with heavenly semblances, of this gang were those, 2 Peter 2:3. concerning whom the Apostle says, Their damnation slumbers not; and those, Ezekiel 14:7, 8. to whom God says, I the Lord will answer him by my selfe, and I will set my face against that man, and will make him a signe, and a Proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of my people, and ye shall know that I am the Lord.

Use. 2 Secondly, try whether they be heavenly things or earthly you chiefly pursuest; certainly friends, we need not be so ignorant of our souls state and affairs; did we oftner converse with our thoughts, and observe the haunts of our hearts, we soon can tell

what dish pleass our palate best: and may you not tell whether heaven or earth be the most savoury meat to your souls? and if you should ask how you might know whether heaven be the prize you chiefly desire, I would put you only upon this double trial.

First, are you uniforme in your pursuit? Doest you contend [⟨1 page duplicate⟩][⟨1 page duplicate⟩] for heaven, and that which leads to heaven also? Earthly things God is pleased to retaile; all have some, none have all; but in heavenly treasure he will not break the whole piece, and cut it into remnants. If you will have heaven, you must have Christ; if Christ, you must like his service as well as his sacrifice; no holiness, no happiness. If God would cut off so much as would serve mens turnes, he might have customers enough. Balaam himself likes one end of the piece, he would die like a righteous man, though live like a wizzard as he was; no, God will not deal with such pedling Merchants; that man alone is for God, and God for him, who will come roundly up to Gods offer, and take all off his hands. One fitly compares holiness and happiness to those two sisters, Leah and Rachel. Happiness like Rachel seems the fairer, (even a carnal heart may fall in love with that,) but holiness like Leah is the elder and beautiful also, though in this life it appears with some disadvantage, her eyes being blear'd with teares of repentance, and her face furrowed with the works of mortification; but this is the Law of that heavenly countrey, that the younger Sister must not be bestowed before the elder. We cannot enjoy faire Rachel, Heaven and Happiness, except first we embrace tender-eyed Leah, Holiness with all her severe duties of repentance and mortification. Now Sirs, how like you this method? Art you content to marry Christ and his grace, and then (serving a hard Apprenticeship in temptations both of

prosperity and adversity, enduring the heat of the one, and the cold of the other) to wait till at last the other be given into your bosome?

Secondly, if indeed heaven and heavenly things be the prize you wrestlest for, you will discover a heavenly deportment of heart, even in earthly things; whereever you meet a Christian, he is going to Heaven; Heaven is at the bottome of his lowest actions. Now observe your heart in three particulars; In getting, in using, and in keeping earthly things, whether it be after a heavenly manner.

First, In getting earthly things. If Heaven be your chief prize, then you will be ruled by a heavenly Law in the gathering of these. Take a carnal wretch, and what his heart is set on, he will have, though it be by hook or crook. A lie fits Gehazi's mouth well enough, so he may fill his pockets by it. Jezabel dares mock God, and murder an innocent man for an acre or two of ground. Absalom regnandi causâ what will he not do? Gods fence is too low to keep a gracelesse heart in bounds, when the game is before him; but a soul that has heaven in its eye is ruled by heavens law: he dares not step out of heavens road to take up a crown, as we see in Davids carriage towards Saul. Indeed in so doing he should crosse himself in his own grand design, which is the glory of God, and the happiness of his own soul in enjoying of him; upon these very termes the servants of God have refused to be rich and great in the world, when either of these lay at stake; Moses threw his Court-preferment at his heels, refusing to be call'd the son of Pharaohs daughter. Abraham scorned to be made rich by the King of Sodom, Genesis 14:22. that he might avoid the suspicion of covetousnesse and self-seeking; it shall not be said another day that he came to enrich himself with the spoil, more than to rescue his kinsmen.

Nehemiah would not take the taxe and tribute to maintain his state, when he knew they were a poor peeled people, because of the fear of the Lord. Doest you walk by this rule? wouldest you gather no more estate or honor then you may have with Gods leave, and will stand with your hopes of heaven?

Secondly, doest you discover a heavenly Spirit in using these things.

First, the Saint improves his earthly things for an heavenly end, where layest you up your treasure? doest you bestow it on your voluptuous paunch, your hawks and your hounds, or lockest you it up in the bosome of Christs poor members? what use makest you of your honor and greatness, to strengthen the hands of the godly or the wicked? and so of all your other temporal enjoyments; A gracious heart improves them for God; when a Saint prayes for these things, he has an eye to some heavenly end. If David prayes for life, it is not that he may live, but live and praise God, Psal. 119 175. When he was driven from his regal throne by the rebellious armes of Absalom; see what his desire was and hope, 2 Samuel 15:25. The King said to Zadock, Carry back the Ark of God into the City: if I shall-finde favor in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and show me both it and his habitation. Mark, not show me my Crown, my Palace, but the Ark, the House of God.

Secondly, a gracious heart pursues earthly things with a holy indifferency, saving the violence and zeal of his spirit for the things of heaven; he useth the former as if he used them not, with a kinde of non-attendency, his head and heart is taken up with higher matters, how he may please God, thrive in his grace, enjoy more intimate communion with Christ in his Ordinances, in these he spreads all his sailes, plyes all his oares, strains every part and

power: thus we finde David upon his full speed; My soul presses hard after you, Psal. 63. And before the Ark we finde him dancing with all his might. Now a carnal heart is clean contrary, his zeal is for the world, and his indifferency in the things of God, he prays as if he did not pray, &c. he sweats in his shop, but chills and growes cold in his closet; O how hard to pully him up to a duty of Gods worship, or to get him out to an Ordinance? No weather shall keep him from the market; raine, blow or snow he goes there; but if the Church-path be a little wet, or the aire somewhat cold, 'tis apology enough for him if his pue be empty; when he is about any worldly businesse, he is as earnest at it, as the idolatrous Smith in hammering of his image; who (the Prophet says) works it with the strength of his armes, yea, he is hungry, and his strength fails, he drinks not, and is faint, Isaiah 44:12. so zealous is the muckworme in his worldly employments, that he will pinch his carcase, and deny himself his repast in due season to pursue that; The Kitchin there shall wait on the shop: But in the worship of God, 'tis enough to make him sick of the Sermon, and angry with the Preacher, if he be kept beyond his hour; here the Sermon must give place to the Kitchin: so the man for his pleasures and carnal pastime, he tells no clock at his sports, and knows not how the day goes; when night comes, he is angry that it takes him off; but at any heavenly work, O how is the man punish't? time now has got leaden heels he thinks; all he does at a Sermon is to tell the clock, and see how the glasse runs: if men were not willing to deceive themselves, surely they might know which way their heart goes by the swift motion, or the hard tugging and slow pace it stirs, as well as they know in a boat, whether they row against the tyde, or with it.

Thirdly, the Christian useth these things with a holy feare, lest earth should rob heaven, and his outward enjoyments prejudice his heavenly interest; he eats in feare, works in feare, rejoices in his abundance with feare: as Iob sanctified his children by offering a sacrifice, out of a feare lest they had sinned; so the Christian is continually sanctifying his earthly enjoyments by prayer, that so he may be delivered from the snare of them.

Thirdly, the Christian is heavenly in his keeping of earthly things. The same heavenly Law which he went by in getting, he observes in holding them. As he dares not say he will be rich and honorable in the world, but if God will; so neither that he will hold what he has, he only keeps them while his heavenly Father calls for them that at first gave them: If God will continue them to him, and entaile them on his posterity too, he blesss God, and so he desires to do also when he takes them away. Indeed Gods meaning in the great things of this world, which sometimes he throwes in upon the Saints, is chiefly to give them the greater advantage of expressing their love to him, in denying them for his sake. God never intended by that strange Providence in bringing Moses to Pharaho's Court, to settle him there in worldly pomp and grandure, (a carnal heart indeed would have expounded Providence, and imported it as a faire occasion put into his hands by God to have advanced himself into the throne, (which some say he might in time have done,) but as an opportunity to make his faith and self-denial more eminently conspicuous in throwing all these at his heels, for which he has so honorable a remembrance among the Lords Worthies, Hebrews 11:24, 25. And truly a gracious soul reckons he cannot make so much of his worldly interests any other way, as by offering them up for Christs sake; however that Traitour thought Maries

ointment might have been carried to a better market, yet no doubt that good woman her self was only troubled, that she had not one more precious to pour on her dear Saviours head. This makes the Christian ever to hold the sacrificing knife at the throat of his worldly enjoyments, ready to offer them up when God calls; overboard they shall go, rather than hazard a wrack to faith or a good conscience; he sought them in the last place, and therefore he will part with them in the first. Naboth will hazard the Kings anger, (which at last cost him his life,) rather than sell an acre or two of land which was his birthright. The Christian will expose all he has in this wotld to preserve his hopes for another: Iacob in his march towards Esau, sent his servants with his flocks before, and came himself with his wives behinde; if he can save any thing from his brothers rage, it shall be what he loves best: If the Christian can save any thing, it shall be his soul, his interest in Christ and Heaven, and then no matter if the rest go, even then he can say, not as Esau to Iacob, I have [illegible] a great deal, but as Iacob to him, [illegible] I have all, all I want, all I desire, as David expresss it; This is all my salvation. all and my desire, 2 Samuel 23:5. Now try, whether your heart be tuned to this note, does heaven give law to your earthly enjoyments? wouldest you not keep your honor, estate, no, not life it selfe to prejudice your heavenly nature and hopes? which wouldest you choose, if you couldest not keep both, a whole skin, or a sound conscience? It was a strange answer, if true, which the Historian says Henry the fifth gave to his Father, who had usurped the crown, and now dying sent for this his son, to whom he said, Fair Son, take the crown, (which stood on his pillow by his head) but God knowes how I came by it: to whom he an-

swered, I care not how you came by it; now I have it, I will keep it as long as my sword can defend it. He that keeps earth by wrong, cannot expect heaven by right.

Chapter 13. An Exhortation to the Pursuit of Heaven and Heavenly Things

Use 3 THirdly, Is it heaven and all that is heavenly that Satan seeks to hinder us of? let this provoke us the more earnestly to contend for them. Had we to do with an enemy that came only to plunder us of earthly trifles, would honours, estates, and what this world affords us stay his stomach, it might suffer a debate (in a soul that has hopes of heaven,) whether it were worth fighting to keep this lumber: but Christ and heaven, these sure are too precious to part withal upon any termes. Ask the Kingdom for him also, said Solomon to Bath-sheba, when she begg'd Abishag for Adonijah. What can the devil leave you worth if he deprive you of these? and yet I confesse I have heard of one, that wished God would let him alone, and not take him from what he had here: Vile Brute! the voice of a swine and not a man, that could chuse to wallow in the dung and ordure of his carnal pleasures, and wish himself for ever shut up with his swill in the hogs coat of this dunghil earth, rather than leave these to dwell in Heavens Palace, and be admitted to no meaner pleasures, then what God himself with his Saints enjoy. It were even just if God

gave such brutes as these a swines face to their swinish hearts: But alas, how few then should we meet that would have the countenance of a man? the greatest part of the world (even all that are carnal and worldly,) being of the same minde, though not so impudent as that wretch, to speak what they think. The lives of men tell plain enough that they say in their hearts, it is good being here, that they wish they could build Tabernacles on earth for all the mansions that are prepared in heaven. The transgression of the wicked said in Davids heart, that the feare of God, was not before them, Psalms 36:1. and may not the worldlinesse of a muck-worm say in the heart of any rational man, that heaven and heavenly excellencies are not before their eyes or thoughts? O what a deep silence is there concerning these in the conversations of men! Heaven is such a stranger to the most, that very few are heard to enquire the way there, or so much as ask the question in earnest, what they shall do to be saved. The most express no more desires of attaining heaven, then those blessed souls now in heaven do of coming again to dwell on earth; Alas, their heads are full of other projects, they are either as Israel, scatter'd over the face of the earth to gather straw, or busied in picking that straw they have gathered, labouring to get the world, or pleasing themselves with what they have got. So that it is no more than needs to use some arguments to call men off the world, to the pursuit of heaven, and what is heavenly.

First, for earthly things, it is not necessary that you have them; that is necessary which cannot be supplied per vicarium, with somewhat besides it self. Now there is no such earthly enjoyment, but may be so supplied, as to make its room more desirable then its company. In Heaven there shall be light and no Sun, a rich feast

and yet no meat, glorious robes and yet no cloathes, thete shall want nothing, and yet none of this worldly glory be found there; yea, even while we are here, they may be recompenced; you may be under infirmities of body, and yet better than if you had health: The Inhabitant shall not say, I am sick, the people that dwell therin shall be forgiven their iniquiy, Isaiah 33:34. You may misse of worldly honor, and obtain with those Worthies of Christ, Heb. 11. a good report by faith, and that is a name better than of the great ones of the earth: you may be poor in the world, and yet rich in grace, and Godliness with content is great gaine. In a word, if you partest with your temporal life, and findest an eternal, what doest you lose by the change? but heaven and heavenly things are such as cannot be recompenced with any other. You have a heavenly soul in your bosome, lose that, and where can you have another? There is but one heaven, misse that, and where can you take up your lodging but in hell? One Christ that can lead you there, reject him, and there remains no more sacrifice for sin. O that men would think on these things! Go sinner to the world, and see what it can afford you in lieu of these; may be it will offer to entertain you with its pleasures and delights; O poor reward for the losse of Christ and heaven! Is this all you can get? does Satan rob you of heaven and happiness, and only give you this posie to smell on as you are going to your execution? will these quench hell-fire, or so much as cool those flames you are falling into? who but those that have foredone their understandings, would take these toyes and new nothings for Christ and heaven? while Satan is pleasing your fancies with these rattles and bables, his hand is in your treasure, robbing you of that which is only necessary; 'Tis more necessary to be saved then to be; better not to be then to have a being in hell.

Secondly, earthly things are such, as it is a great uncertainty, whether with all our labor we can have them or not. The world, though so many thousand years old, has not learn't the Merchant such a method of trading, as that from it he may infallibly conclude he shall at last get an estate by his trade: nor the Courtier such rules of comporting himself to the humor of his Prince, as to assure him he shall rise. They are but few that carry away the prize in the worlds lottery, the greater number have only their labor for their paines, and a sorrowful remembrance left them of their egregious folly, to be led such a wilde goose chase after that, which has deceived them at last. But now for heaven and the things of heaven, there is such a clear and certain rule laid down, that if we will but take the counsel of the Word, we can neither mistake the way, nor in that way miscarry of the end. As many as walk by this rule, peace be upon them, and the whole Israel of God. There are some indeed who run, and yet obtain not this prize, that seek & find not; knock and find the door shut upon them but it is, because they do it either not in the right manner, or in the right season. Some would have heaven, but if God save them he must save their sins also, for they do not mean to part with them; and how heaven can hold God and such company together judge you; As they come in at one door, Christ and all those holy spirits with him would run out at the other. Ungratful wretches, that will not come to this glorious feast, unlesse they may bring that with them, which would disturb rhe joy of that blisseful state, and offend all the guests that sit at the Table with them, yea, drive God out of his own mansion-house. A second sort would have heaven, but like him in Ruth, ch. 4. v. 2, 3, 4. who had a minde to his Kinsman Elimelechs land, and would have paid for the purchase, but he liked not to have it by

marrying Ruth, and so missed of it: Some seem very forward to have heaven and salvation, if their own righteousnesse could procure the same, (all the good they do, and duties they performe they lay up for this purchase) but at last perish, because they close not with Christ, and take not heaven in his right. A third sort are content to have it by Christ, but their desires are so impotent and listlesse, that they put them upon no vigourous use of means to obtain him, and so (like the sluggard) they starve, because they will not pull their hands out of their bosome of sloth to reach their food that is before them: for the world they have mettal enough, and too much, they trudge far and near for that, and when they have run themselves out of breath, can stand and pant after the dust of the earth, as the Prophet phrass it, Amos 2:7. But for Christ and obtaining interest in him, O how key-cold are they! there is a kinde of cramp invades all the powers of their souls when they should pray, hear, examine their hearts, draw out their affections in hungrings and thirstings after his grace and Spirit. 'Tis strange to see how they even now went full soop to the world, are suddenly becalm'd, not a breath of winde stirring to any purpose in their souls after these things, and is it any wonder that Christ and Heaven should be denied to them that have no more mind to them? Lastly, some have zeal enough to have Christ & Heaven, but it is when the Master of the house is risen, and has shut to the door, and truly then they may stand long enough rapping, before any come to let them in. There is no Gospel preached in another world; but as for you poor soul, who are perswaded to renounce your lusts, throw away the conceit of your own righteousnesse, that you may run with more speed to Christ, and are so possest with the excellency of Christ, your own present need of him, and salvation by him, that

you pantest after him more than life it self; In Gods Name go on and speed, be of good comfort, he calls you by name to come unto him, that you may have rest for your soul. There is an office in the Word, where you may have your soul and its eternal happiness ensured to you: Those that come to him, as he will himself in no wise cast away, so not suffer any other to pluck them away. This day (says Christ to Zaccheus) salvation is come to your house, Luke 19:9. Salvation comes to you (poore soul) that openest your heart to receive Christ, you have eternal life already, as sure as if you wert a glorified Saint, now walking in that heavenly City. O Sirs, if there were a free trade proclaimed to the Indies, enough gold for all that went, and a certainty of making a safe voyage, who would stay at home? But alas, this can never be had: all this, and infinitely more may be said for heaven; and yet how few leave their uncertain hopes of the world to trade for it; what account can be gigiven for this, but the desperate atheisme of mens hearts? they are not yet fully perswaded whether the Scripture speaks true or not, whether they may relie upon the discovery that God makes in his Word of this new-found land, and those mines of spiritual treasure, there to be had as certain. God open the eyes of the unbelieving world, (as he did the Prophets servants,) that they may see these things to be realities and not fictions; 'tis faith only that gives a being to these things in our hearts. By faith Moses saw him that was invisible.

Thirdly, earthly things when we have them, we are not sure of them; like birds, they hop up and down, now on this hedge, and anon upon that, none can call them his own: rich to day, and poor to morrow: In health when we lie down, and arrested with pangs of death before midnight: Joyful Parents, one while solacing our

selves with the hopes of our budding posterity, and may be ere long knocks one of Jobs messengers at our door to tell us they are all dead; now in honor, but who knows whether we shall not live to see that butied in scorn and reproach? The Scripture compares the multitude of people to waters, the great ones of the world sit upon these waters; as the ship floates upon the waves, so do their honours upon the breath and favor of the multitude; and bow long is he like to sit that is carried upon a wave? one while they are mounted up to heaven, (as David speaks of the ship) and then down again they fall into the deep. We have ten parts in the King, (say the men of Israel,) 2 Samuel 19:45. and in the very next verse, Sheba does but sound a trumpet of sedition, saying, We have no part in David, no inheritance in the son of Jesse, and the winde is in another corner presently: for it's said, Every man of Israel went up from after David, and followed Sheba. Thus was David cried up and down, and that almost in the same breath. Unhappy man he, that has no surer portion then what this variable world will afford him. The time of mourning for the departure of all earthly enjoyments is at hand, we shall see them as Eglons servants did their Lord, fallen down dead before us, and weep because they are not. What folly then is it to dandle this vaine world in our affections, whose joy like the childes laughter on the mothers knee, is sure to end in a cry at last, and neglect heaven and heavenly things which endure for ever? O remember Dives stirring up his pillow, and composing himself to rest, how he was call'd up with the tydings of death, before he was warme in this his bed of ease, and laid with sorrow on another, which God had made for him in flames, from whence we hear him roaring in the anguish of his conscience. O soul, couldest you get but an interest in the heavenly things we are

speaking of, these would not thus slip from under you; heaven is a Kingdom that cannot be shaken, Christ an abiding portion, his graces and comforts sure waters that faile not, but spring up unto eternal life. The quailes that were food for the Israelites lust soon ceased, but the rock that was drink to their faith followed them; this rock is Christ: make sure of him and he will make sure of you, he'll follow you to your sick-bed, and lie in your bosome, chearing your heart with his sweet comforts, when worldly joyes lie cold upon you, (as Davids cloathes on him) and no warmth of comfort to be got from them. When your outward senses are lock't up, that you can neither see the face of your dear friends, nor hear the counsel and comfort they would give you, then he will come (though these doors be shut) and say, Peace be to you my dear child; feare not death or devils, I stay to receive your last breath, and have here my Angels waiting, that assoon as your soul is breathed out of your body, they may carry and lay it in my bosome of love, where I will nourish you with those eternal joyes that my blood has purchased, and my love prepared for you.

Fourthly, earthly things are empty and unsatisfying. We may have too much, but never enough of them, they oft breed loathing, but never content and indeed how should they, being so disproportionate to the vast desires of these immortal spirits that dwell in our bosomes? A spirit has not flesh and bones, neither can it be fed with such, and what has the world, but a few bones covered over with some fleshly delights to give it? The lesse is blessed of the greater, not the greater of the lesse. These things therefore being so far inferiour to the nature of man, he must look higher if he will be blessed, even to God himself who is the Father of spirits. God intended these things for our use, not enjoyment; and what folly is

it to think we can squeaze that from them, which God never put in them? They are breasts, that moderately drawn, yield good milk, sweet refreshing, but wring them too hard, and you will suck nothing but winde or blood from them. We lose what they have, by expecting to finde what they have not; none find lesse sweetnesse and more dissatisfaction in these things, then those who strive most to please themselves with them. The cream of the creature floats a top, and he that is not content to fleet it, but thinks by drinking a deeper draught to finde yet more, goes further to speed worse, being sure by the disappointment he shall meet to pierce himself through with many sorrows. But all these feares might happily be escaped, if you wouldest turn your back on the creature, and face about for heaven: labor to get Christ, and through him hopes of heaven, and you takest the right road to content, you shalt see it before you, and enjoy the prospect of it as you goest, yea, finde that every step you drawest nearer and nearer to it; O what a sweet change wouldest you finde? As a sick man coming out of an impure unwholesome climate, where he never was well, when he gets into fresh aire or his native soile: so will you finde a cheering of your spirits, and reviving your soul with unspeakable content and peace. Having once closed with Christ, first the guilt of all your sins is gone, and this spoil'd all your mirth before; all your dancing of a child, when some pin pricks it will not make it quiet or merry; well, now that pin is taken out which robbed you of the joy of your life. Secondly, your nature is renewed and sanctified; and when is a man at ease, if not when he is in health? and what is holiness, but the creature restored to his right temper, in which God created him? Thirdly, you becomest a child of God, and that cannot but please you well (I hope) to be son or daughter to so great a King.

Fourthly, you have a right to heavens glory, where you shalt ere long be conducted to take and hold possession of that your inheritance for ever, and who can tell what that is? Nicephorus tells us of one Agbarus, a great man, that (hearing so much of Christs fame, by reason of the miracles he wrought,) sent a Painter to take his picture, and that the Painter when he came was not able to do it, because of that radiancy and divine splendor which sate on Christs face. Whether this be true or no, I leave it; but to be sure, there is such a brightnesse on the face of Christ glorified, and that happiness which in heaven Saints shall have with him, as forbids us that dwell in mortal flesh to conceive of it aright, much more to express; 'tis best going there to be informed, and then we shall confesse we on earth heard not halfe of what we there finde, yea, that our present conceptions are no more like to that vision of glory we shall there have, then the Sunne in the Painters table, is to the Sunne it self in the Heavens. And if all this be so, why then do you spend money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which satisfis not, yea, for that which keeps you from that which can satisfie? Earthly things are like some trash, which does not only not nourish, but take away the appetite from that which would. Heaven and heavenly things are not relished by a soul vitiated with these. Manna, though for deliciousnesse called Angels food, yet but light bread to an Egyptian palate. But these spiritual things depend not on your opinion, O man, whoever you are (as earthly things in a great measure do) that the value of them should rise or fall as the worlds exchange does, and as vain man is pleased to rate them; think gold dirt, and it is so; for all the royal stamp on it, Count the swelling titles of worldly honor (that proud dust brags so in) vanity, and they are such: but have base thoughts of Christ,

and he is not the worse; slight heaven as much as you will, it will be heaven still, and when you comest so far to your wits with the Prodigal, as to know which is best fare, husks or bread; where best living, among hogs in the field, or in your Fathers house, then you will know how to iudge of these heavenly things better, till then go and make the best market you can of the world, but look not to finde this pearle of price, true satisfaction to your soul in any of the creatures shops; and were it not better to take it when you may have it, then after you have wearied your self in vaine in following the creature, to come back with shame, and may be misse of it here also, because you wouldest not have it when it was offered?

_VERSE 13._Wherefore take unto you the whole Armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand.

THe Apostle in these words re-assumes his former Exhortation mentioned, verse 11. and presses it with a new force, from that more particular discovery which he gives of the enemy, verse 12. where like a faithful Scout he makes a full report of Satans great power and malice, and also discloss what a dangerous design he has upon the Saints, no lesse then to despoil them of all that is heavenly: from all which he gives them a second Alarm, and bids them Arme, arme, Wherefore take unto you, &c. In the words consider,

First, the exhortation with the inference, Wherefore take unto you the whole Armour of God.

Secondly, the argument with which he urgeth the exhortation, and that ss double.

First, That ye may be able to withstand in the evil day.

Secondly, having done all to stand; that is, both able to fight, and able to conquer. As for the first general, the Exhortation, we shall wave it as to the substance of it, being the same with what we have handled, v. 11. only there are two observables which we shall lightly touch. The one from the repetition of the very same exhortation so soon, one verse only interposed. The other from the verbe the Apostle useth here, which being not the same with v. 11. affords a different note. There it is▪[illegible], here, [illegible].

Chapter 1. The Reason Why the Apostle Renews the Same Exhortation, and What Truths Ministers Are Often to Preach to Their People

• • •

FIrst of the first, the repetition of the same exhortation, and that in so short a space. Sure it was not for want of matter, but rather out of abundance of zeal, that he harps the second time on the same string. Indeed he is the better Workman, who drives one naile home with reiterated blowes, then he which covets to enter many, but fastens none. Such Preachers are not likely to reach the conscience, who hop from one truth to another, but dwell on none. Every hearer is not so quick as the Preacher, to take a notion as 'tis first darted forth, neither can many carry away so much of that Sermon, which is made up all of varieties, (where a point is no sooner named, but presently pulls back its hand, and another makes a breach and comes forth, before the fist has been opened and hammered upon the conscience by a powerful application) As where the discourse is homogeneal, and some one necessary truth is clear'd, insisted on, and urged home with blow upon blow. Here the whole matter of the discourse is a kin, and one part

remembred brings the memory acquainted with the other, whereas in the former one puts out the other in a weak memory. Short hints and away may please a Scholar, but not so profitable for others, the one more fit for the Schooles, but the other for the Pulpit. Were I to buy a garment in a shop, I should like him better, that layes one good piece or two before me that are for my turn, (which I may fully peruse) then him, who takes down all his shop, and heaps piece upon piece, (meerly to show his store) till at last for variety I can look wishly on none, they lie so one upon another.

Again, as it is profitable thus to insist on truths, so 'tis not unbecoming a Minister to preach the same truths again and again; Paul here goes over and over the same exhortation, v. 11. v. 13. and elsewhere tells us, this is not grievous to him, but to them it is safe, to hear the same things over and over, Philippians 3:1. There are three sorts of Truths must in our Ministery be preached oft.

First, Fundamental Truths, or, as we call them, catechise-points, that contain truths necessary to be known and believed. The weight of the whole building lies on these ground-cells, more than on superstructory truths. In a Kingdom there are some staple commodities and trades, without which the Common-weale could not subsist, as wool, corne, &c. in our countrey, and these ought to be encouraged above others, (which though they be an ornament to the Nation, yea, adde to the riches of it, yet are not so necessary to the subsistence of it) Thus here; there is an excellent use of our other Ministerial labors, as they tend to beautifie and adorne, yea, enrich the Christian with the knowledge of spiritual mysteries; but that which is chiefly to be regarded is the constant faithful opening of those main truths of the Gospel. These are the Land-marks, and show us the bounds of truth; and as it is in townes that butt one

upon another; if the inhabitants do not sometimes perambulate, and walk the bounds, (to show the youth what they are) when the old studs are gone, the next generation may lose all their priviledges by their encroaching neighbors, because not able to tell what is their own. There is no fundamental truth, but has some evil neighbor, (heresie I meane,) butting on it; and the very reason why a spirit of errour has so encroach't of late years upon truth, is, because we have not walk't the bounds with our people in acquainting them with, and stablishing their judgements on these fundamental points, so frequently and carefully as is requisite. And people are much in the fault, because they cast so much contempt upon this work, that they count a Sermon on such point; next to lost, and only childes meat.

Secondly, those truthes are oft to be preach't, which Ministers observe to be most undermined by Satan or his instruments in the judgements and lives of their people. The Preacher must read and study his people as diligently as any book in his study; and as he findes them, dispense like a faithful steward unto them. Paul takes notice that the Galatians had been in ill handling by false apostles, who had even bewitch't them back to the Law in that great point of Justification, and see how he beas upon that point. Our people complain, we are so much, so oft reproving the same errour or sin, and the fault is their own, because they will not leave it; who will blame the dog for continuing to bark, when the thief is all the while in the yard? Alas, alas, it is not once or twice rowsing against sin will do it. When people think the Minister shows his lazinesse, because he preaches the same things, he may then be exercising his patience, in continuing to exhort and reprove those who oppose, waiting, if at last God will give them repentance to the acknowl-

edging of the truth. We are bid ro lift up our voice like a trumpet, and would you have us cease while the battel lasts, or sound a retreat when it shou'd be a battel?

Thirdly, truths of daily use and practice. These are like bread and salt, whatever else is on, these must be on the board every meale. Saint Peter was of this minde, 2 Peter 1:12. I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them. He had (you may see) been speaking of such graces and duties, that they could not passe a day without the exercise of them, and therefore will be ever their Monitour, to stir up their pure mindes about them. All is not well, when a man is weary of his ordinary food, and nothing will go down but rarities; the stomach is sickly, when a man delights rather to pick some sallet, then eate of solid meat, and how far this dainty age is gore in this spiritual disease, I think few are so far come to themselves, as yet to consider and lament. O Sirs, be not weary as in doing, so not in hearing those savoury truths preach't you have daily use of, because you know them, and have heard them often; faith and repentance will be good doctrine to preach and heare to the end of the world; you may as well quarrel with God, because he has made but one heaven, and one way to it, as with the Preacher for preaching these over and over; if your heart were humble, and your palate spiritual, old truths would be new to you every time you hearest them. In heaven the Saints draw all their wine of joy, (as I may so say at one tap) and shall to all eternity, and yet it never tastes flat. God is that one object their souls are filled with, and never weary of, and can any thing of God and his love be wearisome to you in the hearing here? I am not all this while an Advocate for any Loyterer in our Lords vineyard; for any slothful servant in the

work of the Gospel, who wraps up his talent in idlenesse, or buries it in the earth, (where (may be) he is digging and playing the worldling all the week, and then has nothing to set before his people on the Lords day, but one or two old mouldy loaves, which were kneaded many years before.) This is not the good Steward, here is the old, but where are the new things which he should bring out of his treasure? If the Minister labors not to increase by stock, he is the worst thief in the Parish. It is wicked for a man trusted with the improving of Orphans estates, to let them lie dead by him, much more for a Minister not to improve his gifts, (which I may call the town-stock given for the good of the souls of both rich and poor:) if that Preacher was wise, Ecclesiastes 12:9. who still taught the people knowledge, that is, was ever going on, endeavouring to build them higher in knowledge, and that he might, did give good heed, and sought out, and set in order many Proverbs; then surely he will be proved a foolish Preacher at last, that wastes his time in sloth, or spends more of it in studying how to adde to his estate out of his peoples, then how to adde to their gifts and graces, by a conscionable endeavour to increase his own.

Chapter 2. The Best of Saints Subject to Decline in Their Graces, and Why We Are to Endeavor a Recovery of Decays in Grace

• • •

THe second observable in the exhortation is taken from the verbe, which the Apostle useth, [illegible], which signifies not only to take, but to take again, or recover a thing which we have lost, or re-assume a thing which for the present we have left. Now the Apostle writing to the Saints at Ephesus, who (at least many of them) were not now to put on this Armour by a Conversion, (or the first work of faith, which no doubt had already past upon many among them) he in regard of them and believers to the end of the world has a further meaning, i. e. that they would put on more close where this armour hangs loose, and they would recover where they have let fall any duty, or decayed in any grace. So that the Note is,

That the Christian should have an especial care to repaire his broken Armour to recover his decaying graces. This Armour may be battered; I might show sad examples in the several pieces. Was not Jacobs girdle of truth and sincerity unbuckled, when he used

that sinful policy to get the blessing? he was not the plain man then, but the subplantour; but he had as good have stayed Gods time: he was paid home in his own kinde. He puts a cheat on his father, and did not Laban put a cheat on him, giving Leah for Rachel? What say you to Davids breast-plate of righteousnesse in the matter of Uriah? was it not shot through, and that holy man fearfully wounded? who lay almost a year (for ought we reade of him,) before he came to himself, so far as to be thoroughly sensible of his sin, till Nathan a faithful Chirurgion was sent to search the wound, and clear it of that dead flesh, which had growne over it? And Jonah, (otherwise a holy Prophet) when God wou'd send him on an errand to Ni neveh, he has his shoes to seek, I mean that preparation and readinesse with which his minde should have been shod, to have gone at the first call. Good Hezikiah we finde how near his helmet of hope was of being beaten off his head, who tells us himself what his thoughts were in the day of his distress, that he should not see the Lord in the land of the living, expecting that God would never let go his hold, till like a Lion he had broke his bones, and at last made an end of him. Even Abraham himselfe, famous for faith, yet had his fits of unbelief and distrustful qualms coming over his valiant heart; now in this case the Christians care should be to get his armour speedily repaired. A battered helmet is next to no helmet in point of present use; grace in a decay, is like a man pull'd off his legs by sicknesse; if some meanes be not used to recover it, little service will be done by it, or comfort received from it. Therefore Christ gives this Church of Ephesus (to whom Paul wrote this Epistle) this counsel, To remember from whence she was fallen, to repent and do her first works, How many does a declining Christian wrong at once?

First, he wrongs God, and that in a high degree, because God reckons upon more honor to be paid him in by his Saints grace, then by all other talents which his creatures have to trade with in the world. He can in some sense better bear the open sins of the world, then the decayes of his Saints graces; they by abusing their talents rob him but of his oyle, flaxe and wool: But the Christian by the other, bereaves him of the glory which should be paid him from his faith, zeal, patience, self-denial, sincerity and the rest. Suppose a Master should trust one servant with his mony, and another with his child to be look't to; would he not be more displeased to see his dear child hurt, or almost kill'd by the negligence of the one, then his money stollen by the carelesnesse of the other? Grace is the new creature, the birth of the Spirit, when this comes to any harme by the Christians carelesse walking it must needs go nearer the heart of God, then the wrong he has from the world, who are trusted with nothing like this.

Secondly, he that declines in grace, and labors not to repair it, he wrongs his brethren who have a share in one anothers grace; he wrongs his whole body that seeks not cure for a wound in any member. We are bid to love one another, 2 epist. of John 5. v. but how shall we show our love to one another? the very next words will direct us, And this is love, that we walk after his Commandments. Indeed we show little love to our brethren by sinning, whereby we are sure either to ensnare them or grieve them; and how to let grace go down, and sin not go up is a riddle to any that know what they both are.

Thirdly, the Christian wrongs himself in not endeavouring to repaire his broken armour, and recover his declining grace. By this he loses the evidence of his inheritance, at least so blots it that it

cannot be so clearly perceived by him. A declining Christian must needs be a doubting Christian, because the common symptome of an hypocrite, is to wear and waste like a stake set in the ground, (which rots, while true grace like the tree grows.) Is not this the knot which the devil poseth many poor souls withal, and findes them work for many years to untie? If you wert a Christian you wouldest grow. Right Saints go from strength to streugth, and you goest from strength to weakness. They go up the hill to Zion, every Ordinance and Providence is a step that bears them nearer Heaven; but you goest down the hill, and are further from your salvation then when you did first believe (as you thoughtest;) and does it stand wirh your wisdom, Christian, to put a staffe into the devls hand, an argument into his mouth, to dispute against your salvation with? If you held an estate by the life of a child, which upon the death of it should all go away from you, that child I warrant you should be well look't unto; his head should not ake, but you would post to the Physician for counsel; I pray what is your evidence for that glorious estate you hope for? Is it not Christ within you? Is not this new creature (whch may well be call'd Christ for its likenesse to him) the young heire of Heavens glory? and when that is sick or weak, is it not time to use all meanes for its recovery? while thus, you can neither live nor die comfortably. Not live; a man in a consumption has little joy of his life, he neither findes sweetnesse in his meat, nor delight in his work, as a healthfu man does. O how sweet is the promise to faith when active and vigourous? how easie the yoke of the Command to the Christian, when his conscience is not gall'd with guilt, nor hi strength enfeebled by temptation? but the Christian in a declining condition, he tastes not the promise, every command is grievous, and every duty

burdensome to him: he goes in pain like one whose foot is out of joynt, though the way be never so pleasant. And he is as unfit to die as he is to live, such a one can like no more to hear the newes of death, then a tenant that wants his rent does to hear of the quarter-day. This made David beg time of God; Spare me a little, that I may recover my strength.

Having shewen you why the Christian should endeavour to recover his declining graces, it will be very requisite to give a word of counsel to the Christian.

First, to direct him how to judge of the declining state of grace, that he may not passe a false judgement upon himself therein.

Secondly, to direct him when he findes grace to be in a declination, how he may recover it.

Chapter 3. A Cautionary Direction from What We May Not, and from What We May Judge Our Graces to Be in a Declination

• • •

Quest. FIrst of the first, How may a Christian judge whether grace be declining in him or no?

Answ. First, I shall resolve this negatively, and show by what he is not to judge his grace to decline.

Secondly, positively, by what he may certainly conclude a decay of grace.

First, negatively, and that in several particulars.

Frist, Christian, do not judge grace to be fallen weaker, because your sense of corruption is grown stronger: This oft lies at the bottome of poor souls complaints in this case O they never felt pride, hypocrisie and other corruptions so haunt them as now; none knows how they are vexed with these, and the like besides themselves. Now let me ask you who makest this sad moane, whether you doest not think these corruptions were in you before you did thus feel them? how oft have you prayed as formally, and not been

troubled? how oft have you stood chatting with the same lusts, and your soul has not been laid low before the Lord with such abasement of your self as now? deal faithfully between God and your soul, and tell not a lie for God by bearing false witnesse against your self. If it be thus, you have rather a comfortable signe of grace growing then decaying. Sin cannot be on the getting hand, if the sense of sin grow quick; this is the concomitant of a thriving soul, none so full of complaints of their own hearts as such; the least sin goes now to their very souls, which makes them think viler of themselves then ever▪ but it is not the increase of sin in them, but the advance of their love to Christ makes them judge so: when the Sun shines with some power, and the year gets up, we observe, though we may have frosts and snow, yet they do not lie long, but are soon dissolved by the Sun, O 'tis a sweet signe that the love of Christ shines with a force upon your soul, that no corruptions can lie long in your bosome, but they melt into sorrow and bitter complaints. That is the decaying soul where sin lies bound up and frozen, little sense of, or sorrow for it appears.

Secondly, Take heed you thinkest not grace decayes, because your comfort withdrawes. The influence of the Sun comes where the light of it is not to be found, yea, is mighty, as appears in those mines of gold and silver, which are concocted by the same. And so may the actings of grace be vigourous in you, when least under the shines of his countenance. Did ever faith triumph more than in our Saviour, crying, My God, my God; here faith was at its meridian, when it was midnight in respect of joy. Possibly you comest from an Ordinance, and bringest not home with you those sheaves of comfort you usest to do, and therefore conclude grace acted not in you as formerly. Truly if you have nothing else to go by, you may

wrong the grace of God in you exceedingly. Because your comfort is extrinsecal to your duty, a boon which God may give or not, yea, does give to the weak, and deny to the strong. The traveller may go as fast, and rid as much ground, when the Sun does not shine, as when it does; though (indeed he goes not so merrily on his journey) nay, somtimes he makes the more have; the warm Sun makes him sometime to lie down and loyter, but when dark and cold he puts on with more speed. Some graces thrive best (like some flowers) in the shade, such as humility, dependance on God, &c,

Thirdly, take heed you doest not mistake, and think your grace decayes, when may be it is only your temptations increase, and not your grace decrease. If you should hear a man say, because he cannot to day run so fast, when a hundred weight is on his back, as he could yesterday without any such a burden, that therefore he was grown weaker, you would soon tell him where his mistake lies. Temptation lies not in the same heavinesse alway upon the Christians shoulder; observe therefore whether Satan is not more than ordinary let loose to assault you, whether your temptations come not with more force and violence then ever; possibly, though you doest not with the same facility overcome these, as you have done lesse, yet grace may act stronger in conflicting with the greater, then in overcoming the lesse. The same ship, that when lightly ballasted, and favoured with the winde goes mounting, at another time deeply laden, and going against winde and tide, may move with a slow pace, and yet they in the ship take more pains to make it sail thus, then they did when it went faster.

Secondly, positively, how you may conclude that grace is declining; and that in a threefold respect.

First, in reference to temptations to sin.

Secondly, in reference to the duties of Gods worship.

Thirdly, the frame of your heart in worldly employments.

First, in reference to sin, and that is threefold.

First, when you are not so wakeful to discover the encroachings of sin upon you as formerly; at one time we finde Davids heart smote him, when he but rent the skirt of Sauls garment: at another time when his eye glanced on Bathsheba, he takes no such notice of the snare Satan had him in, and so is led from one sin to another, which plainly showed that grace in him was [〈1 page duplicate〉][〈1 page duplicate〉] heavy-eyed, and his heart not in so holy a frame as it had been. If an enemy comes up to the gates, and the sentinel not so much as give an alarm to the City of his approach, it shewes he is off his guard, either fallen asleep, or worse: If grace were awake, and your conscience had not contracted some hardness, it would do its office.

Secondly, when a temptation to sin is discovered, and you findest your heart shut up that you doest not pray against it, or not with that zeal and holy indignation, as formerly upon such occasions; it is a bad signe, that lust has got an advantage of your grace, that you can not readily betake your selfe to your armes. Your affections are bribed, and this makes you so cold a Suitour at the throne of grace, for helpe against yours enemy.

Thirdly, when the arguments prevailing most with you to resist temptations to sin, or to mourn for sin committed, are more carnal and lesse Evangelical then formerly: may be you remembrest when your love to Christ would have spit fire on the face of Satan tempting you to such a sin; but now that holy fire is so abated, that if there were not some other carnal motives to make the vote full, it

would hazard to be carried for it, rather than against it; and so in mourning for a sin there is possibly now some slavish arguments, (like an onion in the eye, which makes you weep, rather than pure ingenuity arising from love to God whom you have offended, this speaks a sad decay, and the more mixture there is of such carnal arguments, either in the resisting of, or mourning for sin, the greater the declination of grace is. Davids natural heat sure was much decayed, when he needed so many cloathes to be laid on him, and he yet feel so little heat, the time was he would have sweat with fewer. I am afraid, many their love to Christ will be found (in these declining times) to have lost so much of its youthful vigour, that what would formerly have put them into a holy fury, and burning zeal against some sins, (such as Sabbath-breaking, pride of apparel, neglect of family-duties, &c.) has now much ado to keep any heat at all in them against the same.

Secondly, in point of duties of worship.

First, if your heart does not prompt you with that forwardnesse and readinesse as formerly, to hold communion with God in any duty; possibly you knowest the time when your heart echoed back to the motions of Gods Spirit, bidding you, Seek his face; Your face, Lord, will I seek; yea, you did long as much till a Sabbath or Sermon-season came, as the carnal wretch does till it be gone; but now your pulse does not beat so quick a march to the Ordinances publick or secret; nature cannot but decay, if appetite to food go away; a craving soul is the thriving soul, such a child that will not let his mother rest, but is frequently crying for the breast.

Secondly, when you declinest in your care to performe duties in a spiritual sort, and to preserve the sense of those more inward failings, which in duty none but your self can check you of. It is not

frequency of duty, but spirituality in duty causes thriving, and therefore neglect in this point soon brings grace into a consumptive posture. Possibly, soul, the time was you wert not satisfied with praying, but you did watch your heart strictly, (as a man would every piece in a summe of money he payes, lest he should wrong his friend with any brasse or uncurrant coin) you wouldest have God not only have duty, but duty stamp't with that faith which makes it currant, have that zeal and sincerity which makes it Gospel-weight; but now you are more careless and formal, O look to it (poor soul) you will, if you continue thus carelesse, melt in your spiritual estate apace. Such dealings will spoil your trade with heaven. God will not take off these slighty duties at your hands.

Thirdly, when a Christian gets little spiritual nourishment from communion with God, to what it has done. The time has been (may be) you couldest show what came of your praying, hearing and fasting; but now the case is altered. There is a double strength communion with God imparts to a soul in a healthful disposition, strength to faith, and strength for our obediential walking; doest you hear and pray, and get no more strength to hold by a promise, no more power over, or brokennesse of heart under your usual corruptions? what? come down the Mount and break the Tables of Gods Law, assoon as you are off the place? as deep in your passion, as uneven in your course as before? there is a sure decay of that inward heat which should and would (if in its right temper) suck some nourishment from these.

Thirdly, by your behavior in your worldly employments.

First, when your worldly occasions do not leave you in so free and spiritual a disposition, to return into the presence of God as formerly; may be you couldest have come from your shop and fam-

ily-employments to your closet, and finde that they have kept you in frame, yea, may be delivered you up in a better frame for those duties, but now 'tis otherwise, you can not so shake them off, but they cleave to your spirit, and give an earthly savor to your praying and hearing; you have reason to bewail it; when nature decayes men, go more stooping, and 'tis a signe some such decay is in you, that you can not as you usest, lift up your heart from earthly to spiritual duties. They were intended as helps against temptation, and therefore when they prove snares to us there is a distemper on us. If we waxe worse after sleep, the body is not right, because the nature of sleep is to refresh; if exercise indisposs for work, the reason is in our bodies: So here.

Secondly, when your diligence in your particular calling is more selfish; possibly you have wrought in your shop, and set close at your study, in obedience to the command chiefly; your carnal interests have swayed but little with you, but now you tradest more for your self, and lesse for God. O have a care of this.

Thirdly, when you can not bear the disappointment of your carnal ends in your particular calling, as you have done; you workest and gettest little of the world, you preachest and are not much esteemed, and you knowest not well how to brook these. The time was you couldest retire your self into God, and make up all you did want elsewhere in him; but now you are not so well satisfied with your estate, rank and condition; your heart is fingering for more of these then God allowes you; this shows declining; children are harder to be pleased, and old men, (whose decay of nature makes them more froward, and in a manner children the second time)

then others; labor therefore to recover your decaying grace, and as this lock grows, so your strength with it will, to acquiesce in the disposure of Gods Providence.

Chapter 4. A Word of Counsel for the Recovery of Declining Grace

• • •

WE come now to give a few directions to the Christian, how to recover decaying grace.

Enquire faithfully into the cause of your declining. The Christians armour decays two ways; either by violent bartery, when the Christian is overcome by temptations to sin; or else by neglecting to forbish and scoure it with the use of those means which are as oile, to keep it clean and bright. Now enquire, which of these have been the cause of your decay. It is like both concurre.

First, if your grace be weakened by any blow, given it by any sin committed by you; there then lies a threefold duty upon you towards the recovery of it.

First, you are to renew your repentance. It is Christs counsel, Revelation 2:5. to Ephesus, Repent, and do your first works; where it is not only commanded as a duty, but prescribed as a means for her recovery; as if he had said, Repent, that you may do your first works. So, Hosea 14:2. The Lord sets back-sliding Israel about this work, bidding her take words and turn to the Lord; and, v. 4. he then tells her he'll take her in hand to recover her of her sins, I will

heale their back-slidings: a repenting soul is under promise of healing; and therefore (Christian) go and search your heart, as you wouldest do your house, if some thief or murderer lay hid in it, to cut your throat in the night; and when you have found the sin that has done you the mischief, then labor to fill your heart with shame for it, and indignation against it, and so go big with sorrow, and cast it forth before the Lord in a heart-breaking confession; better you do this, then Satan do your errand to God for you.

Secondly, when you have renewed your repentance, forget not, delay not then to renew your faith on the promise for pardon. Repentance that is like purging physick to evacuate the peccant humor; but if faith come not presently with its restorative, the poor creature will never get heart, or recover his strength. A soul may die of a fluxe of sorrow as well as of sin; faith has an incarnating vertue, as they say of some strengthening meats, it feeds upon the promise, and that is perfect, converting (or rather restoring) the soul, Psalms 19:7. Though you wert pined to skin and bones, all your strength wasted, yet faith would soon recruit you, and enable every grace to perform its office chearfully. Faith sucks peace from the promise, call'd peace in beleeving; from peace flowes joyes, Being justified by faith we have peace with God, Romans 5:1. and, v. 2. We rejoyce in the hope of glory; and joy affords strength: The joy of the Lord is our strength.

Thirdly, back both these with a daily endeavour to mortifie those lusts which most pevail over your grace. Weeds cannot thrive, and the flowers also; when grace does not act vigorously and freely, conclude it is opprest with some contrary lust, which weighs down its spirits, and makes them lumpish; even as superfluous humours do load the natural spirits in our bodies, that we

have little joy to stir or go about any businesse till they be evacuated; and therefore ply this work close, it is not a days work or two in the year, (like Physick at spring and fall) nothing more vain, then to make a busle, as the Papists do at their Lent; or as some unsound Professours among our selves, who seem to bestir themselves before a Sacrament or day of Fasting, with a great noise of zeal, and then let those very lusts live peaceably in them all the year after. No, this is child-play to do and undo; you must mortifie daily your lusts by the Spirit, Romans 8:13. Follow but this work conscionably in your Christian course, making it your endeavour, (as constantly as the labouring man goes out every day to work in the field where his calling lies) to watch your heart, and use all means for the discovery of sin, and as it breaks forth to be humbled for it, and be chopping at the root of it with this axe of mortification; and you shalt see by the blessing of God what a change for the better there will be in the constitution of your grace; you who are now so poor, so pale, that you are afraid to see your own face long in the glasse of your own conscience, shall then reflect with joy upon your owne conscience, and dare to converse with your self without those surprizals of horrour and feare, which before did appale you; your grace, though it shall not be your rejoycing, yet it will be your evidence for Christ, in whom it is: and lead you in with boldness to lay claim to him, while the loose Christian, whose grace is over-grown with lusts (for want of this weeding hook) shall stand trembling at the door, questioning whether his grace be true or no; and from that doubt of his welcome.

Secondly, if upon enquiry you findest that your Armour decays, rather for want of scouring, then by any blow from sin presumptuously committed, (as that is most common and ordinary, rust will

soon spoil the best armour, and negligence give grace its bane, as well as grosse sins,) then apply your self to the use of those means which God has appointed for the strengthening grace; if the fire goes out by taking off the wood, what way to preserve it but by laying it on again?

First, I shall send you to the Word of God, be more frequently conversant with it. David tells us, where he renewed his spiritual life, and got his soul so oft into a heavenly heate, when grace in him began to chill. The Word (he tells us) quickened him. This was the Sunny bank he fate under. The Word draws forth the Christians grace, by presenting every one with an object suitable to act upon, this is of great power to rouse them up; as the coming in of a friend, makes us (though sleepy before) shake off all drowsinesse to enjoy his company. Affections they are actuated when their object is before them; if we love a person, this is excited by sight of him, or anything that mindes us of him; if we hate one our blood riseth much more against him when before us. Now the Word bring the Christian graces and their object together. Here love may delight her self with the beholding Christ, who is set out to life there in all his love and lovelinesse; here the Christian may see his sins in a glasse that will not flatter him; and can there any godly sorrow be in the heart, any hatred of sin, and not come forth, while the man is reading what they cost Christ for him?

Secondly, from the Word go to meditation; this is as bellowes to the fire; that grace which lies chosk't and eaten up for want of exercise, will by this be cleared and break forth; while you are musing this fire will burne, and your heart grow hot within you, according to the nature of the subject your thoughts dwell upon: resolve therefore (Christian) to enclose some time from all worldly

Suitours, wherein you may every day (if possible) at least take a view of the most remarkable occurrences that have past between God and you; First, ask your soul what takings it has had that day, what mercies heaven has sent into you, and do not when you have askt the question, (like Pilate) go out; but stay till your soul has made report of Gods gracious dealings to you: and (if you beest wise to observe, and faithful to relate them) your conscience must tell you, that the cock was never turn'd, the breast of mercy never put up all the day, yea, while you are viewing these fresh mercies, telling over this new coine, hot out of the mint of Gods bounty, ancient mercies they will come crowding in upon you, and call for a place in your thoughts, and tell you what God has done for you moneths and years ago, (and indeed old debts should not be paid last) give them (Christian) all a hearing one time or another, and you shalt see how they will work upon your ingenious spirit. It is with the Christian in this case, as with some Merchants servant that keeps his Masters cash, he tells his Master he has a great summe of his by him, and desires he would discharge him of it, and see how his accounts stand, but he can never finde him at leisure. There is a great treasure of mercy alwayes in the Christians hands, and conscience is oft calling the Christian to take the account, and see what God has done for him, but seldom it is, he can finde time to tell his mercies over; and is it any wonder that such should go behinde-hand in their spiritual estate, who take no more notice what the gracious dealings of God are with them? how can he be thankful that seldome thinks what he receives? or patient when God afflicts, that wants one of the most powerful arguments to pacifie a mutinous spirit in trouble, and that is taken from the abundant good we receive at the hands of the Lord as well as a lit-

tle evil? how can such a souls love flame to God, that is kept at such a distance from the mercies of God, which are fuel to it? and the like might be said of all the other graces. Secondly, reflect upon your self, and bestow a few serious thoughts upon your own behavior, what it has been towards God and man all along the day. Ask your soul, as Elisha his servant, Whence comest you, O my soul? where have you been? what have you done for God this day, and how? and when you goest about this, look that you neither beest taken off from a through search, (as Jacob was by Rachels specious excuse) nor be found to cocker your self, (as Eli his sons) when you shalt upon enquiry take your heart tardy in any part of your duty; take heed what you doest, for you judgest for God, who receives the wrong by your sin, and therefore will do himself justice if you will not.

Thirdly, from meditation go to prayer; indeed a soul in meditation is on his way to prayer; that duty leads the Christian has to this, and this brings help to that; when the Christian has done his utmost by meditation to excite his graces, and chase his spirit into some divine heat, he knows all this is but to lay the wood in order. The fire must come from above to kindle, and this must be fetch't by prayer. They say, stars have greatest influences when they are in conjunction with the Sunne; then sure the graces of a Saint should never work more powerfully then in prayer, for then he is in the nearest conjunction and communion with God. That Ordinance which has such power with God, must needs have a mighty influence on our selves. It will not let God rest, but raiss him up to his peoples succour, and is it any wonder if it be a means to rouse up and excite the Christians grace? how oft do we see a dark cloud upon Davids spirit at the beginning of his prayer, which by that

time he is a little warme in his work, begins to clear up, and before he ends breaks forth into high actings of faith and acclamations of praise? Only here (Christian) take heed of formal praying, this is as baneful to grace as not praying. A plaister, though proper and of soveraign vertue, yet if it be laid on cold may do more hurt then good.

Fourthly, to all the former joyne fellowship and communion with the Saints you lived amongst. No wonder to hear a house is robb'd that stands far from neighbors; he that walks in communion of Saints, he travels in company, he dwells in a City where one house keeps up another, to which Jerusalem is compared. 'Tis observable concerning the house in whose ruines Jobs children were entombed, that a winde came from the wilderness and smote the four corners of it; it seems it stood alone; the devil knowes what he does in hindering this great Ordinance of communion of Saints; in doing this he hinders the progresse of grace, yea, brings that which Christians have, into a declining wasting state. The Apostle couples those two duties close together, to hold fast our Profession, and to consider one another, and provoke unto love and to good works, Hebrews 10:23, 24. Indeed it is a dangerous step to Apostasy, to forsake the communion of Saints; hence 'tis said of Demas, he has left us, and embraced the present world. O what mischief has Satan done us in these few late years, in this one particular? what is become of this communion of Saints? where are there two or three to be found that can agree to walk together? those that could formerly suffer together, cannot sit together at their Fathers table, can hardly pray one with or one for another;

the breath of one Christian is strange to another that once lay in his, bosome; —This is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation.

Chapter 5. The Words Opened, and What Is Meant by the Evil Day

• • •

WE come to the argument with which the Apostle urgeth the exhortation, and that is double.

The first has respect to the hour of battel, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day.

The second to the happy issue of the war, which will crown the Christian thus arm'd, and that is certain victory, and having done all stand.

First of the first, That ye may be able to withstand in the evil day; But what is this evil day? Some take this evil day to comprehend the whole life of a Christian here below in this vale of tears; and then the argument runs thus: Take to your selves the whole Armour of God, that you may be able to persevere to the end of your life, which you will finde, as it were, one continued day of trouble and trial, Thus Jacob drawes a black line over his whole life, Few and evil have the days of my life been, Gen. 47. What day shines so faire that over casts not before night, yea, in which the Christian meets not with some shower or other, enough to deserve the name of an evil day? Every day has its portion, yea, proportion;

Sufficient is the evil of the day. We need not borrow and take up sorrows upon use of the morrow, to make up our present load; as we read of daily bread, so of a daily crosse, Luke 9:23. which we are bid to take, not to make, (we need not make crosses for our selves, as we are prone to do) God in his Providence will provide one for us; and we are bid to take it up, but we hear nothing of laying it down, till crosse and we lie down together; our troubles and our lives are coetaneous, live and die together; here when joy comes sorrow is at its heel, staffe and rod go together. Job himself, (whose prosperity the devil so grudg'd, and set forth in all his bravery and pomp, Job 1:10. as if his Sun had no shadow,) heare what account this good man gives of this his most flourishing time, chap. 3. 26. I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet. There were some troubles that broke his rest, when his bed was (to thinking) as sort as heart could wish, even now this good man tosses and tumbles from one side to the other, and is not quiet. If one should have come to Job and blessed him with his happy condition, and said Surely, Job, you couldest be content with what you have for your portion, if you might have all this setled on you and your heires after you, he would have said, as once Luther, that God should not put him off with these. Such is the Saints state in this bottome, that their very life here, and all the pompous entertainments of it, they are their crosse, because they detain them from their crown. We need nothing to make our life an evil day more than our absence from our chief good; which cannot be recompenced by the world, nor enjoyed with it. Only this goodnesse there is in this evil, that it is short, our life is but an evil day, it will not last long; and sure it was mercy that God has abridged so much of the terme of mans life in these last days,

wherein so much of Christ and Heaven are discovered, that it would have put the Saints patience hard to it, to have known so much of the upper worlds glory, and then be kept so long from it, as the Fathers in the first age were. O comfort one another (Christians) with this; though your life be evil with troubles, yet 'tis short; a few steps, and you are out of the raine. There is great difference between a Saint in regard of the evils he meets with, and the wicked; as two travellers riding contrary ways, (both taken in the rain and wet) but one rides from the raine, and so is soon out of the showre; but the other rides into the rainy corner, the further he goes, the worse he is. The Saint he meets with troubles as well as the wicked, but he is soon out of the showre; when death comes he has faire weather: but the wicked the further he goes the worse; what he meets with here, is but a few drops, the great storme is the last. The pouring out of Gods wrath shall be in hell, where all the deeps of horrour are opened, both from above of Gods righteous fury, and from beneath of their own accusing and tormenting consciences.

Secondly, others take the phrase in a more restrained sense, to denote those particular seasons of our life, wherein more especially we meet with afflictions and sufferings. Beza reads it tempore adverso, in the time of our adversity. Though our whole life be evil, if compared with Heavens blisseful state, our clearest day, night to that glorious morning; yet one part of our life compared with another may be called good, and the other evil, we have our vicissitudes here. The Providences of God to his Saints here, while on this low bottome of earth are mixt and particoloured, as was signified by the speckled horses in Zechariahs vision; Red and white, peace and war, joy and sorrow checker our days. Earth is a

middle place betwixt heaven and hell, and so is our state here; it partakes of both: we go up hill and down till we get to our journeys end, yea, we finde the deepest slough nearest our fathers house. Death, I mean, into which all the other troubles of out life fall, as streames into some great river, and with which they all end, and are swallowed up. This being the comprehensive evil, I conceive to be meant here, being made remarkable by a double article [illegible], that day, that evil day, not excluding those other days of tribulation which intervene. These are but so many petty deaths, every one snatching away a piece of our lives with them, or like Pages sent before to usher in this King of terrours that comes behinde.

The phrase being opened; let us consider the strength of this first argument, with which the Apostle reinforcs his exhortation, of taking to our selves the whole Armour of God, and that consists in three weighty circumstances.

First, the nature and quality of this day of affliction, it is an evil day.

Secondly, the unavoidablenesse of this evil day of affliction, implied in the forme of speech, that you may withstand in the evil day. He shuts out all hope of escaping, as if he had said you have no way but to withstand, please not your selves with thoughts of shunning battel; the evil day must come, be you arm'd or notarm'd.

Thirdly, the necessity of this armour, to withstand. As we cannot run from it, so not bear up before it, and oppose the force which will be made against us, except clad with Armour. These

would afford several points, but for brevity we shall lay them together in one Conclusion.

Chapter 6. Showing That the Day of Affliction Is Evil and in What Respects, Also Unavoidable, and Why to Be Prepared For

• • •

IT behoves everyone to arme and prepare himself for the evil day of affliction and death, which unavoidably he must conflict with. The point has three branches.

First, the day of affliction and death is an evil day.

Secondly, this evil day is unavoidable.

Thirdly, it behoves every one to provide for this evil day.

First of the first branch, the day of affliction, especially death is an evil day. Here we must show how affliction is evil, and how not.

First, it is not morally or intrinsecally evil, if it were evil in this sense; First, God could not be the author of it; his nature is so pure, that no such evil can come from him, any more than the Sunnes light can make night. But this evil of affliction he vouchs for his own act, Against this family do I devise an evil, Micah 3:2. yea more, he impropriates it so to himself, as that he will not have us think any can do us evil beside himself. 'Tis the Prerogative he

glories in, that there is no evil in the City, but it is of his doing, Amos 3:6. And well it is for the Saints that their crosses are all made in heaven, they would not else be so fitted to their backs as they are. But for the evil of sin, he disownes it with a strict charge, that we lay not this brat, which is begotten by Satan upon our impure hearts, at his door. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempts he any man, James 1:13.

Secondly, if affliction were thus intrinsecally evil, it could in no respect be the object of our desire, which sometimes it is and may be. We are to choose affliction rather than sin, yea, the greatest affliction before the least sin. Moses chose affliction with the people of God, rather than the pleasures of sin for a season. We are bid rejoyce when we fall into divers temptations, that is, afflictions.

But in what respects then may the day of affliction be called evil?

First, as it is grievous to sense in Scriprure, evil is oft put as contradistinct to joy and comfort: We looked for peace, and behold no good. A merry heart is called a good heart, a sad spirit an evil spirit, because nature has an abhorrency to all that opposs its joy, and this every affliction does more or lesse. No affliction, while present is joyous, but grievous; it has like Physick, an unpleasing farewel to the sense. Therefore Salomon, speaking of the evil days of sicknesse, expresss them to be so distasteful to nature, that we shall say, We have no pleasure in them. They take away the joy of our life. Natural joy is a true flower of the Sun of prosperity, it opens and shuts with it. 'Tis true indeed, the Saints never have more joy then in their affliction, but this comes in upon another score; they have a good God that sends it in, or else they would be

as sadly on it as others. 'Tis no more natural for comfort to spring from afflictions, then for grapes to grow on thornes, or Manna in the wilderness. The Israelites might have look't long enough for such bread, if heaven had not miraculously rained it down. God chooss this season to make the Omnipotency of his love the more conspicuous. As Elijah to adde to the miracle, first causes water in abundance to be poured upon the wood and sacrifice, so much as to fill the trench, and then brings fire from heaven by his prayer, to lick it up: Thus God poures out the flood of affliction upon his children, and then kindles that inward joy in their bosomes which licks up all their sorrow, yea, he makes the very waters of affliction they float on, adde a further sweetnesse to the musick of their spiritual joy, but still it is God that is good, and affliction that is evil.

Secondly, the day of affliction is an evil day, as it is an unwelcome remembrancer of what sinful evils have passed in our lives. It revives the memory of old sins, which it may be, were buried many years ago in the grave of forgetfulnesse. The night of affliction is the time when such ghosts use to walk in mens consciences; and as the darkness of the night addes to the horrour of any scareful object, so does the state of affliction (which is it self uncomfortable) adde to the terrour of our sins then remembred. Never did the Patriarchs sin look so ghastly on them, as when it recoil'd upon them in their distress, Genesis 42:21. The sinner then has more real apprehensions of wrath then at another time; affliction approximates judgement, yea, it is interpreted by him, as a Pursevant sent to call him presently before God, and therefore must needs beget a woful confusion and consternation in his spirit. O that men would think, of this, how they could bear the sight of their sins, and a Rehearsal Sermon of all their ways in that day! That is the

blessed man indeed, who can with the Prophet then look on them, and triumph over them. This indeed is a dark parable, as he calls it, few can skill of it, as Psalms 94:3, 4. I will open my dark saying upon the harp; wherefore should I feare in the day of evil, when the iniquity of my heels compasss me about?

Thirdly, the day of affliction makes discovery of much evil to be in the heart, which was not seen before. Affliction shakes and royles the creature, if any sediment be at the bottome it will appear then. Sometimes it discovers the heart to be quite naught, that before had some seeming good, these suds wash off the hypocrites paint, Natura vexata prodit seipsam. When corrupt nature is vext it shows it self, and some afflictions do that to purpose. We reade of such as are offended when persecution comes, they fall quite out with their Profession, because it puts them to such cost and trouble; others in their distress that curse their God, Isaiah 8:21. It is impossible for a naughty heart to think well of an afflicting God. The hireling, if his Master takes up a staffe to beat him, throws down his work and runs away; and so does a false heart serve God. Yea, even where the person is gracious, corruption is oft found to be stronger, and grace weaker than they were thought to be. Peter, who set out so valiantly at first to walk on the sea, the winde does but rise and he begins to sink; now he sees there was more unbelief in his heart then he before suspected. Sharp afflictions are to the soul as a driving raine to the house; we know not that there are such crannies and holes in the house, till we see it drop down here and there. Thus we perceive not how unmortified this corruption, nor how weak that grace is, till we are thus search't, and made more fully to know what is in our hearts by such trials. This is the reason why none have such humble thoughts of themselves, and

such pitiful and forbearing thoughts towards others in their infirmities; as those who are most acquainted with afflictions, they meet with so many foiles in their conflicts, as make them carry a low saile in respect of their own grace, and a tender respect to their brethren, more ready to pity then censure them in their weaknesses.

Fourthly, this is the season when the evil one Satan comes to tempt. What we finde call'd the time of tribulation, Matthew 13:22. we finde in the same parable, Luke 8:13. call'd the time of temptation. Indeed they both meet; seldome does God afflict us, but Satan addeth temptation to our wilderness; This is your hour (says Christ) and the power of darkness, Luke 22:53. Christs sufferings from man, and temptation from the devil came together. Esau, who hated his brother for the blessing, said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand, then will I kill my brother, Genesis 27:41. Times of affliction are the days of mourning, those Satan waits for to do us amischief in.

Fifthly and lastly, the day of affliction has oft an evil event and issue, and in this respect proves an evil day indeed. All is well (we say) that ends well; the product of afflictions on the Christian is good, the rod with which they are corrected, yields the peaceable fruits of righteousnesse, and therefore they can call their afflictions good, that is a good instrument that lets out only the bad blood. It is good for me that I was afflicted, says David. I have read of a holy woman, who used to compare her afflictions to her children, they both put her to great pain in the bearing, but as she knew not which of her children to have been without (for all the trouble in the bringing forth) so neither which of her afflictions she could have missed, notwithstanding the sorrow they put her to in the en-

during. But to the wicked the issue is sad, first in regard of sin, they leave them worse, more impenitent, hardened in sin, and outragious in their wicked practices. Every plague on Egypt added to the plague of hardness on Pharaohs heart: he that for some while could beg prayers of Moses for himself, at last comes to that passe, that he threatens to kill him if he come at him any more. O what a prodigious height do we see many come to in sin after some great sicknesse or other judgement? Children do not more shoot up in their bodily stature after an ague, then they in their lusts after afflictions. O how greedy and ravenous are they after their prey, when they once get off their clog and chain from their heeles! when Physick works not kindly, it does not only leave the disease uncured, but the poison of the Physick stays in the body also. Many appear thus poisoned by their afflictions, by the breaking out of their lusts afterward. Secondly, in regard of sorrow, every affliction on a wicked person producs another, and that a greater than it self. The last wedge comes the last, which shall rive him fit for the fire, the sinner is whip't from affliction to affliction, as the vagrant from Constable to Constable till at last he comes to hell, his proper place and setled abode, where all sorrrows will meet in one that is endlesse.

The second branch of the point follows. This evil day is unavoidable. We may as well stop the chariot of the Sun, when posting to night, and chase away the shades of the evening, as escape this hour of darkness that is coming upon us all. None has power over the Spirit to retain it, neither has he power in the day of death, and there is no discharge in that war, Ecclesiastes 8:8. Among men 'tis possible to get off when prest for the wars, by pleading priviledge of years, estate, weakness of body, protection

from the Prince, and the like, or if all these fail, possibly the sending another in our room, or a bribe given in the hand may serve the turn. But in this war the presse is so strict, that there is no dispensation; David could willingly have gone for his son, we hear him crying, Would God I had died for you, O Absalom, my son, my son: but he will not be taken, that young Gallant must go himself. We must in our own person come into the field, and look death in the face. Some indeed we finde so fond as to promise themselves immunity from this day, as if they had an ensuring office in their breast. They say they have made a Covenant with death, and with hell they are at an agreement, when the overflowing scourge shall passe through it shall not come unto them. And now (like debtors that have feed the Serjeant) they walk abroad boldly and feare no arrest. But God tells them as fast as they binde he will loose: Your Covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; and how should it if God will not set his seal to it? There is a divine Law for this evil day, which came in force upon Adams first sin, that laid the fatal knife to the throat of mankinde, which has opened a sluce to let out his heart-blood ever since. God to prevent all escape has sowen the seeds of death in our very constitution and nature, so that we can assoon run from our selves, as run from death. We need no feller to come with a hand of violence, and hew us down; there is in the tree a worme which grows out of its own substance that will destroy it, so in us, those infirmities of nature that will bring us down to the dust. Our death was bred when our life was first conceived; and as a breeding woman cannot hinder the hour of her travel, (that follows in nature upon the other) so neither can man hinder the bringing forth of death with which his life is big. All the pains and aches

man feels in his life are but so many singultus morientis naturae, groans of dying nature; they tell him his dissolution is at hand. Beest you a Prince sitting in all your state and pomp, death dare enter your Palace, and come through all your guards, to deliver the fatal message it has from God to you, yea, runs its dagger to your heart; wert you compassed with a Colledge of Doctors consulting your health, Art and Nature both must deliver you up when that comes. Even when your strength is firmest, and you eatest your bread with a merry heart, that very food which nourishs your life, gives you withal an earnest of death, as it leaves those dregs in you which will in time procure the same. O how unavoidable must this evil day of death be, when that very staffe knocks us down to the: grave at last, which our life leans on, and is preserved by! God owes a debt both to the first Adam and second; to the first he owes the wages of his sin: to the second, the reward of his sufferings. The place for full payment of both is the other world, so that except death comes to convey man there, the wicked who are the posterity of the first Adam, will misse of that full pay for their sins, which the threatening makes due debt, and engags God to perform; The godly also who are the seed of Christ, these should not receive the whole purchase of his blood, which he would never have shed but upon the credit of thar promise of eternal life, which God gave him for them before the world began; This is the reason why God has made this day so sure, in it he dischargs both bonds.

The third branch of the point follows, That it behoves every one to prepare, and effectually to provide for this evil day, which so unavoidably impends us: And that upon a twofold account; First, in point of duty. Secondly, in point of wisdom.

First, in point of duty. First, it is upon our allegiance to the great God, that we provide and arme our selves against this day. Suppose a subject were trusted with one of his Princes castles, and this man should hear that a puissant enemy was coming to lay siege to this castle, yet takes no care to lay in armes and provision for his defense, and so 'tis lost, how could such a one be clear'd of treason? does he not basely betray the place, and with it his Princes honor into the enemies hand? Our souls are this castle which we are every one to keep for God. We have certain intelligence that Satan has a design upon them, and the time when he intends to come with all his powers of darkness, to be that evil day. Now as we would be found true to our trust, we are obliged to stand upon our defense, and store our selves with what may enable us to make a vigorous resistance.

Secondly, we are obliged to provide for that day, as a suitable return for, and improvement of the opportunities and meanes, which God affords us for this very end. We cannot without shameful ingratitude to God, make waste of those helps God gives us in order to this great work. Every one would cry out upon him that should basely spend that money upon riot in prison, which was sent him to procure his deliverance out of prison; And do we not blush to bestow those talents upon our lusts and Satan? which God graciously indulgs to deliver us from them, and his rage in a dying hour? what have we Bibles for, Ministers and preaching for? if we mean not to furnish our selves by them with armour for the evil day? In a word, what is the intent of God in lengthening out our days, and continuing us some while here in the land of the living? was it that we might have time to revel or rather ravel out upon the pleasure of this vaine world? Does he give us our precious time to

be employed in catching such butterflies as these earthly honours and riches are? It cannot be. Masters do not use (if wise) to set their servants about such work, as will not pay for the candle they borne in doing it. And truly nothing lesse then the glorifying of God, and saving our souls at last can be worth the precious time we spend here. The great God has a greater. end then most think in this dispensation: If we would judge aright, we should take his own interpreration of his actions; and the Apostle Peter bids us, count that the long-suffering of the Lord is salvation, 2 Peter 3:15. which plate he quotes out of Paul, (as to the sense, though not in the same forme of words) which in Romans 2:4. are these, Or despisest you the riches of his goodnesse, and forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodnesse of God leads you to repentance? From both places we are taught what is the minde of God, and the language he speaks to us in by every moments patience, and inch of time that is granted to us. It is a space given for repentance. God sees (as we are) death and judgement could bring no good news to us, we are in no case to welcome the evil day, and therefore mercy stands up to plead for the poor creature in Gods bosome, and begs a little time more may be added to its life, that by this iudulgence it may be provoked to repent before he be called to the bar, Thus we come by every day that is continually superadded to our time on earth. And does not this lay a strong obligation on us to lay out every point of this time, unto the same end 'tis begged for.

Secondly, in point of wisdom. The wisdom of a man appears most eminently in two things.

First, in the matter of his choice and chief care.

Secondly, in a due timing of this his choice and care.

First, a wife man makes choice of that for the subject of his chief care and endeavour, which is of greatest importance and consequence to him; fools and children only are intent about toys and trifles. They are as busie and earnest in making of a house of dirt or cards, as Solomon was in making of his Temple. Those poor bables are as adequate to their foolish apprehensions, as great enterprises are to wise men. Now such is the importance of the evil day, especially that of death, that it proves a man a fool, or wise, as he comports himself to it. The end specifies every action, and gives it the name of good or evil, of wise or foolish. The evil day of death is as the end of our days, so to be the end of all the actions of our life. Such will our life be found at last, as it has been in order to this one day. If the several items of our life (counsels and projects that we have pursued) when they shall then be cast up, will amount to a blessed death, then we shall appear to be wise men indeed, but if after all our goodly plots and policies for other things, we be unprovided for that hour, we must be content to die fooles at last; And no such fool as the dying fool. The Christian goes for the fool (in the worlds account) while he lives; but when death comes, the wise world will then confesse they mis-call'd him, and shall take it to themselves; We fooles counted his life to be madnesse, and his end to be without honor. But how is he now numbred among the children of God, and his lot is among the Saints? therefore have we erred from the way of truth, Wisd. 5.4, 5. The place is Apocryphal, but sinners will finde the matter of it Canonical. 'Tis true indeed, Saints are out-witted by the world in the things of the world, and no marvel, neither does it impeach their wisdom any more, then it does a Scholars, to be excell'd by the Cobler in his mean trade, Nature, where it intends higher excellencies, is more

carelesse in those things that are inferiour, as we see in man, who (being made to excel the beasts in a rational soul) is himself excelled by some beast or other in all his senses. Thus the Christian may well be surpast in matters of worldly commerce, because he has a nobler object in his eye, that makes him converse with the things of the world in a kinde of non-attendance; he is not much careful in these matters if he can die well at last, and be justified for a wise man at the day of the resurrection, all is well; he thinks it is not, manners, to be unwilling to stay so long for the clearing of his wisdom, as God can wait for the, vindicating of his own glorious Nature, which will not appear in its glory till that day, when he will convince the ungodly of their hard thoughts and speeches of him. Then they shall, till then they will not be convinced.

Secondly, a wise man labors duly to time his care and endeavour for the attaining of what he proposs. 'Tis the fool that comes when the market is done; as the evil day is of great concernment in respect of its event, so the placing of our care for it in the right season is of chief importance, and that sure must be before it comes. There are more doors then one, at which the messenger may enter that brings evil tydings to us, and at which he will knock we know not; we know not where we shall be arrested, whether at bed or board, whether at home or in the field, whether among our friends that will counsel and comfort us, or among our enemies that will adde weight to our sorrow by their cruelty. We know not when, whether by day or night, (many of us) not, whether in the morning, noon, or evening of our age. As he calls to work at all times of the day, so he does to bed; may be while you are praying or preaching, and it would be sad to go away profaning them and the Name of God in them; possibly when you are about worse work, death may

strike your quaffing cup out of your hand, while you are sitting in the Alehouse with your jovial mates, or meet you as you are reeling home, and make some ditch your grave, that as you livedst like a beast, so you shouldest die like a beast. In a word, we know not the kinde of evil God will use as the instrument to stab us; whether some bloody hand of violence shall do it, or a disease out of our bowels and bodies; whether some acute disease, or some lingring sicknesse; whether such a sicknesse as shall slay the man while the body is alive, (I meane take the head and deprive us of our reason) or not; whether such noisome troubles as shall make our friends afraid to let us breath on them, or themselves look on us; whether they shall be afflictions aggravated with Satans temptations, and the terrours of our own affrighted consciences or not; who knowes where, when, or what the evil day shall be? therefore does God conceal these, that we should provide for all. Cesar would never let his souldiers know, when or where he meant to march. The knowing of these would torment us with distracting fear, the not knowing them should awaken us to a providing care. It is an ill time to calk the ship, when at sea, tumbling up and down in a storme, This should have been look't to, when on her seat in the harbour. And as bad it is to begin to trim a soul for heaven, when tossing upon a sick bed. Things that are done in a hurry are seldome done well; A man call'd out of his bed at midnight with a dismal fire on his house-top, cannot stand to dresse himself in order as at another time; but runs down with one stocking half on may be, and the other not on at all. Those poor creatures I am afraid go in as ill a dresse into another world, who begin to provide for it, when on a dying bed conscience calls them up with a cry of hell-fire in their bosomes: But (alas!) they must go, though they have not time to

put their armour on. And so they are put to repent at leisure in hell, of their shuffling up a repentance in haste here. We come to the Application of the Point.

Chapter 7. The Application of the Point

• • •

Use 1 FIrst, it reproves those that are so far from providing for the evil day, that they will not suffer any thoughts of that day to stay with them, they are as unwilling to be led into a discourse of this subject, as a child to be carried into the dark, and there left. It is a death to them to think of death, or that which leads to it. As some foolishly think, they must needs die presently when they have made their Will, so these think they hasten that sorrowful day by musing on it. The meditation of it is no more welcome to them, then the company of Moses was to Pharaoh. Therefore they say to it as he to Moses, Get you from me, and let me see your face no more; the seare of it makes them to butcher and make away all those thoughts which conscience stirs up concerning it, And at last they get such a mastery of their consciences, that they arrive to a kinde of Atheisme, it is as rare to have them think or speak of such matters, as to see a flie busie in Winter. Nothing now but what is frolick and jocund is entertained by them. If any such thoughts come as prophesie mirth and carnal content, these (as right with their hearts) are taken up into the chariot to sit with them, but all other are commanded to go behinde. Alas, poor-spirited wretches! something might be said for

you, if this evil day of death and judgement were such entia rationis, as had no foundation or being but what our fancies give them, (such troubles there are in the world, which have all their evil from our thoughts, when we are disquieted with the scorns and reproaches of men, did we but not think of them they were nothing) but your banishing the thoughts of this evil day from your mind, will be a poor short relief, You can neither hinder its coming, nor take away its sting when it comes by your slighting it. You are like a Passenger in a ship sleep or wake, you are going your voyage. You doest but like that silly bird, who puts her head into a reed, and then thinks she is safe from the Fowler because she sees him not. You are a faire mark for Gods vengeance, he sees you, and is taking his aime at you, when you seest not him, yea, you puttest your self under an inevitable necessity of perishihg, by not thinking of this day. The first step to our safety, is consideration of our danger.

Use 2 It reproves these, who if they think of the evil day, yet it is so far off, that it is to little purpose. They will be sure to set it at such a distance from them, as shall take away the force of the meditation, that it shall not strike them down in the deep sense and fear of it. That cannon, which if we stood at the mouth of it would shatter limb from limb, will not so much as scare them that get out of its reach. The further we put the evil day, the weaker impression it makes on us. 'Tis true (say sinners) it cannot be help't, we owe a debt to nature, it must be paid; sickness will come, and death follow on that, and judgement brings up the reare of both. But (alas!) they look not for these guests yet, they prophesy of these things a great while hence to come. Many a faire day they hope will intervene. Thus men are very kind to themselves. First, they wish it may

be long before it comes, and then because they would have it so, they are bold to promise themselves it shall be so; and when once they have made this promise, no wonder if they then live after the rate of their vain hopes, putting off the stating of their accounts, till the winter-evening of old age, when they shall not have such allurements to gad abroad from the pleasures of this life, O then they will do great matters to fit them for the evil day. Bold man! who gave you leave to cut out such large thongs of that time which is not yours but Gods? Who makes the Lease, the Tenant or the Landlord? or doest you forget you farmest your life, and are not an Owner? This is the device of Satan, to make you delay, whereas a present expectation of the evil day, would not let you sit still unprepared. O why do you let your souls from their work, make them idle and rest from their burdens, by telling them of long life, while death chop in upon you unawares? O what shame will your whorish hearts be put to, (that now say your husband is gone afar off, you may fill your selves with loves) if he should come before he is look't for, and finde you in bed with lusts? And let me tell you, sudden destruction is threatened, especially to such secure ones. Reade Matth. 24.48, 50, 51. where 'tis denounced against that sort of sinners, who please themselves with their Lords delaying his coming, that the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looks not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of. Indeed God must go out of his ordinary road of dealing with sinners, if such scape a sudden ruine. One is bold to challenge any to show a President in Scripture of any that are branded for security, that some remarkable yea, sudden judgement did not surprise. Sodom, how soon after a Sun-shine morning did the heavens thicken, and bury them in a few hours, (by a storme of fire) in their own ashes?

Carelesse Laish cut off before they almost think of it. Agag, when he saw the clouds of his fears break, and faire weather was in his countenance, they return immediately upon him, and shut him up in death; he is presently hewen in pieces. Amalek slaughtered by David before the triumph of their late victory was cold. Nebuchadnezzar strutting himself in his Palace with this bravado in his mouth, Is not this great Babylon that I have built? and before he can get the words out of his throat, there is another voice falling from heaven, saying, O King, to you be it spoken,your Kingdom is departed from you: and the same hour it was fulfill'd, and he sent to graze with the beasts. Dives blessing himself for many years, and within a few hours the pillow is pluck't from under his head, and you heare no more of him, till out of hell he roare; yea, a whole world, (few persons excepted) drowned, and they not know till the day the flood came, Matthew 24:29. and swept them all away: And who are you, O man, that promisest your self an exemption, when Kings, Cities, a whole world have been ruined after this sort?

Vse 3 This reproves those, who indeed think oft of this evil day, (much against their will,) by reason of an awakened conscience, that is ever pinching of them, and preaching on Pauls text (before Felix) to them, till it makes them tremble as he did; yet such is the power of lust in their hearts, that it makes them spur on, notwithstanding all the rebukes conscience gives them, and affrighting thoughts they have of the evil day; yet they continue in their old trade of sin desperately. These wretches are the objects of our saddest pity. The secure sinner (that has broke prison from his conscience,) is like a strong-brain'd drunkard, he swallows down his sin, (as the other does his drink) with pleasure, and is not stirr'd at

all; but here is a man that is stomach sick, (as I may so say) his conscience is oft disgorging his sweet draughts, and yet he will sin, though with pain and anguish. O consider (poor wretches) what you do, instead of arming your selves against the evil day, you arme the evil day against your selves; you are sticking the bed with pins and needles, on which you must ere long be laid; you are throwing billets into that fiery furnace, wherein at last you shall be cast, and all this in spight of your consciences, which yet God mercifully sets in your way, that the prickings of them may be as a hedge of thornes, to keep you from the pursuit of your lusts. Know therefore, if you will go on, that as your conscience takes from the pleasure of your sin at present, so it will adde to the horrour of your torment hereafter.

Usue 4 It reproves those, who though they are not so violent and outragious in sin, to make them stink above ground in the nostrils of others, yet rest in an unarm'd condition, they do not flie to Christ for covering and shelter against this day of storme and tempest, and the reason is, they have a lie in their right hand, they feed on a shell, and a deceived heart carries them aside from seeking after Christ. It would make one tremble to see how confident many are with their false hopes and self-confidences, daring to come up (as Corah with his Censer, as undauntedly as Moses himself) even to the mouth of the grave, till on a sudden they are swallowed up with destruction, and sent to be undeceiv'd in hell, who would not be beaten from their refuges of lies here; whoever you art, O man, and whatever you have to glory in, were it the most Saint-like conversation that ever any lived on earth, yet if this be your shelter against the evil day, you will perish. No salvation when that flood comes but Christ, yea, being in Christ, hanging on

the out-side of the Ark by a specious Profession, will not save; Me thinks I see how those of the old world ran for their lives, some to this hill, and others to that high tree, and how the waves pursued them, till at last they were swept into the devouring flood. Such will your end be, that turn any other way for help then to Christ; yet the Ark waits on you, yea, comes up close to your gate to take you in. Noah did not put forth his hand more willingly to take in the dove, then Christ does to receive those who flie to him for refuge. O reject not your own mercies for lying vanity.

Use 3 Let it put you upon the enquiry (whoever you art,) whether you beest in a posture of defense for this evil day. Ask your soul soberly and solemnly, Art you provided for this day, this evil day? how couldest you part with what that will take away, and welcome what it will certainly bring? Death comes with a voider to carry away all your carnal enjoyments, and to bring you up a reckoning for them. O can you take your leave of the one, and with peace and confidence reade the other? will it not affright you to have your health and strength turn'd into faintnesse and feeblenesse, your sweet nights of rest into waking eyes, and restlesse tossings up and down; your voice that has so often chanted to the viol, to be now acquainted with no other tune but sighs and groans. O how can you look upon your sweet and dear relations with thoughts of removing from them? yea, behold the instrument, as it were, whetting that shall give the fatal stroke to sever soul and body? think that you wert now half dead in your members, that are most remote from the fountain of life, and death to have but a few moments journey, before it arrive to your heart, and so beat your last breath out of your body. Possibly the inevitable necessity of these do make you to harden your self against them; this might in-

deed in some Heathen, that is not resolv'd whether there be another world or no, help a little to blunt the edge of that terrour which otherwise would cut deeper in his amazed heart. But if you believest another world, and that judgement which stands at deaths back, ready to allot you your unchangeable state in blisse or misery; surely you can not relieve your awakened conscience with such a poor cordial. O therefore think what answer you meanest to give unto the great God, at your appearing before him, when he shall ask you, what you can say, why the sentence of eternal damnation should not then be pronounced against you. Truly we deale unfaithfully with our owne souls, if we bring not our thoughts to this issue. If now you should ask how you should provide against the evill day, so that you may stand before that dreadful bar, and live so in the mean time, that you might not be under a slavish bondage, through the fearful expectation of it; Take it in a few directions.

First if ever you would have a blessed issue of this evil day, so as to stand in judgement before the great God, rest not till you have got into a Covenant-relation with Christ, Dying Davids living comfort was drawn from the Covenant God had made with him; this was all his desire and all his salvation; how can you put your head into the other world without horrour, if you have not solid ground that Christ will own you for his? Heaven has its proper heires, and so has hell. The heires of heaven are such as are in Covenant with God. The foundation of it was laid in a Covenant, and all the mansions there are prepared for a people in Covenant with him; Gather my Saints together that have made a Covenant with me. But how may you get into this Covenant-relation? First, break your covenant with sin. You are by nature a covenant-ser-

vant to sin and Satan, may be you have not expresly in words and formally as witches seal'd this covenant, yet virtually as you have done the work of Satan, and been at the command of your lusts, accepting the reward of unrighteousnesse, (the pleasure and carnal advantages they have paid you in for the same) therein you have declared your self to be so. Now if ever you will be taken into Covenant with God, break this; a Covenant with hell and heaven cannot stand together.

Secondly, betroth your self to Christ. The Covenant of grace is the joynture which God settles only upon Christs Spouse. Rebeccah had not the Jewels and costly raiment till she was promised to become Isaaks wife, Genesis 24:53. All the Promises are Yea and Amen in Christ. If once you receivest Christ, with him, you receivest them. He that owes the tree has right to all the fruit that is on it. Now that you may not huddle up a marriage between Christ and you, so as to be disown'd of Christ, and it prove a nullity at last; it behooves you to look to it, that there be found in you what Christ expects in every soul that he espouss. First, therefore consider whether you can heartily love the person of Christ. Look wishly on him again and again as he is set forth in all his spiritual excellencies, are they such as your heart can close with? does his holy nature and all those heavenly graces with which he is beautified, render him desirable to you? or couldest you like him better if he were not so precise and exactly holy? yea, is your heart so inflamed with a desire of him, that you can love him with a conjugal love. A woman may love one as a friend? whom she cannot love so as to make him her husband. A friendly love may stand with a love of some other equal to it, yea, Superiour; But▪ a conjugal love is such as will bear neither: can you finde in your heart to forsake all

other, and cleave to Christ? does your heart speak you ready, and present you willing to go with your sweet Jesus, though he carry you from father and fathers house? Is your confidence such of his power to protect you from all your enemies, sin, wrath and hell, that you can resolvedly put the life of your soul into his hands, to be saved by the sole vertue of his blood, and strength of his omnipotent arme; and of his care to provide for you for this life and the other, that rhou can acquiesce in what he promiss to do for you? In a word, if you have Christ, you must not only love him, but for his sake, all your new Kindred, which by your marriage to him you shalt be allied unto. How can you fadge to call the Saints your brethren? can you love them heartily, and forget all the old grudges you have had against them? some of them you will finde poor and persecuted, yet Christ is not ashamed to call them brethren, neither must you. If you findest your heart now in such a disposition as suits these Interrogatories, I dare not deny the banes, yea, I dare not but pronounce Christ and you Husband and Wife. Go, poor soul, (if I may call so glorious a Bride poor,) Go and comfort your self with the expectation of your Bridegrooms coming for you, and when the evil day approaches, and death it self draws nigh, look not now with terrour upon it, but rather revive with old Jacob, to see the chariot which shall carry you over unto the embraces of your husband, whom you hearest to be in so great Honor and Majesty in Heaven, as may assure you he is able to make you welcome when you comest there. Amongst the all things which are ours by being Christs, the Apostle forgets not to name this to be one, Death is ours. And well, he did so, or else we should never have look't upon it as a gift, but rather as a judgement. Now soul, you are out of any danger of hurt that the evil day can do you.

Yet there remains something for you to do, that you may walk in the comfortable expectation of the evil day. We see that gracious persons may for want of a holy care fall into such distempers, as may put a sting into their thoughts of the evil day. David, that at one time would not feare to walk in the valley of the shadow of death, is so affrighted at another time when he is led towards it, that he cries, Spare me, O Lord, that I may recover my strength, before I go hence, Psal. 39. The child, though he loves his father, may do that which may make him afraid to go home. Now, Christian, if you wouldest live in a comfortable expectation of the evil day,

First, labor to die to this life, and the enjoyments of it every day more and more. Death is not so strong to him, whose natural strength has been wasted by long pining sicknesse, as it is to him that lies but a few days, and has strength of nature to make great resistance. Truly thus it is here, that Christian, whose love to this life and the contents of it, has been for many years consuming and dying, will with more facility part with them, then he whose love is stronger to them. All Christians are not mortified in the same degree to the world. Paul tells us he died daily. He was ever sending more and more of his heart out of the world, so that by that time he came to die, all his affections were pack't up and gone, which made him the more ready to follow, [illegible], I am ready to be offered up, 2 Timothy 4:6. If it be but a tooth to pull out, the faster it stands the more pain we have to draw it, O loosen the roots of your affections from the world, and the tree will fall more easily.

Secondly, be careful to approve your self with diligence and faithfulness to God in your place and calling. The clearer you standest in your own thoughts concerning the uprightnesse of your

heart in the tenure of your Christian course, the more composure you will have when the evil day comes. I beseech you, O Lord, (says good Hezekiah at the point of death as he thought) remember now how I have walked before you in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in your sight. This cannot be our confidence, but it will be a better companion then a scoulding conscience; if the blood be bad, the spirits will be tainted also; the more our life has been corrupted with hypocrisie and unfaithfulnesse, the weaker our faith will be in a dying hour. There is great difference between two children that come home at night, one from the field, where he has been diligent and faithful about his fathers work, and another that has played the Truant a great part of the day; the former comes inconfidently to stand before his father, the other sneaks to bed, & is afraid his father should see him, or ask where he has been. O Sirs, look to your walking. These have been trying times as ever came to England. It has required more care and courage to keep sincerity then formerly. And that is the reason why it is so rare to finde Christians (especially those whose place and calling has been more in the winde of temptation,) go off the stage at death with such a Plaudite of inward peace in their bosomes.

Thirdly, familiarize the thoughts of the evil day to your soul; Handle this serpent, often walk daily in the serious meditations of if, do not run from them because they are unpleasing to flesh; that is the way to increase the terrour of it. Do with your souls, when shy of, and scared with the thoughts of affliction or death, as you use to do with your beast, that is given to bogle and start as you ride on him. When he flies back and starts at a thing, you do not yield to his fear and go back, that will make him worse another

time, but you ride him up close to that which he is afraid of, and in time you break him of that quality. The evil day is not such a scareful thing to you that are a Christian, as you shouldest start for it. Bring up your heart close to it. Show your soul what Christ has done to take the sting out of it what the sweet promises are, that are given on purpose to overcome the feare of it, and what your hopes are you shalt get by it. These will satisfie and compose your Spirit, whereas the shunning the thoughts of it will but increase your feare, and bring you more into bondage to it.

Chapter 8. The Second Argument with Which the Exhortation Is Pressed, Drawn from the Assured Victory Which Shall Crown the Soul's Conflict in This Armor

• • •

We come now to the second Argument the Apostle useth, further to presse the exhortation; and that is taken from the glorious victory, which hovers over the heads of believers while in the fight, and shall surely crown them in the end; this is held forth in these words, And having done all, to stand. The phrase is short, but full.

SECT. I.

First observe, Heaven is not won with good words and a fair Profession; Having done all. The doing Christian is the man that shall stand, when the empty boaster of his faith shall fall. The great talkers of Religion are oft the least doers. His Religion is in vaine, whose Profession brings not letters testimonial from a holy life. Sacrifice without obedience is Sacriledge. Such rob God of that

which he makes most account of. A great Captain once smote one of his souldiers for railing at his enemy, saying, that he called him not to raile on him, but to fight against him and kill him. 'Tis not crying out upon the devil, and declaiming against sin in prayer or discourse, but fighting and mortifying it that God looks chiefly upon; such a one else does but beat the aire; there are no marks to be seen on his flesh and unmortified lusts that he has fought. Paul was in earnest, he left a witnesse upon his body, made black and blew with stroaks of mortification. It was not a little vapouring in sight of the Philistines that got David his wife, but shedding their blood: And is it so small a matter to be son to the King of Heaven, that you thinkest to obtain it, without giving a real proof of your zeal for God, and hatred to sin? Not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work; this man (says the Apostle) shall be blessed in his deed, James 1:25. Mark, not by his deed, but in his deed; he shall meet blessednesse in that way of obedience he walks in. The empty Professour disappoints others, who seeing his leaves, expect fruit, but finde none; and at last he disappoints himself; he thinks to reach heaven, but shall misse of it. Tertullian speaks of some that think, Satìs Deum habere, si corde & animo suspiciatur, licèt actu minus fiat: God has enough (they think) if he be feared and reverenced in their hearts, though in their actions they show it not so much: and therefore they can sin, and believe in God, and feare him never the worse: This (says he) is to play the Adulteresse, and yet be chaste, to prepare poison for ones father, and yet be dutiful; but let such know, (says the same father) that if they can sin and believe, God will pardon them with a contradiction also; he'll forgive them, but they shall be turn'd into hell for all that. As ever you

would stand at last, look you be found doing the work your Lord has left you to make up, and trust not to lying words, as the Prophet speaks, Jer. 7.

SECT. II.

Secondly, Observe, that such is the mercy of God in Christ to his children, that he accepts their weak endeavours, (joyn'd with sincerity and perseverance in his service) as if they were full obedience, and therefore they are here said to have done all. O who would not serve such a Lord! you hear servants sometimes complain of their Masters to be so rigid and strict, that they can never please them, no, not when they do their utmost: But this cannot be charged upon God. Be but so faithful as to do your best, and God is so gracious that he will pardon your worst. David knew this Gospel-indulgence, when he said, Then shall I not be ashamed when I have respect to all your Commandments, Psalms 119:6. [illegible], when my eye is to all your Commandments. The Traveller has his eye on or towards the place he is going, though he be yet short of it; there he would be, and is putting on all he can to reach it; So stands the Saints heart to all the Commands of God, he presses on to come nearer and nearer to full obedience: such a soul shall never be put to shame. But wo to those that cover their sloth with the name of infirmity, yea, that spend their zeal and strength in the pursuit of the world or their lusts, and then think to make all up when charg'd therwith. That it is their infirmity, and they can serve God no better. These do by God as those two did by their Prince, (Francis the first of France) who cut off their right hand one for another, and then made it an excuse they were lame, and so could not serve in his Galleys, for which they were sent to the

Gallowes. Thus many will be found at last to have disabled themselves, by refusing that help the Spirit has offered to them, yea, wasted what they had given them, and so shall be rewarded for hypocrites as they are. God knows how to distinguish between the sincerity of a Saint in the midst of his infirmities, and the shifts of a false heart. But we will wave these, and briefly speak to four points which lie clear in the words.

First, here is the necessity of perseverance. Having done all.

2ly, here is the necessity of divine Armour, to persevere til we have done al. Wherfore else bids he them take this armour for this end, if they could do it without?

Thirdly, here is the certainty of persevering and overcoming at last, if clad with this Armour, else it were small encouragement to bid them take that Armour which would not surely defend them.

Fourthly, here is the blessed result of the Saints perseverance, propounded as that which will abundantly recompence all their pain and patience in the war, having done all to stand, From these follow four distinct Points.

First, he that will be Christs souldier must persevere.

Secondly, there can be no perseverance without true grace in the heart.

Thirdly, where true grace is, that soul shall persevere.

Fourthly, to stand at the end of this war, will abundantly recompence all our hazard and hardship endured in the warre.

SECT. III.

He that will be Christs souldier must persevere to the end of his life in this war against Satan. This Having done all, comes in after our conflict with death: That ye may be able to withst and in the evil day; then follows, And having done all. We have not done all till that pitch't battel be fought. The last enemy is death. The word [illegible], imports as much as to finish a businesse, and bring a matter to a full issue; so, Philippians 2:12. where we translate it well, Work out your salvation: that is, perfect it; be not Christians by halves, but go through with it; the through Christian is the true Christian. Not he that takes the field, but he that keeps the field; not he that sets out, but he that holds out in this holy war, deserves the name of a Saint. There is not such a thing in this sense belonging to Christianity as an honorable retreat; not such a word of command in all Christs military Discipline, as fall back and lay down your armes; No, you must fall on, and stand to your armes, till call'd off by death.

First, we are under a Covenant and Oath to do this. Formerly souldiers used to take an oath not to flinch from their colours, but faithfully to cleave to their Leaders, this they called Sacramentum militare, a military oath. Such an oath lies upon every Christian. It is so essential to the being of a Saint, that they are described by this, Psal: 50.5. Gather my Saints together, those that have made a Covenant with me. We are nor Christians, till we have subscribed this Covenant, and that without any reservation. When we take upon us the Profession of Christs Name, we list our selves in his muster-roll, and by it do promise, that we will live and die with him in opposition to all his enemies. Every Nation will walk in the name of his God, and we will walk in the Name of our God; and what is it to walk in the Name of our God, but to fight under the

banner of his Gospel, wherein his Name is displayed, by giving an eternal defiance to sin and Satan? If a Captain had not such a tie on his souldiers, he might have them to seek when the day of battel comes: therefore Christ tells us upon what termes he will enroll us among his disciples: If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his Crosse, and follow me. He will not entertain us, till we resign up our selves freely to his dispose, that there may be no disputing with his commands afterwards, but as one under his authority, go and come at his word.

Secondly, perseverance is necessary, because our enemy perseveres to oppose us. There is no truce in the devils heart, no cessation of armes in our enemies camp. If an enemy continue to assault a City, and they within cease to resist, it is easie to tell what will follow: The Prophet that was sent to Bethel did his errand well, withstood Jeroboams temptation, but in his way home was drawn aside by the old Prophet, and at last slain by a Lion. Thus many flie from one temptation, but not persevering are vanquish't by another, those that at one time escape his sword, at another time are slain by it. Joash was hopeful when young, but it lasted not long. Yea, many precious servants of God, not making such vigorous resistance in their last days as in their first, have fallen foully, as we see in Solomon, Asa, and others. Indeed it is hard when a line is drawn to a great length, to keep it so streight that it slacken not, and to hold a thing long in our hand, and not to have a numbnesse grow in our fingers so as to remit of our strength; therefore we are bid so often to hold fast the Profession of our faith; but when we see an enemy gaping to catch us when we fall, me thinks this should quicken us the more to it.

Thirdly, because the promise of life and glory is setled upon the persevering soul, the crown stands at the Goal, he has it that comes to the end of the race. To him that overcomes will I give, not in praelio, but in bello, not in a particular skirmish, but in the whole war. Ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the whole Will of God, ye might receive the promise, Hebrews 10:36. There is a remarkable accent on that henceforth, which Paul mentions, 2 Timothy 4:7, 8. I have fought a good fight, henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of righteousnesse. Why, was it not laid up before? yes, but having persevered and come near the Goale, being within sight of home, ready to die, he takes now surer hold of the promise. Indeed in this sense it is, that a gracious soul is nearer its salvation after every victory then it was before, because he approachs nearer to the end of his race, which is the time promised for the receiving of the promised salvation. Then and not till then the Garland drops upon his head.

Here we may take up a sad lamentation, in respect of the many Apostate Professours of our days. Never was this spiritual falling sicknesse more rise. O how many are sick of it at present, and not a few fallen asleep by it? These times of warre and confusion have not made so many broken Merchants as broken Professours; where is the Congregation that cannot show some who have outlived their Profession? not unlike the silkworm, which (they say) after all her spinning, works her selfe out of her bottome, and becomes at last a common flie. Are there not many, whose forwardnesse in Religion we have stood gazing on with admiration, as the disciples on the Temple, ready to say one to another as they to Christ, See what manner of stones these are? what polished gifts and shining graces are here? and now not one stone left upon an-

other. O did you ever think, that they who went in so goodly array towards heaven in communion with you, would after that face about, and run over to the devils side, turn Blasphemers, Worldlings and Atheists, as some have done? O what a sad change is here! It had been better for them, not to have known the way of righteousnesse, then after they have known it, to turne from the holy Commandment delivered unto them, 2 Peter 2:21. Better never to have walk't a step towards heaven, then to put such a scorn and reproach upon the ways of God. Comparationem videtur egisse qui utrumquo cognoverit, & judicato pronunciûsse eum meliorem, cujus se rursu esse maluerit. Tertul. de poenit. Such a one who has known both what a service Satans is, and what Gods is, then to revolt from God to the devil, seems to have compared one with the other, and as the result of his mature thoughts, to pronounce the devils which he chooss better than Gods which he leaves. And how is it possible that any can sin upon a higher guilt, and go to hell under a greater load of wrath? These are they which God loaths. He that hates putting away disdains much more to be himself thus put away. If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him, Hebrews 10:38. The Apostate is said to tread upon the Son of God, Hebrews 10:29. as if he were no better than the dirt under his feet. Well, he shall have treading for treading, God himself will set his foot upon him, Psalms 119:118. You have troden down all that erre from your statutes, and who (think you) will be weary soonest? he that is under foot beares the weight of the whole man upon him. To be under the foot of God, is to lie under the whole weight of Gods wrath. O pity and pray for such forlorn souls, they are objects of the one, and subjects of the other;

though they are fallen low, yet not into hell; now and then we see an Eutichus raised, that has fallen from such a height. And you that stand, take heed lest you fall.

SECT. IV.

Secondly, A soul void of divine armour cannot persevere. What this divine armour is I have shewen, and the Apostle here does in the several pieces of it. The sanctifying graces of Gods Spirit are this Armour. One that has not these wrought in him, will never hold out to passe all the stages of this Christian race, to fight all the battels that are to be fought before victory is to be had. Common gifts of the Spirit, such as illumination, conviction, sudden pangs and flushing heats of affection may carry out the creature for a while with a goodly appearance of zeal for God, and forwardnesse in Profession, but the strength these afford is soon spent. Johns hearers mentioned, John 5:35. got some light and heat by sitting under his burning Ministery, but how long did it last? Ye were willing to rejoyce for a season. They were very beautiful colours that were drawn on them, but not laid in oyle, and therefore soon wash't off again. The foolish Virgins made as great a blaze with their lamps, and did expect as good a day when Christ should come, as the wise Virgins, but (alas!) their lamps are out before he appeared, and as good never a whit as never the better. The stony ground more forward then the best soile, the seed comes up immediately, as if a crop should soon have been reap't, but a few nipping frosts turns its hue, and the day of harvest proves a day of desperate sorrow. All these instances, and many more in Scripture do evince, that nothing short of solid grace, and a principle of divine life in the soul will persevere. How forward soever Formalists and

slighty Professours are, to promise themselves hopes of reaching heaven, they will finde it too long a step for their short-breathed souls to attain. The reasons are,

First, such want a principle of divine life to draw strength from Christ to persevere them in their course. That by which the gracious soul it self perseveres is the continual supply it receives from Christ; as the arme and foot is kept alive in the body by those vital spirits which they receive from the heart; I live, (says Paul) yet not I, but Christ in me; that is, I live but at Christs cost, he holds as my soul, so my grace in life: Now the carnal person wanting this union, must needs waste and consume in time. He has no root to stand on. A carcase when once it begins to rot, never recovers, but every day grows worse till it runs all into putrefaction, no salve or plaister will do it good: but where there is a principle of life, there when a member is wounded nature sends supplies of spirits, and helps to work with the salve for a cure. There is the same difference between a gracious person and an ungracious; see them opposed in this respect. Proverbs 14:17. The righteous man falls seven times a day, and riseth; but the wicked falls into mischief: that is, in falling he falls further, and has no power to recover himself. When Cain sinned, see how he falls further and further like a stone down a hill, never stayes till he comes to the bottome of despair; from envying his brother to malice, from malice to murder, from murder to impudent lying, and brazen-fac't boldness to God himself, and from that to despair; so true is that, 2 Tim. 3 13. Evill men shall waxe worse and worse. But now when a Saint falls, he riseth, because when he falls he has a principle of life to cry out to

Christ, and such an interest in Christ as stirs him up to help; Lord, save me, said Peter, (when he began to sink) and presently Christs hand is put forth, he chides him for his unbelief, but he helps him.

Secondly, an unregenerate soul has no assurance for the continuance of those common gifts of the Spirit he has at present; they come on the same termes that temporal enjoyments do to such a one. A carnal person, when he has his table most sumptuously spread, cannot show any word of promise under Gods hand that he shall be provided for the next meal. God gives these things to the wicked, as we a crust or a nights lodging to a beggar in our barne; 'tis our bounty, such a one could not sue us for denying the same: so in the common gifts of the Spirit, God was not bound to give them, nor is he to continue them. You have some knowledge of the things of God, you may for all this die without knowledge at last; you are a sinner in chaines, restraining grace keeps you in; this may be taken off, and you let loose to your lusts as freely as ever. And how can he persevere that in one day may from praying fall to cursing, from a whining complaining conscience come to have a seared conscience.

Thirdly, every unregenerate man, when most busie with Profession, has those engagements lie upon him, that will necessarily, when put to it, take him off one time or other. One is engaged to the world, and when he can come to a good market for that, then he goes away, he cannot have both, and now he'll make it appear which he loved best. Demas has forsaken us, and embraced this present world. Another is a slave to his lust, and when this calls him he must go in spight of Profession, conscience, God and all, Herod feared John, and did many things, but love is stronger than feare; his love to Herodias overcomes his fear of

John, and makes him cut off at once the head of John, and the hopeful buddings which appeared in the tenderness of his conscience, and begun Reformation. One root of bitternesse or other will spring up in such a one. If the complexion of the soul be profane, it will at last come to it, however for a while there may some religious color appear in the mans face from some other external cause.

This shows us what is the root of all final apostasy, and that is the want of a through change of the heart. The Apostate does not lose the grace he had, but discovers he never had any; and 'tis no wonder to hear that he proves bankrupt, that was worse then nought when he first set up. Many take up their Saintship upon trust, and trade in the duties of Religion with the credit they have gain'd from others opinion of them. They believe themselves to be Christians, because others hope them to be such, and so their great businesse is by a zeal in those exercises of Religion that lie outmost, to keep up the credit which they have abroad, but do not look to get a stock of solid grace within, which should maintain them in their Profession, and this proves their undoing at last. Let it therefore make us in the feare of God, to consider upon what score we take up our Profession. Is there that within which bears proportion to our outward zeal? Have we laid a good bottome? Is not the superstructive top heavy jetting too far beyond the weak foundation? They say trees shoot as much in the root under ground, as in the branches above, and so does true grace. O remember what was the perishing of the seed in the stony ground; it lacked root, and why so? but because it was stony. Be willing the plough should go deep enough to humble you for sin, and rend your heart from sin. The soul effectually brought out of the love of

sin as sin, will never be through friends with it again. In a word, be serious to finde out the great spring that sets all your wheels on motion in your religious trade. Do as men that would know how much they are worth, who set what they owe on one side, and what stock they have on the other; and then when they have laid out enough to discharge all debts and engagements, what remaines to themselves they may call their own: Thus do you consider what you standest engaged to, your worldly credit, profit, slavish feare of God, and selfish desire of happiness, and when you have allowed for all these, see then what remaines of your feare of God, love to God, &c. if nothing, you are nought; if any, the lesse there be, the weaker Christian you art, and when you comest to be tried in Gods fire, you will suffer losse of all the other, which as hay and stubble will be burnt up.

SECT. V.

Every soul clad with this Armour of God shall stand and persevere: Or thus, true grace can never be vanquish't. The Christian is borne a Conquerour, the gates of hell shall nor prevail against him. He that is borne of God overcomes the world, 1 John 5:4. Mark, from whence the victory is dated, even from his birth. There is victory sowen in his new nature, even that seed of God, which will keep him from being swallowed up by sin or Satan. As Christ rose never to die more, so does he raise souls from the grave of sin, never to come under the power of spiritual death more. These holy ones of God cannot see corruption. Hence he that believes is said in the present tense to have eternal life. At the Law that came four hundred years after, could not make void the promise made to Abraham, so nothing that intervenes can hinder the accomplishing

of that promise of eternal life, which was given, and passed to Christ in their behalf before the foundation of the world. If a Saint could any way miscarry, and fall short of this eternal life, it must be from one of these three causes, 1. Because God may forsake the Christian, and withdraw his grace and help from him; Or, 2. Because the believer may forsake God; Or lastly, because Satan may pluck him out of the hands of God. A fourth I know not Now none of these can be.

First, God can never forsake the Christian. Some unadvised speeches have drop't from tempted souls, discovering some fears of Gods casting them off; but they have been confuted, and have eaten their words with shame, as we see in Job and David. O what admirable security has the great God given his children in this particular!

First, in Promises. He has said,I will never leave you nor forsake you. Five negatives in that promise as so many seals to ratifie it to our faith, he assures us there never did or can so much as arise a repenting thought in his heart concerning the purposes of his love and special grace towards his children, Romans 11:29. The gifts and calling of God are without repentance, even the believers sin against him, their froward carriage stirs not up thoughts of casting them off, but of reducing them; For the iniquity of this covetousnesse I was wroth and smote him; I hid me and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart; I have seen his ways and will heal them, Isaiah 57:27, 28. The water of the Saints failings, cast on the fire of Gods love cannot quench it; Whom he loves he loves to the end.

Secondly, God to give further weight and credit to our unbelieving and mis-giving hearts, seals his promise with an oath. See, Isaiah 54:9, 10. With everlasting kindness will I have mercy on you, says the Lord your Redeemer; this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should not return over the earth, so have I sworn that I will not be wroth with you. Yea, he goes on and tells them, The monntaines shall depart, (meaning at the end of the world, when the whole frame of the heavens and earth shall be dissolv'd) but his kindness shall not depart, neither shall his Covenant of peace be removed. Now lest any should think this was some charter belonging to the Jewes alone, we finde it, v. 17. setled on every servant of God as his portion: This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousnesse is of me, says the Lord. And surely God that is so careful to make his childrens inheritance sure to them, will con them little thanks, who busie their wits to invalid and weaken his conveyances, yea, disprove his will; if they had taken a bribe, they could not plead Satans cause better.

Thirdly, in the actual fulfilling these promises, (which he has made to beleevers) to Christ their Attourney. As God before the world began, gave a promise of eternal life to Christ for them, so now has he given actual possession of that glorious place to Christ (as their Advocate and Attourney) where that eternal life shall be enjoyed by them; for as he came upon our errand from heaven, so there he returned again to take and hold possession of that inheritance, which God had of old promised, and he in one summe at his death had paid for. And now what ground of feare can there be in the believers heart, concerning. Gods love standiog firme to him; when he sees the whole Covenant performed already to Christ for

him, whom God has not only called to, sanctified for, and upheld in the great work he was to finish for us, but also justified in his Resurrection and Jayle-delivery, and received him into heaven, there to sit on the right hand of the Majesty on high, by which he has not only possession for us, but full power to give it unto all believers?

A second occasion of feare to the believer that he shall not persevere, may be taken from himself. He has many sad feares and tremblings of heart, that he shall at last forsake God: The journey is long to heaven, and his grace weak, O, says he, is it not possible that this little grace should faile, and I fall short at last of glory? Now here there is such provision made in the Covenant, as scatters this cloud also.

First, the Spirit of God is given on purpose to prevent this; Christ left his mother with John, but his Saints with his Spirit, to tutour and keep them that they should not lose themselves in their journey to heaven. O how sweet is that place, Ezekiel 36:27. I will put my Spirit in you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgements and do them. He does not say they shall have his Spirit, if they will walk in his statutes: no, his Spirit shall cause them to do it. But may be you are afraid you may grieve him, and so he in anger leave you, and you perish for want of his help and counsel. Answ. The Spirit of God is indeed sensible of unkindnesse, and upon a Saints sin, may withdraw in regard of present assistance, but never in regard of his care; as a mother may let her froward child go alone, till it get a knock, that may make it cry to be taken up again into her armes, but still her eye is on it that it shall not fall into mischief. The Spirit withdrew from Samson, and he fell into the Philistines hands, and this makes him cry to God,

and the Spirit puts forth his strength in him again. Thus here, indeed the office of the Spirit is to abide for ever with the Saints, Iohn 14.16. He shall send you another Comforter, that he may abide for ever with you.

Secondly, it is one main businesse of Christe intercession, to obtain of God perseverance for our weak graces. I have prayed, (says Christ to Peter) that your faith faile not. But was not that a particular priviledge granted to him, which may be denied to another? O Sirs, do we think that Christs love looks a squint? does he pray for one child more than another? such feares and jealousies foolish children are ready to take up, and therefore Christ prevents them, by bidding Peter in the very next words. When you are converted, strengthen your brethren, Luke 22:31. that is, when you feelest the efficacy and force of my prayer for your faith, carry this good newes to them, that their hearts may be strengthened also; and what strengthening had it been to them, if Christ prayed not for them as well as Peter? does Christ pray for us? yea, does he not live to pray for us? O how can children of so many prayers, of such prayers perish? The Saints prayers have a mighty power. Iacob wrestled and had power with God, this was his sword and bowe (to allude to what he said of the parcel of ground he took, from the Amorite,) by which he got the victory and had power with God. This was the Key with which Elijah opened and shut heaven. And if the weak prayers of Saints (coming in his Name) have such credit in heaven, that with them they can go to Gods treasure, and carry away as much as their armes of faith can hold; O then, what prevalency has Christs intercession, who is a Son, an obedient Son, that is come from finishing his great work on earth, and now prayes his Father for nothing, but what he has bid him ask, yea, for nothing

but what he is beforehand with him for, and all this to a Father that loves those he prays for as well as himselfe? Bid Satan avaunt, Say not your weak faith shall perish, till you hearest that Christ has left praying, or meets with a repulse.

Thirdly, let us see whether Satan be able to pluck the Christian away, and step betwixt him and home. I have had occasion to speak of this subject in another place, the lesse here shall serve. Abundant provision is made against his assaults. The Saint is wrap't up in the everlasting armes of Almighty power, and what can a cursed devil do against God, who laid those chaines on him which he cannot shake off? when he is able to pluck that dart of divine fury out of his own conscicnce which God has fastened there, then let him think of such an enterprise as this. How can he overcome you that cannot tempt you but in Gods appointed time? And if God set Satan his time to assault the Christian whom he loves so dearly, surely it shall be when he shall be repulsed with greatest shame.

Use 1 Away then with that doctrine, which says, one may be a Saint to day, and none to morrow; now a Peter, anon a Judas; O what unsavoury stuffe is this! a principle it is that at once crosss the main design of God in the Gospel-Covenant, reflects sadly on the honor of Christ, and wounds the Saints comfort to the heart.

First, it is derogatory to Gods design in the Gospel-Covenant, which we finde plainly to be this, that his children might be put into a state sure and safe from miscarrying at last, which by the first Covenant man was not. See, Romans 4:16. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be of grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed. God on purpose because of the weakness of the first Covenant through the mutable nature of man, makes a new

Covenant of a far different constitution and frame, not of works as that was, but of faith, and why? the Apostle tells us, that it might be sure to all the seed, that not one soul, who by faith should be adopted into Abrahams family, and so become a child of the promise, should faile of inheriting the blessing of the promise, which is eternal life; called so, Titus 1:2. and all this because the promise is founded upon grace, that is, Gods immutable good pleasure in Christ, and not upon the variable and inconstant obedience of man as the first Covenant was. But if a Saint may finally fall, then is the promise no more sure in this Covenant then it was in that, and so God should not have his end he propounds.

Secondly, it reflects sadly on Christs honor, both as he is intrusted with the Saints salvation, and also as he is interessed in it. First, as he is intrusted with the Saints salvation. He tells us they are given him of his Father for this very end, that he should give them eternal life, yea, that power which he has over all flesh; was given him to render him every way able to effect this one businesse, John 17:2. He accepts the charge, ownes them as his sheep, knowes them every one, and promiss, he will give them eternal life, they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of his hand, John 10:27, 28. Now how well do they consult with Christs honor, that say his sheepe may die in a ditch of final apostasy notwithstanding all this? Secondly, as he is interessed in the salvation of every Saint. The life of his own glory is bound up in the eternal life of his Saints. Its true, when Adam fell God did save his stake, but how can Christ who is so nearly united to every believing soul? There was a league of friendship betwixt God and Adam; but no such union as here where Christ and his Saints make but one Christ, for which his Church is called Christ, 1 Corinthians 12:12.

As the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of that one body being many, are one body, so is Christ. Christ and his members make one Christ: now is it possible a piece of Christ can be found at last-burning in hell? can Christ be a cripple Christ? can this member drop off and that? 'Tis as possible that all, as any should; and how can Christ part with his mystical members and not with his glory? does not every member adde an ornament to the body, yea, an honor? The Church is called the fulnesse of him, Ephesians 1:23. O how dishonourable is it to Christ that we should think he shall want any of his fulnesse? and how can the man be full and compleat that wants a member?

Thirdly, it wounds the Saints comfort to the heart, and layes their joy a bleeding.Paul says, he did not [illegible], He did not dash the generous wine of Gods Word with the water of mans conceits No, he gave them pure Gospel. Truly, this principle of Saints falling from grace gives a sad dash to the sweet wine of the Promises; the soul-reviving comfort that sparkles in them, ariss from the sure conveyance with which they are in Christ made over to believers to have and to hold for ever. Hence called the sure mercies of David, Acts 13:34. mercies that shall never faile: This, this indeed is wine that makes glad the heart of a Saint; though he may be whipt in the house when he sins, yet he shall not be turned out of doores. As God promised in the type to Davids seed, Psalms 89:33. Neverthelesse, my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him▪ nor suffer my faithfulness to faile▪ and, v. 36. His seed shall endure for ever. Could any thing separate the believer from the love of God in Christ, this would be as a hole at the bottome of his cup to leak out all his joy, he might then feare every temptation or affliction he meets would slay him, and so the wickeds curse

would be the Saints portion. His life would ever hang in doubt, before him, and the fearful expectation of his final miscarriage, which he sees may befall him, would eat up the joy of his present hope. Now how contrary such a frame of heart is to the spirit of adoption, and full assurance of hope, which the grace of the new Covenant gives, he that runs may reade in the Word.

Use 2 This truth prepares a sovereign cordial to restore the fainting spirits of weak believers, who are surprised with many feares, concerning their persevering and holding out to the end of their warfare. Be of good cheer, poor soul; God has given Christ the life of every soul within the Ark of his Covenant. Your eternal safety is provided for; Whom he loves he loves to the end, Jh. 13.1. Has he made you willing in the day of his power to march under his banner, and espouse his quarrel against sin and hell? the same power that overcame your rebellious heart to himself, will overcome all your enemies within and without for you; say not you are a bruised reed; with this he will break Satans head, and not cease till he has brought forth judgement into compleat victory in your soul. He that can make a few wounded men rise up and take a strong city, can make a wounded spirit triumph over sin and devils. The Ark stood in the midst of Jordan, till the whole Camp of Israel was safely got over into Canaan, Josh. 3. And so does the Covenant (which the Ark did but typifie;) yea, Christ, Covenant and all stand to secure the Saints a safe passage to Heaven. If but one believer drownes, the Covenant must drown with him. Christ and the Saint are put together as co-heires of the same inheritance, Romans 8:17. If children, then heires, heirs of God, and joynt-heirs with Christ. We cannot dispute against one, but we question the firmness of the others title. When you heare Christ is turn'd out of

heaven, or himself to be willing to sell his inheritance there, then, poore Christian, feare your coming there and not till then. Coheires cannot sell the inheritance except both give up their right, which Christ will never do nor suffer you.

Use 3 Thirdly, this truth calls for a word or two of caution. Though there is no feare of a Saints salling from grace, yet there is great danger of others falling from the top of this comfortable doctrine into a carelesse security, and presumptuous boldness; and therefore a battlement is very necessary, that from it we may with safety to our souls, stand and view the pleasant prospect this truth presents to our eye. That flower from which the Bee sucks honey, the spider draws poison. That which is a restorative to the Saints grace, proves an incentive to the lust of a wicked man. What Paul said of the Law, we may truly of the Gospel: Sin taking occasion from the grace of the Gospel, and the sweet promises thereof, deceives the carnal heart, and works in him all manner of wickedness. Indeed sin seldome grows so rank any where, as in those who water its roots with the grace of the Gospel. Two ways this doctrine may be abused.

First, into a neglect of duty.

Secondly, into a liberty to sin. Take heed of both.

First, beware of falling into a neglect of duty upon this score; if a Christian, you can not fall away from grace. Take for an antidote against this three particulars.

First, there are other arguments to invite, yea, that will constrain you to a constant vigourous performing of duty, though the feare of falling away should not come in, or else you are not a Christian; what? nothing make the child diligent about his fathers

businesse, but feare of being disinherited and turned out of doors? There is sure some better motive to duty in a Saints heart, or else Religion is a melancholy work. Speak for your selves, O ye Saints, is self-preservation all you pray for, and heare for? should a messenger come from Heaven, and tell you Heaven were yours, would this make you give over your spiritual trade and not care whether you had any more acquaintance with God till you came there? O how harsh does this sound in your eares! There are such principles engraven in the Christians bosome, that will not suffer a strangenesse long to grow betwixt God and him. He is under the Law of a new life, which carries him naturally to desire communion with God, as the child does to see the face of his deare father, and every duty is a Mount wherein God presents himself to be seen and enjoyed by the Christian.

Secondly, to neglect duty upon such a perswasion, is contrary to Christs practice and counsel. First, his practice. Though Christ never doubted of his Fathers love, nor questioned the happy issue of all his temptations, agonies and sufferings; yet he prayes, and prayes again more earnestly, Luke 22:44. Secondly, his counsel and command. He told Peter, that Satan had begg'd leave to have them to sift them. But withal he comforts him (who was to be hardest put to it) with this, But I have prayed for you that your faith faile not. Sure our Saviour by this provision made for him and the rest, means to save them a labor that they need not watch or pray. No such matter: after this, as you may see, v. 40. He calls them up to duty, Pray that ye enter not into temptation. Christs praying for them was to strengthen their faith, when they should themselves pray for the same mercy; not to nourish their sloth that they needed not to pray. Christs prayers in Heaven for his Saints

are all heard already: but the returne of them is reserved to be enclosed in the answer God sends to their own prayers The Christian cannot in faith expect to receive the mercies Christ prayes for in Heaven, so long as he lives in the neglect of his duty on earth. They stand ready against he shall call for them by the prayer of faith, and if they be not worth sending this messenger to Heaven, truly they are worth little.

Thirdly, consider that although the Christian be secured from a total and final apostasy, yet he may fall sadly to the bruising of his conscience, enfeebling his grace, and reproach of the Gospel, which sure are enough to keep the Christian upon his watch; and the more, because ordinarily the Saints back-slidings, begin in their duties. As it is with tradesmen in the world, they first grow carelesse of their businesse, often out of their shop, and then they go behinde-hand in their estates: So here, first remisse in a duty, and then fall into a decay of their graces and comforts, yea, sometimes into ways that are scandalous. A stuffe loseth its glosse before it weares: The Christian, the lustre of his grace in the lively exercise of duty, and then the strength of it.

Secondly, take heed of abusing this doctrine unto a liberty to sin; shall we sin because grace abounds? grow loose, because we have God fast bound in his promise? God forbid, none but a Devil would teach us this Logick. It was a great height of sin those wretched Jewes came to, who could quaffe and carouse it while death look't in upon them at the windows; Let us eat and drink for tomorrow we shall die. They discovered their Atheisme therein. But what a prodigious stature in sin must that man be grown to, that can sin under the protection of the promise, and draw his encouragement to sin from the everlasting love of God? Let us eat

and drink, for we are sure to live and be saved. Grace cannot dwell in that heart, which drawes such a cursed conclusion from the premisses of Gods grace. The Saints have not so learn't Christ. The inference the Apostle makes from the sweet priviledges we enjoy in the Covenant of grace, is not to wallow in sin; but having these promises, to cleanse our selves from all filthinesse of flesh and spirit, 2 Corinthians 7:1. 'Tis the nature of faith, (the grace that trades with Promises) to purifie the heart. Now the more certain report faith brings of Gods love from the promise to the soul, the mote it purifies the heart, because love by which faith works, is thereby more inflamed to God; and if once this affection takes fire, the room becomes too hot for sin to stay there.

SECT. VI.

The fourth note and last is, That it will abundantly recompence all the hardship and trouble the Christian endures in this war against sin and Satan, that he shall be able when the war is ended to stand. In mans wars all do not get by them that fight in them; the gaines of these are commonly put into a few pockets. The common souldiers endure most of the hardship, but go away with little of the profit; they fight to make a few that are great yet greater, and are many times themselves turn'd off at last, with what will hardly pay for the cure of their wounds, or keep them from starving in a poor Hospital. But in this war there is none loseth, but he that runs away. A glorious reward there is for every faithful souldier in Christs Camp, and that is wrapt up in this phrase, Having done all to stand. Now in this place, to stand imports three things, which laid together will clear the point.

First, to stand in this place, is to stand Conquerours. An Army when conquered, is said to fall before their enemy, and the Conquerour to stand. Every Christian shall at the end of the war stand a Conquerour over his vanquish't lusts, and Satan that headed them. Many a sweet victory the Christian has here over Satan; But (alas!) the joy of these Conquests is again interrupted with fresh alarms from his rallied enemy. One day he has the better, and may be the next he is put to the hazard of another battel, much ado he has to keep what he has got: yea, his very victories are such as send him bleeding out of the field: Though he repulses the temptation at last, yet the wounds his conscience gets in the fight, do overcast the glory of the victory. 'Tis seldome the Christian comes off without some sad complaint of the treachery of his own heart, which had like to have lost the day, and betrayed him into his enemies hand: But for your eternal comfort. Know (poor Christian) there is a blessed day coming, which shall make a full and final decision of the quarrel betwixt you and Satan: You shalt see this enemies Camp quite broke up, not a weapon left in his hand to lift up against you. You shalt tread upon his high places, from which he has made so many shots at you. You shalt see them all dismantled and demolished, till there be not left standing any one corruption in your bosome, for a devil to hide and harbour himself in. Satan, at whose approach you have so trembled, shall then be subdued under your feet: he that has so oft bid you bow down, that he might go over your soul and trample upon all your glory, shall now have his neck laid to be trodden on by you. Were there nothing else to be expected as the fruits of our watching and praying, weeping & mourning, severe duties of mortification and self-denial, with whatever else our Christian warfare

puts us upon but this; our labor sure would not be in vain in the Lord. Yea, blessed watching and praying, happy tears and wounds we meet with in this war; may they out at last end in a full and eternal victory over sin and Satan. Bondage is one of the worst of evils. The baser an enemy is, the more abhorred by noble spirits. Saul feared to fail into the hands of the uncircumcised Philistines, and to be abused by their scornes and reproaches more than a bloody death. Who baser than Satan? what viler tyrant then sin? Glorious then will the day be, wherein we shall praise God for delivering us out of the hands of all our sins, and from the hand of Satan. But dismal to you (sinners) who at the same time wherein you shall see the Saints stand with crowns of victory on their heads, must like fettered captives be dragg'd to hells dungeon, there to have your eare bored unto an eternal bondage under your lusts. And what more miserable sentence can God himself passe upon you? Here sin is pleasure, there it will be your torment. Here a sweet bit and goes down glib, but there it will stick in your throats. Here you have suitable provision to entertain your lusts withal: Palaces for pride to dwell and strut her self in: Delicious fare for your wanton palates: houses, and lands, with coffers of silver and gold for your covetous hearts, by their self-pleasing thoughts to sit brooding upon: but you will finde none of these there; hell is a barren place, nothing grows in that land of darkness to solace and recreate the sinners minds. You shal have your lusts, but want the food they long for. O what a torment must that needs be, to have a soul sharp set, even to a ravenous hunger after sin; but chain'd up where it can come at nothing it would have to satisfie its lost: for a proud wretch, that could wish he might dominere over all the world, yea, over God himself if he would let him, to be

kept down in such a dungeon, as hell is, O how it will cut! for the malicious sinner, whose heart swells with rancour against God and his Saints, that he could pluck them out of Gods bosome, yea, God out of his throne if he had power, to finde his hands so manacled, that he can do nothing against them he so hates: O how this will torment! Speak, O you Saints, whose partial victory over sin at present is so sweet to you, that you would choose a thousand deaths, sooner than return to your old bondage under your lusts: how glorious then is that day in your eye, when this shall be compleated in a full and eternal Conquest, never to have any thing to do more with sin or Satan.

Secondly, to stand, is here to stand justified and acquitted at the great day of judgement. The phrase is frequent in Scripture, which sets out the solemn discharge they shall have then, by standing in judgement, Psalms 1:5. The wicked shall not stand in the judgement; that is, they shall not be justified, Psalms 130:3. If you, Lord, shouldest mark iniquity, O Lord, who shall stand? that is, who shall be discharged? The great God, upon whose errand we come into the world, has appointed a day wherein he will judge the world by Jesus Christ; a solemn day it will be, when all that ever, lived on earth, high and low, good and bad, shall meet in one Assembly to make their personal appearance before Christ, and from his mouth to receive their eternal doom, who shall in his Majestick robes of glory ascend the awful seat of Judicature, attended with his illustrious traine and guard of Angels about him, as so many officers ready to execute and perform his pleasure according to the definitive sentence that he shall pronounce; either to conduct those blessed ones whom he shall justifie into his glorious Kingdom, or binde them hand and foot to be cast into hells un-

quenchable flames whom he shall condemn. I do not wonder that Pauls Sermon on this subject, did make an earth-quake in Felix his conscience: but rather that any should be so far gone in a lethargy, and dedolent numbnesse of conscience, as the thought of this day cannot recover them to their sense and feeling. O Sirs, do you not vote them happy men and women that shall speed well on this day? are not your thoughts enquiring who those blessed souls are, which shall be acquitted by the lively voice of Christ the Judge? You need not ascend to search the rolls of election in heaven, here you may know they are such as fight the Lords battels on earth against Satan, in the Lords Armour, and that to the end of their lives. These having done all shall stand in judgement. And were it but at a mans bar, some Court-Martial, where a souldier stood upon trial for his life, either to be condemned as a Traitour to his Prince, or clear'd as faithful in his trust. O how such a one would listen to heare how it would go with him, and be overjoyed when the Judge pronounces him innocent! Well may such be bid to fall down on their knees, thank God and the Judge that have saved their lives; how much more ravishing will the sweet voice of Christ be in the Saints eares, when he shall in the face of men and Angels make publike declaration of their righteousnesse? O how confounded will Satan then be, who was their accuser to God and their own consciences also, ever threatening them with the terrour of that day! How blank will the wicked world be, to see the dirt that they had throwen by their calumnies and lying reports on the Saints faces, wiped off with Christs own hand; they from Christs mouth to be justified as sincere, whom they had call'd hypocrites!

will not this, O ye Saints, be enough for all the scorne you were laden with from the world, and conflict you endured with the Prince of the world? But this is not all. Therefore

Thirdly, to stand, does here also (as the complement of their reward) denote the Saints standing in heavens glory. Princes when they would reward any of their subjects, that in their wars have done eminent service to the crown, (as the utmost they can do for them) do prefer them to Court, there to enjoy their Princely favor, and stand in some place of honorable service before them continually. Solomon sets it out as the greatest reward of faithful subjects to stand before Kings. Heaven is the royal city where the great God keeps his Court. The happiness of glorious Angels is to stand there before God. I am Gabriel that stand in the presence of God, Luke 1:19. That is, I am one of those heavenly spirits who wait on the great God, and stand before his face, as Courtiers do about their Prince. Now such honor shall every faithful soul have. Thus says the Lord of hostes, If you will walk in my ways, and if you will keep my charge, I will give you places to walk, among these that stand by, Zechariah 3:7. He alludes to the Temple, which had rooms joyning to it for the Priests that waited on the Lord in his holy service there. Or to Courtiers, that have stately galleries and lodgings becoming their place at Court allowed them in the Kings Palace they wait upon. Thus all the Saints, (whose representative Joshua was) shall after they have kept the Lords charge in a short lifes service on earth, be called up to stand before God in heaven, where with Angels they shall have their galleries, and mansions of glory also. O happy they who shall stand before the Lord in glory! The greatest Peeres of a Realme (such as Earles, Marquesses and Dukes are) count it greater honor to stand before their King,

though bare-headed and oft upon the knee, then to live in the countrey, where all bow and stand bare to them; yea, let but their Prince forbid them coming to Court, and 'tis not their great estates or respect they have where they live will content them. 'Tis better to wait in heaven then to reign on earth. 'Tis sweet standing before the Lord here in an Ordinance, one day in the worship of God is better than many elsewhere; O what then is it to stand before God in glory! If the Saints spikenard sends forth so sweet a smell, while the King sits at his table here in a Sermon or Sacrament: O then what joy must needs flow from their near attendance on him, as he sits at his table in heaven, which when God first made, it was intended by him to be that Chamber of presence, in which he would present himself to be seen of, and enjoyed by his Saints in all his glory. I know nothing would have a more powerful, yea, universal operation upon a Saints spirit, then the frequent and spiritual consideration of that blisseful state in heaven, which shall at last crown all their sad conflicts here on earth. None like this sword to cut the very sinews of temptation, and behead those lusts, which defie and out-brave whole troops of other Arguments. It is almost impossible to sin with lively thoughts and hopes of that glory. 'Tis when the thoughts of heaven are long out of the Christians sight, and he knows not what is become of his hopes to that glorious place, that he begins to set up some idol, (as Israel the Calfe in Moses his absence) which he may dance before. But let heaven come in sight, and the Christians heart will be well-warm'd with the thoughts of it, and you may as soon perswade a King to throw his royal Diademe into a sink, and wallow with his robes in a kennel, as a Saint to sin with the expectation of heavens glory. Sin is a devils work, not a Saints, who is a Peer of heaven, and waits every

hour for the Writ, that shall call him to stand with Angels and glorified Saints before the throne of God. This would cheer the Christians heart, and confirme him when the fight is hottest, and the bullets flie thickest from men and devils, to think, 'tis heaven all this is for, where it's worth having a place, though we go through fire and water to it. 'Tis before the Lord, (said David to scoffing Michal) that chose me, before your father and all his house, therefore I will play before the Lord, and I will yet be more vile then thus. 2 Samuel 6:21. Thus, Christian, wouldest you throw off the vipers of reproaches, which from the fire of the wickeds malice flie upon you; 'Tis for God that I pray, hear, mortifie my lust, deny my self of my carnal sports, profits and pleasures, that God who has passed by Kings and Princes, to choose me a poor wretch to stand before him in glory; therefore I will be yet more vile then thus. O Sirs, were there not another world to enjoy God in, yet should we not while we have our being serve our Maker? The heavens and the earth obey his Law, that are capable of no reward for doing his Will. Quench hell, burn heaven, (said a holy man) yet I will love and feare my God; How much more when everlasting armes of mercy stand ready stretch't to carry you assoon as the fight is over into the blisseful presence of God. You have servants of your own so ingenuous and observant, that can follow your work hard abroad in all weathers; and may they but when they come home, weary and hungry at night, obtain a kinde look from you, and some tender care over them, they are very thankful. Yea, says one, (to shame the sluggish Christian) how many hundred miles will the poor Spaniel run after his Master in a journey, who gets nothing but a few crumbs, or a bone from his Masters trencher? In a word, which is more, the devils slaves, what will

they not do and venture at his command, who has not so much to give them, as you to your dog, not a crust, not a drop of water to cool their tongue? and shall not the joy of heaven which is set before the Christian, into which he shall assuredly enter, make him run his race, endure a short scuffle of temptation and affliction? yea sure, and make him reckon also that these are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in him.

Thanks for Reading

If you spotted a typo or have feedback, the email is **sam@goodsoilapps.com** — or use the in-app feedback form in *Christian Reader*.