

# THE CHRISTIAN WARRIOR

WRESTLING WITH SIN, SATAN,  
THE WORLD, AND THE FLESH



*Isaac Ambrose*



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In this timely and insightful work, Isaac Ambrose entreats Christians not to slumber in the midst of battle. He presents the danger of the forces working against Christians—sin, Satan, the world, and the flesh. Be edified by Ambrose’s instructions and warnings as he reveals from Scripture the tools and weapons God has given believers to fight against spiritual adversaries. Learn how the armor of God is not merely for decoration but rather for use. Ambrose calls for determined obedience, steadfastness, and confidence in Christ, who has already won the great battle.

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“Our contemporary culture, saturated by scientific rationalism, frequently tends to ignore the reality of the powers of evil and darkness. This Puritan classic takes Ephesians 6:12 seriously and teaches that battle with the devil still rages today. Isaac Ambrose’s small but dynamic, packed treatise offers readers practical directions and helpful spiritual disciplines to face the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Most importantly, *The Christian Warrior* will help you cling to Jesus as your only reliable defense.”

—Tom Schwanda, associate professor of Christian formation and ministry, emeritus, Wheaton College

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ISAAC AMBROSE (1604–1664) was an English Puritan ministering in Preston and Garston until he was ejected by the Act of Uniformity of 1662.

RELIGION / Christian Life / Spiritual Warfare



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# The Christian Warrior



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*Wrestling with  
Sin, Satan, the World, and the Flesh*

Isaac Ambrose

“And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels.”

—Revelation 12:7

Abridged, Methodized, and Improved  
by Thomas Jones

Edited by Don Kistler



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*The Christian Warrior*

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# Preface

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Soldiers of Christ, be aware that you are highly advanced in God's creation, that you occupy an important station, that you have an arduous work allotted to you, and that you have neither time nor talent to throw away. For you are enlisted under the banner of Christ; you have entered the armies of the Most High, and have taken the oath of allegiance to the King of Zion, and bound yourselves by an oath to fight the good fight of faith against sin, Satan, the world, and the flesh. What formidable enemies are these! You have to encounter all the powers of hell, and their name is Legion. Fight them you now must, for you have put on the armor, and taken the field to fight all the enemies of God and man. When you survey the enemies' camp, and see their strength, their number, their stratagems, and inveterate malice, and are then made to feel your own weakness and nothingness, you tremble, and say, "How shall I go against these mighty hosts? Yet I must conquer them all, or die an eternal death."

O soldiers of Christ! Banish all your guilty fears. There is, after all, far more *for* you than *against* you. You are on the Lord's side, who fights for you. He is your refuge and strength, your sun and shield. He is with you in the field, to teach your hands to war, and to cover your head in the day of battle, and has promised you the victory. If God be for you, who is he that can overcome you and put you to death, when you are hid in the Lord's pavilion, and surrounded with

the wall of salvation? While in the heat of the battle, be filled with the hope of victory, and feel assured that you shall finally obtain a complete and glorious conquest over all that come against you; for has not the Captain of your salvation engaged to subdue Satan and all his armies shortly under your feet? Trust Him and take courage then; you cannot meet with disappointment, for faithful is He who promised, who also will do it.

With a view to strengthen your hope of victory, keep in mind that you have not an enemy, difficulty, or danger to encounter but which has been already conquered and subdued for you by the great Captain of your salvation. And the countless millions of His soldiers, who have now arrived safe in glory, singing the song of Moses and the Lamb, were once here below, wrestling with all the enemies and difficulties which you now have to encounter. Only war a good warfare, then, and rest assured that He who carried them safe through the war will carry you also to the triumphs of the world to come. Not one of all His true soldiers was ever left to perish on the field of battle. Put on courage, you Christian warriors! Fight the good fight of faith. Be faithful unto death, and then your Captain will release you from the war and give you the crown of life, which you shall forever wear in honor of your gracious Lord and Saviour.

Thomas Jones

# THE CHRISTIAN WARRIOR

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## PART 1

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” Ephesians 6:12

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### *Statement of the Doctrines to be Handled*

1. All God’s people must be warriors.
2. We have powerful and malicious enemies to contend with.
3. We must wrestle and strive hard against them.

#### **1. All God’s people must be warriors.**

The wicked refuse to engage in this war. Instead of fighting the Lord’s battles, they take up arms on the enemy’s side. They spend their time in chambering and wantonness, in idleness and carnal security. They are altogether ignorant of Satan’s assaults and of their own danger. Oh, that their eyes were opened to see their perilous condition! Oh, that such men knew their danger in time to escape it! They are not the Lord’s soldiers, but the devil’s revellers. They will not fight against Satan, and Satan will not disturb their sleep. So

they are in covenant with death and hell.

All the people of God, from first to last, are, and must be, engaged in this spiritual warfare, and can say, "We do not war after the flesh; 'the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds,' " 2 Corinthians 10:4. Such has been the language of the saints in all ages; they were all in the war, even the most holy of them all. Job, Moses and Aaron, Lot and David, the Patriarchs and the Prophets. All had their fiery trials. And so those under the gospel: Peter was winnowed, Paul was buffeted, and even Christ himself was led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

### *Remarks*

Must all God's people war with devils? Then consider what religion will cost you. The Christian soldier must endure hardness. Saints must be winnowed, buffeted, tried, and tempted. Wars and dangers shall be their portion. And through much tribulation must they enter into the kingdom of God. See how Paul is in labors, in stripes, in prisons, in deaths. He was always in perils wherever he went. Christianity will cost you much here and save you forever. Then be a Christian that you may be a conqueror.

Are we to fight against sin and Satan, the world and the flesh? Then, courage, Christians! Be not dismayed. Are you afraid of these formidable enemies? Go forth in the strength of the Lord God and He will put all your enemies shortly under your feet. Satan's fiery darts and all your trials shall do you good, and be to you as the waves to the ark, as the whale to Jonah, as

the fire that brightens the iron, as the mill that grinds the wheat, or as the fire that separates the dross from the gold. Do you not feel your spirits sharpened, your pride subdued, your flesh cooled, every lust mortified, and every grace invigorated by these temptations and trials? Tell me, are not you roused to make earnest and ardent prayers by these wars and conflicts? Are not Satan's temptations like bellows to blow the fire of devotion in your soul, and like a hedge of thorns to keep you from going astray? Oh, vain men! Be not afraid of the war, but enlist into the armies of Christ, and fight valiantly under the banner of the cross. It is an honorable war; Christ invites you to it, and promises to cover your head in the day of battle and to crown you in the end. And what more would you have? "Put on the whole armor of God, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might, and He is engaged to give you the victory."

## **2. We have powerful and malicious enemies to contend with.**

1. *We wrestle not with flesh and blood, i.e., not with men, but with devils; not with feeble, frail mortals like ourselves, but with mighty hosts of spiritual adversaries, with Satan at their head.* The main contest is not with the corruptions of our nature, but with principalities and powers, with Beelzebub and his legions.

We have indeed within us hosts of busy and injurious enemies; and these are often "like the sons of Zeruiah, too hard for us. Within are fightings. "The flesh lusteth against the spirit," Galatians 5:17, and often brings us into captivity to the law of sin. We often

groan, earnestly longing to be delivered from this body of sin and death. These inward sins in our souls and bodies are very formidable enemies, if there were no other.

Christians! How does it concern you to stand upon your watchtower! You have enemies within you. If a city was besieged by foreign armies, would the citizens harbor traitors within their walls? No. Would they not put them to death for their own safety? You have within you a host of treacherous enemies, and these seek all occasions to betray you into the devil's hands. Is it not high time for us all to mortify our bosom traitors and murderers? These are, in some respects, more dangerous than the devil himself, because they are within us. They open the door to let the enemy in. Satan can do nothing till your bosom sins betray you into his hands. He can never force you to sin, but must first gain your consent. Oh, then, how carefully should you watch over your own hearts and live in prayer!

2. *Our formidable enemies are "principalities, powers, rulers of darkness, and spiritual wickednesses."* A few words on each term will show what we have to contend with.

**PRINCIPALITIES:** Much more than all princes, Satan rules over all the earth, and is called the god of this world.

The earth indeed is the Lord's, and the Most High ruleth over the kingdoms of men. Yet Satan has now the dominion over the world in its corrupted state. When the world left God, then God, in judgment, gave Satan his dominion over it and gave him leave to rule over all the children of disobedience, and his dominion is here called "principalities."

**POWERS:** They are princes, with mighty power. We

cannot tell how great the power of Satan is. When God permits him, he makes a wonderful display of his power in all creation, over all the elements. He has power over fire. He can cause thunders and lightnings in the firmament, and set the heavens on fire. He has power over the air. He is the prince of the power of the air. It was he that caused the mighty wind from the wilderness to fall upon Job's house and kill his children. Without God's permission, he cannot make a breath of air to blow, but with permission he can at any time raise wind enough to remove mountains. Satan has power over water. He can hurl the sea into such commotion that the depth shall boil like a pot. Satan has power over the earth, and can cause earthquakes to swallow up towns and cities, rocks and rivers.

Satan can enter into the bodies of beasts. A legion of devils entered into a herd of two thousand swine, hurled them violently over a precipice into the sea, and drowned them. And they have no less power over the bodies of men. Read of the lunatics, the deaf and the dumb, which were healed of Christ when on earth.

And what mighty power the devil has over the souls of men! He can work on the understanding, and cause thousands of evil thoughts to arise there, to our sorrow, by working on the corruptions which he finds in the souls. The devil can do great mischief in the will of men. Though he cannot command and determine it, yet he can persuade and allure it to a thousand evils. Satan works on the affections and passions of men. He deals much with our imaginations, paints sinful objects as lovely and desirable, and so kindles our affections towards them till the consent of the will is obtained, and the soul is led captive.

**RULERS OF THE DARKNESS OF THIS WORLD:**

The darkness of this world is the seal of Satan's empire. His time is during this world. He began with Adam in Paradise, and will continue to rule till time is no more. At the end of the world, he shall be shut up as a closed prisoner in hell. Satan's dominion is in the earth and the air. In heaven, the devils rebelled and were cast out, and now they rule in the earth and in the air. Here they seduce and destroy the souls of men as fast as they can. Woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, who dwell among such enemies! Yet let the saints rejoice, no enemies shall be in heaven to torment us. This may well make us long to change earth for heaven. Soldiers in bloody wars cannot but long earnestly for victory, and to be released from the war, and enjoy peace. Like the mariners who, being tossed on the boisterous sea, naturally long for the haven of rest and safety, so must the soldiers of Christ ardently long for the promised victory over their spiritual adversaries and to land on the shore of eternal rest. Oh, Christians! Press on towards heaven, for the earth is full of snares and plots of Satan, who tries to take and to ruin you forever.

**SPIRITUAL WICKEDNESSES:** Oh, what enemies are these! We have to wrestle with evil spirits which are full of subtlety, full of malice, and full of power to hurt and to destroy. These can attack us in all conditions, and in all places, when we see them not. They are not only spirits, but evil spirits, full of malice. Satan is more than wicked, he is maliciously wicked. His constant trade and greatest delight is to allure men to hell to be tormented forever. The devils tempt us not only to outward transgressions, but also to spiritual sins such as

pride, hypocrisy, unbelief, and blasphemy.

Satan fights with the people of God not about the things of earth such as gold mines, lands, and treasures, but about heavenly things such as our salvation and happiness in Christ, and meetness for glory. He strives to rob us of our God, our Redeemer, our Sanctifier and Comforter, and to allow us nothing but sin and misery, guilt, condemnation, and torments. Such are the enemies which we have to contend with, and which must be conquered, or we are undone for-ever.

### *Remarks*

Are devils thus mighty and malicious? Then it is high time to lay to heart the work you have to do, i.e., to contend with and subdue these formidable enemies. Bless God that you are not already destroyed by them. Should the Lord let them loose, what work would they do in the earth? They would rend the heavens, shake the earth, and destroy all mankind in an instant. My brethren, you should not dread them too much, for God is your refuge and strength. Neither must you slight them, for no mere creature on earth can stand before them. Oh, bless God for the restraints he lays upon Satan!

Are devils so mighty and malicious? Then let all tempted souls flee to God, and rely on His strength who governs heaven, earth, and hell. Let the righteous flee under the wings of the Almighty, where they shall find a safe shelter in every time of danger. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth unto it and is safe."

### **3. We must wrestle and strive hard against them.**

This combat is called wrestling because Satan does not fight with us at a distance, but comes into close struggle. He closes in with us, yea, gets within us, and lays hold on the heart. Other enemies may lay hold on our bodily limbs, but Satan is a spirit and lays hold on our spirits and all the powers of our mind, and nothing can escape his fangs.

It is called wrestling because it is violent. Wrestling is not an easy, idle work, but requires strength, skill, and vigor. Satan deals with us as a roaring lion, and strives to destroy our souls. Then striving earnestly is necessary on our part that we may not become his prey. Oh, brethren, "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might," that you may escape hell and take heaven by violence. We must not dally with such an enemy, but resist unto blood.

We must wrestle, because of the many arts and tricks which the enemy will use against us. He is a very cunning wrestler, and conquers by art as well as by strength. He has thousands of artful stratagems. He has also numberless plots formed in secret, and has the experience of thousands of years, so that he knows well how to take advantage of us, and assail us unawares. And should we not study his arts and wiles so that we may "not be ignorant of his devices"? Soldier, keep your armor on and go forth in the strength of the Lord and no enemy can prevail against you.

We must wrestle, because Satan has his seconds to fight on his side; the world and the flesh are his chief captains. The world presents its golden apples to tempt us, then the flesh lays hold on the bait, and we are drawn away from God. When Satan sees a fit time, he

threatens us with poverty and distress; he turns all smiles into frowns. Instead of honors and riches, he sets before us nothing but darkness and distress, and we know how terrible these are to our frail nature. So the subtle enemy vanquishes some by prosperity and others by adversity. Few come off conquerors. Let those of us that are true warriors take courage, for we have God on our side, and Christ is the captain of our salvation. Likewise, the angels of God encamp round about the saints. What a comfort is this, that we have the angels of God and the God of angels for our defense! There are more for us than can come against us, and this will secure to us the victory.

### *Remarks*

1. **Of terror to the wicked.** Is our spiritual combat a hard wrestling? Then woe to the wicked who never wrestle at all. Let them know that they are not the Lord's soldiers, but the devil's revellers. As they are his captives, he lets them alone to take their sleep quietly. "When the strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace," but when Christ comes to dispossess him, there will be a great struggle and many a battle fought. Woe to them that are at ease in Zion! Can we be God's servants and not His soldiers? Is not Christ's Church on earth truly militant? The saints are warriors, as well as travellers. Oh, then, what is their condition who sleep in the arms of death? They will not even resist Satan, but go where he leads them. They lie down in carnal security and dream of heaven, till they find themselves in the torments of hell. The enemy has already secured them in his net, and now

has nothing more to do but to drag them from their bed of slumbers and cast them into the deep.

2. **Encouragement to the warriors.** Is our spiritual combat a wrestling? Then courage, Christians! "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." The Christian, above all men, needs courage. A cowardly spirit unfits us for the lowest duty. It is the valiant who takes heaven by a holy violence. The soldiers of Christ must have a heroic spirit and dare to be holy in spite of men and devils. Sinners are bold, and shall saints be timid? The one resolves to be wicked, and shall the other be wavering in his holy course? Hell keeps the field impudently, with displayed banners of open profaneness, and shall saints hide themselves for shame? Oh, let this never be the case with the armies of the living God!

Take courage, therefore, O you saints, and be strong. When Joshua was to march before Israel into Canaan, the Lord would raise his spirits with saying, "Be strong, be of good courage." So would I say to every man of grace, "Be strong, and of good courage." "Be not dismayed, for the Lord thy God is with thee, whithersoever thou goest." So He says to you who march through the wilderness to the heavenly Canaan, "Be full of faith, for the Lord is with you. What if devils fly in your face, and grapple with you hand to hand? Any feeble David may wrestle with Goliath, as long as the battle is the Lord's, and as long as the warrior comes to the field in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel."

Is your spiritual combat a wrestling? Come, then, and play the man. Here are legions of devils ready to devour. See them coming speedily and furiously

against you, determined to destroy soul, body, and spirit. What will you do now? Will you turn your back and fly? Shall Satan conquer without a struggle? Oh, no! Stand to your arms, and bid him defiance. Resist him, and he will flee from you. But he will come again.

3. **Motives to continue the war.** There is a necessity for it. Either you must wrestle with the enemy or be taken captive by him. Shall not this necessity make you fight? Necessity would make cowards fight, and shall you, a soldier of Christ, lay down your arms in despair? Only wrestle in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and the victory is sure. When Christ resisted Satan, he fled away and left Him. Resist him and he will flee from you also. Satan is a conquered enemy; Christ conquered him for you, and He will conquer him by you when you fight in His name.

The sweetness of victory will abundantly repay for the trouble of wrestling. While the wicked think of the sweetness of sin and the trouble of wrestling, let the Christian think of the fruits of victory over sin, death, and hell; he will then earnestly and voluntarily strive to obtain this glorious conquest. The war is only for time; the victory is for eternity.

The combat is lawful and just, appointed of God. It is He that bids us to put on the armor, and take the field against our spiritual adversaries. The Lord warns us that Satan comes against us as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, and bids us to resist him steadfastly in the faith. You see, brethren, that your cause is just, and you have God's authority for engaging in it. You are God's property, by creation, redemption, and self-dedication. Satan is a usurper who can have no right to you. In fighting Satan, you do but de-

fend your own right and the dominion of God in your own souls; your cause is just and good. Then fight and conquer.

You have already, in baptism, taken a military sacrament, and there vowed that you would continue God's faithful soldiers and servants unto your lives' end. What! My brethren, shall you take money to serve in God's wars against the devil and all that help him, and now run away from your colors? A sworn enemy to sin and Satan should never turn his back on those who seek his life. Keep your oath in mind and resist even unto blood and death.

The Lord measures your temptations and weighs your strength. He gives the shoulders and fits the burden, and will never lay on you more than He will enable you to bear. As your day is, so shall your strength be. Souls are apt to complain and say, "The devil is mighty and his temptations strong, while I am feeble and foolish. How then can I stand in the wars?"

Remember that all your conflicts are weighed in the balance, and God says unto Satan, "Hitherto shalt thou go, and no further." No doubt but Satan would destroy you at once, but God restrains him and says of you, as He did of Job, "touch not his life." God sets bounds to Satan and gives strength to His people. Then let them fight on and take courage.

The Lord has promised His presence with you on the field of battle, not only as an onlooker, but as a protector, by weakening the power of the enemy and increasing your strength. During the encounter, God will enfeeble the arm of the enemy and confound his plans. He will, at the same time, give you the skill of a warrior and cover your head in the day of battle. In this

way, the soldiers of Christ are made more than conquerors by having the Lord on their side. Christians are, indeed, foiled now and then; but their Lord restores them and renews their strength by putting underneath them the everlasting arms.

In addition to all this, God has provided for you a complete and impenetrable armor. This armor is the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit, and prayer in the Spirit. In other words, this holy armor is to have all the graces of the Holy Spirit in lively exercise. Having this armor on, we shall be able to stand in the evil day against the wiles of the devil and to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. But recollect that all the virtue of this armor wholly depends upon God alone. Without Christ, every part of the armor would be broken to pieces with one stroke of our adversary; but, while fighting in the whole armor of God, none has ever yet lost the field. Oh, what encouragement is this unto us!

As the victory is sure to all who are clad with the armor of God, so the reward is truly great. Jesus promises that they will have life eternal, that they will eat of the tree of life, that they will feed on the heavenly manna, that they will receive the crown of life, and reign with Him forever. We do not contend for counterfeits, but for crowns; not for temporal crowns, but for the crown of life, which does not fade away. The crown of conquerors endures for ever.

Wrestlers shall finally triumph. When? In the day of judgment. They who now serve Satan and refuse to wrestle against him shall, in the end, be led in triumph by him down to hell. But to you who fight the Lord's

battles, the day is coming when you shall march in triumph with Christ into glory and shall see your enemies no more forever. When Christ, with the countless multitudes which have conquered through the blood of the Lamb, shall mount the throne of glory, what triumphant hallelujahs will fill the arch of heaven! O my brethren, where is your courage gone? Where is your ambition? Set your hearts not on mean and dying things, but on crowns and kingdoms, glorious victories and eternal triumphs. Amen.

**4. The victory is certain to the saints.** God is on the side of all true wrestlers and, if God is for them, who can prosper against them? Let this animate your soul to go forward and expect to conquer. Do you fear that you are in Satan's hands? Know that Satan is in God's hands. If you are God's soldier, then He will never suffer you to be overcome by His inveterate enemy. Has God armed you with heavenly armor to fight His battles? Oh, then He will never suffer you to be vanquished, but will fortify you with His own strength and cover your head in the day of battle! God said of Jerusalem in the time of danger, "I will be unto her a wall of fire round about her." Surely Jerusalem is safe enough now within such a wall!

The same wall is around all the saints, every one of them, and therefore they must be all invincible. If your shelter were stones, these might be battered. Were it walls of lead, these might be melted. Were your defense waters, these might be dried up. Were it an army of men, these might lose their lives. But you are guarded with such a defense as cannot be demolished. You have a wall of fire round about you for your defense and the destruction of your enemies. This fire is

terrible to God's enemies. Look at Sodom burning and the tremendous conflagration in the last day, when the heavens and the earth shall be one lake of fire. Even then, the soldiers of Christ shall be safe in their high tower. Then courage, Christians! God Almighty is a wall of fire round about you by day and by night, in life and in death.

Jesus Christ is your Captain, who is mightier than all your enemies. He has already so bruised the serpent's head that he cannot finally overcome the least of His followers. Satan, as a strong man, kept his palace in peace; but Christ, who is stronger than he, has robbed him of all his armor. Remember that the King of Zion is the Captain of your salvation, and will you not fight under the banner of such a King? When you wrestle, He stands by and will take care to bring you off with honor. Are you not His redeemed people, the children of His family, and members of His body? Then He is sure to defend and protect you in all your conflicts. He lived and died for you in order to deliver you out of the hands of your enemies; and will He now suffer them to devour you? No, He will subdue them all under your feet. Christ knows by experience what fiery darts and fierce encounters mean. He will, therefore, succor those who are tempted. He has bowels of mercy to feel for them and an arm of power to deliver them. The Lord Jesus not only feels deeply, but prays earnestly for His children when they wrestle with their grand adversary. No sooner does Satan run in upon you but Christ runs into the bosom of the Father to intercede for you. There He pleads His atoning blood and covenant engagement in your behalf, and Him the Father hears always. Oh, the love of Christ! It passes

knowledge! Trust in Him and banish fear.

The Spirit of God will strengthen you against the power of the evil spirit. He will attend you as the Spirit of wisdom and understanding to counsel and strengthen you, to bear you up, and help your infirmities. He will be with you to kindle your love to Christ and faith in His name. He will stay with you to comfort your heart and to keep down your unbelieving fears. If you are a true warrior, the Spirit of God will inspire your soul with courage, will give you patience to endure, and will comfort you with the hope of victory over sin, Satan, death, hell, and the grave. O glorious victory! It is worth striving for. Then go on, Christian, fight the good fight of faith; be faithful unto death and the Captain of your salvation will give unto you the crown of life.

You have, moreover, a host of mighty angels to guard you through the war in safety. The angels are ministering spirits, to minister unto the heirs of salvation. God gives them charge concerning the children of His grace, to be around their path by day and their beds by night. We have reason to believe that they ward off many a fiery dart aimed by Satan at the saint. What strong motives are these to fight the Lord's battles! We have God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost with legions of angels on our side. What higher honor, what greater safety can we possibly have? How should this animate our hearts for the war, and fill us with the hope of victory over all our enemies.

We may also fancy that the spirits of just men made perfect are now looking at those warriors which are yet on the bloody field of battle, in close combat with the enemy, and take deep interest in their safety and suc-

cess. We can suppose that they are now addressing the combatants in some such language as this: "Though your conflict is severe, it cannot be long. The God that gave us the victory over the very same enemies as you now encounter will assuredly crown you also with victory. Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might and you shall soon arrive where we now are, praising Him who brought us safely through and crowned us with final victory."

Remember also that all your brethren throughout the world are engaged in the same warfare with you. They are all wrestling and all in the fire of temptation. You march in the midst of a gallant army, all of them children of the King of Kings. These warriors encourage you, and you should encourage them. Every stroke and wound you give to the enemy is a joy to your fellow soldiers, and every time you are foiled is to them a grief. Then see that you play the man as a valiant warrior.

Christians, be not afraid of Satan; he is only a creature of limited power. Is he potent? Your Captain is omnipotent. Is he in armor? Christ can easily disarm him. He is a creature under a curse. Nothing weakens the power of a creature like God's curse. Let this encourage those that are under God's blessing and protection. Satan is a wounded and a conquered creature. Our Savior has conquered Satan for us, and He will subdue him shortly under our feet. You may now come and set your feet on his neck. Courage, Christians! The great Captain of your salvation has deprived the strong man of his armor, and has spoiled principalities and powers for you. It was for us Christ fought our enemies, and for us He conquered. Satan is a chained,

cursed creature. Think of this, Christians. The devils can do nothing till God permits them; no, not so much as to enter into a herd of swine. Believe this and fight, confident of victory. Our greatest enemy is wholly in the power of our best Friend and Father. Then, of whom shall we be afraid when God fights for us? Now, brethren, we see the motives and encouragements we have to fight the Lord's battles.

## PART 2

In our Christian warfare, some directions are necessary how we are to manage our spiritual combat; for we have subtle and powerful enemies to contend with. We should know these two things in particular: how the enemy assails us and how we should defend ourselves. I shall here give the best information I can. I shall endeavor to show how we are assaulted by our spiritual adversary in our infancy, in youth, in the time of conversion, in our riper years, and at the close of life. We should be acquainted with his several methods at each period, and how to resist and overcome him. May the Lord direct me how to write, and you to profit by what you read.

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### CHAPTER 1

#### *In Our Infancy*

##### **1. Satan works on the infant mind**

There can be little doubt but the devil works on sin wherever he finds it. He finds it in human nature as soon as we are in possession of that nature. We were conceived and born in sin, children of wrath, in Satan's kingdom. The dragon stands ready to devour the child as soon as it is born. "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me," must be the language of every child of man; therefore, Satan puts

in his claim and tries to corrupt them by stirring up in them all evil tempers and passions, such as peevishness, discontent, anger, pride, jealousy, revenge, etc. This he does in order to strengthen these evil tempers in their nature, to fit and prepare them for his service when they are of age to commit sins knowingly. Children have, in their very nature, the seed of every sin; and, as they grow, sin grows in them. As long as they continue out of Christ, Satan dwells in them and reigns in them.

How does this enemy deal with infants? "While he keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace." He lets them obey their evil propensities quietly, that they may grow in strength. None have so much to fear from Satan as the children of godly parents, knowing, as he does, that many prayers are offered up for these. He knows that such parents bewail the sinful nature of their children and dedicate them earnestly to their God and Savior in the ordinance of baptism. This kindles his malice; and he, doubtless, would soon destroy them, if God allowed it. However, as long as they continue dead in sin, he knows that they are within his dominion, ready to serve him until they are made partakers of Christ, at whatever age that may be. For the comfort of pious parents I would say that there can be no doubt of the salvation of those that die in infancy. How they are made partakers of Christ is an unexplained mystery; but this we know that of such is the kingdom of heaven.

## **2. The duty of parents here**

Parents have cause here for bitter lamentation, for their child is born into the world in a state of sin, a

child of wrath, having a soul defiled and polluted all over. Pious parents take this to heart, and say, "The corruptions which we have derived from our parents, we have communicated to our children; we have made our little ones, as soon as they were born, vassals to Satan!" Sin, like a black river of poison, flows from Adam through one generation after another to the end of the world.

Parents should earnestly pray for their infants. If parents have truly devoted themselves to God, He has promised to receive their children in His favor. The promise is made to them and to their children. Plead this promise in faith and say, "O God, Thou hast graciously received me into Thy covenant; I pray Thee to receive my children also and make them Thy children by adoption and grace, so that they may inherit glory with Thee forever."

Parents should devote their children early to God in baptism, the ordinance which He has appointed. If you put your children in His arms, He will most assuredly bless them. Say, "Lord, the children which Thou hast given unto us, we give to Thee again; receive and seal them for Thine own until the day of redemption." You would think it an honor, were your children born into the world heirs of a large earthly estate. How much greater honor to be born of God, heirs of the Kingdom of heaven. No wonder that Theodosius gloried more in being called a Christian than in being an emperor. How earnest, then, should all parents be with God, praying Him to make their children Christians.

### **3. The duty of children here**

When children are of age to reflect, let them bewail

the sin of their nature and say, "I am a child of Adam, born in sin and of sinful parents. I came into life in a polluted state and went astray from the womb. I have lived ever since in a condemned state. How very merciful has God been in sparing my life when I deserved to be sent into hell! I am ready to say, 'Oh, that I never had been born! Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of sin and death?'. "

Many are apt to mourn for actual transgressions and think but little of original sin, which is the source of all sin and began the controversy between God and man. Surely the horrible nature of this root and parent of all sins is not well understood. This sin cries aloud to God, day and night, for vengeance against the whole race of man, and it is of God's mercy that they are not all consumed.

Let children plead the covenant of God with their pious parents and say, "Lord, remember Thy gracious promise to our parents, of being a God to them and to their seed after them. We are their seed, for whom they offered up many prayers. Let those prayers which Thou hast entered on the records of heaven now come down in blessings on our heads, that we may be the children of Thy grace and loyal subjects of Thy kingdom."

Let baptized children seek the true baptism, the baptism of the heart, the "inward and invisible grace." Plead hard for deliverance out of Satan's kingdom wherein you were born and say, "Satan lays claim to me and pleads hard that I am one of his subjects. Lord, break my bonds and rescue me out of his slavery. Lord, I feel that I am full of the leprosy of sin, defiled and polluted in my very nature. Come, Lord Jesus, and lead

me to the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. There may I be washed, till I shall be without spot or wrinkle.”

Let the baptized keep their baptismal vows of fighting against sin, Satan, the world, and the flesh. Let them wage war against them all, under the banner of the King of Zion. Let them fight for their Master’s Kingdom. The vow in baptism is a most solemn vow, but you have often broken it. As soon as you could talk, you made a wrong use of your tongue; and, instead of fighting against your spiritual enemies, you have served them all. Repent and renew your covenant engagements with your God.

# Chapter 2

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## *Temptations in Time of Conversion*

This is the second period of Satan's assault, when we are born again of the Spirit, which generally takes place in time of youth—from twelve to thirty years of age. In handling this, I shall observe four points that show the nature of Satan's assaults, and then two that show our duties in resisting.

### *The Nature of Satan's Assaults*

#### **1. Satan's assaults at conversion**

Youth, most commonly, is the time of conversion. This is the opinion of our most eminent divines, many of whom might easily be mentioned. Some, it is true, return to God at every period of life, from childhood to old age; but generally speaking, conversion takes place in youth, while they are under instruction. Were there more catechising, and stricter watch over the youth, there would be more conversions; for this, of all others, is the most favorable period of life to impress the heart with religious sentiments. While children are incapable of judging for themselves, the parents are answerable for them and bound to instruct them in soul concerns. When children are of age to judge for themselves, the parents who have done their duty are free and the children must answer for themselves. When the son of a Jew was thirteen years old, the fa-

ther called ten Jews to witness that his son was duly taught all that the law and customs required, and that his son must, from henceforth, take care of himself in spiritual concerns; and he prayed that his son might live long and walk in the right way. When the instructed children of Christians arrive at fourteen years of age, they bring them to be confirmed by the bishop, and there to take their baptismal vow upon themselves to free their parents.

Oh, how good it is for a man to bear the yoke in his youth! It must be borne at one time or another. No time is so advantageous every way as in the days of youth. How very blessed it would be to come early into the Kingdom of Christ and enlist under the banner of the cross against all spiritual enemies. God has engaged to be the God of those who seek Him early. Satan knows all this full well, and, therefore, sets a stricter watch over the season of youth than any. He observes most narrowly all the actings of God's Spirit upon them. And, if he sees any appearance of their leaving his service and turning to fight against his kingdom, he instantly prepares for battle. He is ready with his fiery darts of ten thousand temptations to throw them down who try to throw down his kingdom. Now, my young man, what will you do? You must fight Satan, or die the death.

## **2. The occasion of Satan's first and furious assaults**

He was quiet while he could keep his house in peace; but now when the sinner begins to be uneasy about his salvation, the enemy begins to rage. The sinner was lately at some sermon, or read some good book, or heard some glad tidings about Christ—that

He is come into the world to rescue captive souls from the devil's power. He has heard the Savior proclaiming liberty to the captives and salvation to the lost and saying that if any heavy-laden sinner was weary of the devil's government, He would take him under His protection and save him from His wrath, sin's dominion, and Satan's malice. On hearing such glad tidings as these, the poor sinner is brought to consider seriously what he had best do and how to act.

Consideration is the first step towards repentance. The prodigal first came to himself before he came to his father. He considered with himself what a starving condition he was in, feeding on husks when there was plenty of bread in his father's house. "Why, then, should I perish with hunger?" said he. "I will arise and go to my father." He did so, and was kindly received. It is usual with penitents to begin with considering their misery and danger. "Am I Satan's vassal? Shall I continue in his kingdom? Is not the sweet government of Christ a thousand times better than the tyranny of Satan? And is not the reward of Jesus a thousand thousand times better than the devil's wages? What! Is not heaven better than hell? And did I not promise to fight under the banner of Christ against sin, Satan, the world, and the flesh? How is it, then, that I still serve these my enemies and suffer myself to be taken captive by Satan at his will and pleasure? What if I were to die this night, in this state? What would become of me to all eternity? Could I be content to lose God and Christ and the joys above, and to dwell with devils and reprobates and all those infernal fiends in the bottomless pit? Consider, O my soul, and think most seriously on these weighty and everlasting concerns. As you die, so

must you remain for ever and ever." When the sinner comes to have such considerations as these, the devil is alarmed, lest he should lose his prey, and makes haste to beset the soul with such temptations as the following.

### 3. Temptations from Satan himself

1. *He tries to remove pious thoughts which lead to holiness.* He says, "What are these strangers doing here? How did these intruders come into my house, to disturb my dwelling? Are these fit companions for the soul, where I bear rule? Away with them, shut them out of doors, for I cannot endure them within my territories."

2. *The enemy injects wicked thoughts into men's minds instead of good.* These are the darts which he throws into the soul at pleasure. He constantly employs the mind as far as he can. He strives to keep the soul from having one thought of heaven or of hell from one end of the week to the other. He finds him constant employ. The sinner grinds; and he is filling the hopper that the mill may not stand still. He is with the sinner as soon as he awakes in the morning and injects evil into his heart throughout the day; and at night, like a careful jailer, locks him up and keeps him from all good thoughts.

Before I proceed, I shall propose three questions.

QUESTION 1. Does Satan know our thoughts?

ANSWER. I answer, as long as they are simply the inward thoughts of our hearts, he cannot know them. "Thou, Lord, only knowest the hearts of the children of men," 2 Chronicles 6:30. But we too commonly reveal our inmost thoughts to the enemy by the workings

of some of the passions and dispositions of the soul or body, or both.

QUESTION 2. Can Satan keep good thoughts from entering into our minds?

ANSWER. All the unregenerate are in his kingdom and under his control and dominion. "he worketh in the children of disobedience, and leads them captive at his will." He so fills their hearts with evil thoughts that no good thought has room to enter. He does the same with the regenerate as far as he can. He crowds their minds with worldly cares and anxieties. He drives the mind as much as he possibly can from the great concern, and so keeps out good thoughts which, otherwise, would fill the soul all the day. But when the Christian sets about his proper work in good earnest, Satan cannot keep the believing heart from being employed in holy and spiritual concerns. The Christian's heart ascends in spite of the devil's efforts to keep it down.

QUESTION 3. Can Satan inject evil thoughts into our hearts?

ANSWER. There can be no doubt but he instills all manner of wicked thoughts into the minds of his own children. He put it in the heart of Judas to betray his Master and filled the hearts of Ananias and Sapphira to lie unto the Holy Ghost. And so he still fills the hearts of wicked men with multitudes of evil thoughts and sinful passions, so that God is not in all their thoughts. He does not have the hearts of the righteous at command like the hearts of the wicked; yet he greatly ensnares them and draws their minds from God, by a thousand stratagems. He works chiefly on their imaginations, painting earthly objects in the most

alluring form. As he tempted Christ on the mount with the glory of the world, so, by deceiving the fancy, he throws his fiery darts into us. We have now seen how Satan assaults by himself.

#### **4. Temptations from Satan through means**

When the sinner is awakened to see his danger and begins to seek salvation, the god of this world employs three very powerful agents to prevent him from escaping out of his dominion: evil men, an evil world, and sinful flesh.

1. *Evil men.* Carnal and unbelieving men try and strive hard to keep young converts from leaving them to go after Christ. They try at first to allure them by enticements, flatteries, and promises; they cast before them golden apples to deceive the senses and gratify the appetite. If all this fails, they threaten them with all sorts of sufferings, with poverty, shame, disgrace, and everything terrible to nature. In this way, they prevail on some to make shipwreck of their faith and go back. But they who shall be saved go forward in the way everlasting, till they arrive in eternal glory.

2. *An evil world.* The love of the world and of earthly pleasures fills the heart of man until grace enters in. And when holy thoughts and heavenly affections enter into the heart, the indwelling corruptions cry, "What strangers are these that disturb our dwelling? We have possessed this heart for many years, and must we now be turned out to make room for these invaders?" Now, the world strives hard to keep the soul in the service of sin and promises him riches, honors, and pleasures, if he continues but quiet. It threatens him with all sorts of sufferings if he persists in his resolution to run the

heavenly race. "Stay," says the world, "in my service, and I will promote you unto great honor"; or, "If you depart, I will follow you with all the torments I can heap upon you."

"Oh," says the Christian, "if I continue the servant of this world, what will become of my soul in the other world?"

Now, this evil world marches against him with all its forces, and cries, "Come afflictions, come shame, come desertions, and set upon him furiously, and compel him to serve his old master. If he goes in the ways of holiness and righteousness, be you like thorns and briars under his feet, to torment him, and fill his soul with vexations, griefs, and fears." Such is the conduct of the world towards young converts.

3. *The sinful flesh.* This is, of all others, the most powerful instrument that the prince of darkness employs to keep the awakened sinner in his service. Other instruments can only work upon us, but this works within us, and is always with us; it is ourselves. "Flesh" here means our corrupt nature which has defiled both body and soul, being mixed with the whole man—as darkness at the dawn of day is mixed with the light. This corrupt nature is always prone to sin and ready to entertain all temptations which promise to gratify the lusts of the flesh. This enemy is called the old man; the sin which dwells in us; the old Adam; the earthly, the carnal, the natural man; the law of our members and the lusts of the flesh which war against the soul. As Satan is the father, so the flesh is the mother of sin which, by receiving Satan's temptations into a fruitful womb, conceives and brings forth children in abundance and nourishes them.

We may fancy that we hear the flesh, as the main agent of Satan, addressing the soul in some such language as this: "What manner of communication is this, which you have with Christ my enemy? Are godly thoughts suitable to dwell with me? Was I not born and brought up with you? And will you entertain those that would destroy me? You must know that carnality and spirituality cannot agree in the same soul. If the spirit lives, I die; if the spirit thrives, I perish. And am I not nearer and dearer to you than the spirit? Was I not with you in the womb and have I not lived with you ever since? And have I not studied to gratify you with all carnal pleasures and delights? And will you, after all, turn your back on the old man, your constant friend?"

If you offer to fight against him, he will summon legions of lusts to throw out these pious thoughts. These, then, are the agents which the devil employs in fighting against the soul: evil men, an evil world, and the sinful flesh.

### *Our Duties in Resisting*

#### **1. Christian duties when Satan himself tempts**

1. *In order to withstand and conquer Satan's assaults, cultivate pious thoughts.* Though they are new things to you, yet nothing is more useful to the soul. Holy thoughts are precious things. They are God's messengers. They come from God and lead to God again. Wherever they are entertained, they bestow exceedingly great rewards. Therefore, cherish these motions of the Spirit and know that they come from heaven to

benefit your soul. The very end of pious thoughts is to wean your heart from the earth and fix your affections on everlasting things. Then hold them fast till they accomplish their work.

2. *Next, complain to God of the enemy's stratagems to keep pious thoughts out of your heart.* Tell God in prayer that His enemy and yours has gotten possession of your fancy and affections and all the outer rooms that lead to the privy chamber of your heart; that he has barred and bolted the doors so fast that you cannot open to any pious thoughts. Oh, the tyranny of Satan where he has the dominion!

3. *Cry to God, also, against the treachery and wickedness of your own heart.* Complain of its backwardness to entertain any holy thoughts, and say, "If they offer themselves to me, I join Satan to drive them away; and, when I try to lift up my soul in holy meditation, my fancy and imagination soon turn me aside to some vanity. Woe is me, that my nature is this vile! Come, Lord, and open the door of my heart for holy and pious thoughts. Lord, Thou canst dispossess Satan and fill my heart with Thyself. I pray Thee to subdue my soul to Thyself."

4. *Dread all wicked thoughts.* Does Satan fill your heart with proud, unclean, and unbelieving thoughts? Show your abhorrence of them and reprove your soul for holding any conference with them. Crush them early at their first rising. If you begin to give way to unhallowed thoughts, you may soon be led far from God and sink deep in guilt and misery. Therefore, "watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."

## 2. Duties when Satan tempts by others

1. *Does the enemy tempt you with the world's allurements?* Remember that the Lord said to you, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." God and an evil world are at such enmity that we cannot serve both. You cannot serve God and mammon. We may here appeal to your consciences: "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." If you please the world, you wage war against heaven. Consider this, you who forget God!

Your baptismal vow binds you to renounce the world with all its pomps and vanities. You have there promised to fight against them under the banner of Christ, and shall you backslide from your profession and side with your enemies against your God? If so, your latter end will be worse than the beginning.

See how deceitful and changeable the world is. All is vanity. All things are on the wing and passing away. Where you expected your highest enjoyment, you met your bitterest disappointment and sorrow. When Satan paints the world full of glory, many fall down and worship it. But, after all, what is the world? It is a reed to lean on and a shadow to embrace. Ahithophel with his policy, Haman with his pomp, Nebuchadnezzar with his pleasures, and Dives with his riches, all soon found the world giving way under their feet and the earth opening its mouth to swallow them up. The world first deceived and ensnared them, then forsook them, and at last punished them. What a wicked world, loaded with treacheries! It hates them that love it, deceives them that trust it, afflicts them that serve it, reproaches

them that honor it, and ruins them that follow it. It is reported of a hermit that he saw the whole world filled with nets, and devils standing by to manage them. Go over the whole world, behold countries, view provinces, look into cities, hearken at doors, see what is done in halls, in palaces, and in private houses. Are not the devil's snares in every corner? Justice is sold, shame is lost, truth is wrested, and right is despised. What lying, what slandering, what deceiving is there everywhere! The innocent are condemned, the guilty are acquitted, the wicked advanced, the virtuous oppressed. Pride, envy, perjury, and vanity—these are the things that bear rule in every land, town and country.

Ah! poor soul, does the world hinder you from changing your Master and condition? Does it tell you of riches, honors, and pleasures? Say then, with Christ, "What will it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Or does it try to frighten you with afflictions, persecutions and torments? Say then with the Apostle that the afflictions of time are not to be compared with the glory of eternity. Or, if all this will not stop the mouth of the world, consider the enmity of the world against Christ, and the vow you have made of fighting for Christ against the world. Consider also your obligation to Christ and your danger from the world. Should all this fail to arm your soul against your temptations, consider what the world is—how vain, wicked, and delusive—and say to it, "Away, world! For the time is short, and my salvation is in danger."

2. *Does the enemy tempt you through the flesh?* Remember that the Lord commands you to mortify the flesh. He says to you, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts

thereof.” Again, “Put off . . . the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.” Yea, “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence.”

The flesh is a worse enemy than the devil himself. Never could the devil hurt us, if this inbred enemy did not betray us into his hands. The sinful flesh is the root, the fountain, and the origin of other sins. “When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin.” Were there no fire in our wood, the devil’s breath could never kindle a flame in our souls or bodies.

We must weaken the flesh by abating the fuel that feeds its fire. “Make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.” We must stop the passages through which the flesh is nourished. As sin is seated in every part of the soul and body, we must guard every part of both. Keep from the body drunkenness, covetousness, and gluttony. Keep from the mind vain thoughts and pernicious errors. Keep from the memory the remembrance of sinful pleasures, unless it is to repent of them.

As we must weaken the flesh, so we must also watch over it. Though we have obtained the victory in many conflicts, yet it is still plotting against us. Then guard the senses, in particular, for they are the gates of the soul. Make a covenant with your eyes and turn them away from beholding vanity. Put a knife to your throat, if you are a man given to appetite. Take heed to your ways, that you do not sin with your tongue. And “let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may benefit the hearers.”

The heart is, of all foes, the most subtle and crafty. "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." Then "keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." Indeed, the heart is the chief monarch of this little world, man, which rules and commands all other parts. It is the main wheel of the machine which sets all the rest of the wheels going. It is the fountain of all our thoughts, words, and actions. As the heart is, so is the whole man. "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil."

Ah, poor soul, does the flesh hinder you from turning to Christ for salvation? Does it plead nearness and dearness to you, and that it has been your close companion from the womb? Does it remind you of the pleasures and delights it has provided for you? Then tell the flesh of the evils which it has produced. Tell it that there were destructive hooks under the baits of pleasures and delights it speaks of. Say, "Those pleasures met me with drops of honey and departed after giving me cups of gall." The pleasures of the flesh terminate in death and damnation. "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die." Why, then, should I gratify the flesh to my own ruin? Always keep in mind that God has ordered you to mortify the flesh, and no enemy is as dangerous as that which lives in your own bosom. You must subdue it or it will lead you to the chambers of death. For, "when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

In answer to all these things, do you say, "I am an unregenerate sinner"? Then, where is the use of giving these counsels to a man dead in trespasses and sin? But are you not a rational creature? Then make proper use of the powers you possess. I appeal to your understanding and conscience. Does not the gospel proclaim free and full salvation to every one that will cordially accept it and follow Christ? You answer, "Yes, but my heart is so hard and unbelieving that I cannot do these things!" Then fall down before God and cry earnestly unto Him to create in you a new heart and renew a right spirit within you and, while you are praying, expect an answer of grace; for He is a God that hears prayer and delights in mercy. All the inability to turn from sin to Christ which you plead is nothing more than your own unwillingness. When you are made willing, your difficulties in becoming a real Christian are all removed.

Argue this important business with yourself as a rational being and say, "My heart, why do you not leave all things to go after Christ in the way of holiness to heaven? Why do you not embrace the salvation of God which is freely offered to you, and turn from sin to God?" Upon inquiring, you will soon find that nothing stands between your soul and salvation but your love of sin, aversion to holiness, and unwillingness to be a Christian and a man of God. Now, then, does not your reason tell you that you ought to go to God in prayer and cry to Him for a new heart, that you may be made willing to come into the way of life and be forever saved?

# Chapter 3

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## *Further Assaults of Satan*

If the enemy is at first foiled, and the soul resolved to go on, the Holy Spirit usually leads him on by these steps: (1.) A sight of sin; (2.) A sense of misery; (3.) Sorrow for sin; (4.) Seeking for comfort; (5.) A sight of Christ; (6.) Desire after Christ; (7.) Relying on Christ; (8.) Obedience to Christ. Satan counteracts him in every step and strives to keep the soul in his power. I shall endeavor to describe his modes of assaults, and the soul's duties.

### **1. Of Satan's assaults upon our sight of sin**

1. *No sooner has the Holy Ghost opened the eyes of the soul to see its sin, but Satan comes on with his fiery darts.* Sometimes he makes sin little, and so prevails on the soul to sin on. Sinners are loath to hear the worst of themselves and, therefore, Satan furnishes them with figleaves to cover themselves. He teaches them to say, "Surely, our sins are not great; we are not so bad as many, and we have some good. If we do sin a little, God is merciful; therefore, we have hope." Thus, they stifle the influences of the Spirit of God. The enemy has very great enmity against the first work of grace on the heart, and takes the greatest pains to blind the eyes of men and divert their minds from spiritual concerns. It is the policy of Satan to resist strongly the first work

of Christ on the soul. He tries to make sin to appear very little, if any sin at all.

2. *Sometimes he makes sin appear very great.* When he sees the soul dejected on account of offenses, then Satan comes in and tells him that they are so great that they cannot be pardoned. "Think," says he, "of the evil nature of sin, the number and greatness of those which you have committed. You have sinned against light and convictions, against vows and conscience. By so doing, you have dishonored God, grieved your brethren, and brought disgrace on the gospel. How then can you have any hope of forgiveness?" He now turns to be an angel of light, shows to the soul the evil and danger of sin, and says, "Oh, you wretch! What have you done? What sins are these that cry to heaven for vengeance on you? What a wretched life you have spent on the earth! What grievous and crying sins you stand guilty of!"

### **The duties that concern us now**

1. *The nature of the temptation points out the duty.* When the adversary tries to make you believe that your sins are little, tell him that no sins are little because they are against an infinite God. "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned and done this evil in Thy sight." All sins, however little they may appear to us, are against the great and holy God. No sin is so little but it deserves eternal death. "The wages of sin is death." The greater the sin, the greater the punishment; but the least sin deserves eternal punishment. Every sin is a soul-killing poison. We may see this in the sin of Adam. His one sin destroyed a world. All that ever lived, or shall live to the end of the world, are polluted with it.

Do we not find that every sin which the soul delights in sours all the soul and defiles the whole man? It not only corrupts all his actions and dealings in worldly concerns, but pollutes all his spiritual services and turns his reading and praying into abomination.

The less the sin, the greater our folly to commit it. By sinning against heaven, we put on one side of the scale the glory of God, the blood of Christ, the joys of heaven, the eternal life of an immortal soul; and, on the other side of the scale we put some momentary pleasure, worldly goods, fleshly lust, and sensual vanity. In preferring the latter, we discover our extreme folly and depravity. "For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" What folly do we then discover when we sell our souls for a pin, a point, a trifle, a vanity; for the enjoyment of what we call "a little sin"! Speak no more of sin as little, if we prefer it before the great things of God—Christ, heaven, and salvation. What prodigious madness is such conduct!

2. *When Satan tells you that your sins are too great to be pardoned, tell him that some of the very greatest sinners have been pardoned and saved.* Not a few idolaters, murderers, and blasphemers have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, none should despair of mercy when they look to Jesus and rest on the merits of his atoning blood and righteousness.

It is as easy with God to forgive the greatest sinners as the least transgressors. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." And, "Let the wicked forsake his sins and let him return to

the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him, for He will abundantly pardon." Are your sins high as heaven? The mercies of God are above the heavens. As God is infinite, so are His pardoning mercies and forgiveness. Your greatest sins are only the sins of man, but the mercies of the gospel are the mercies of an infinite being. Then, sinner, you may confidently venture your soul's salvation on the merits of the cross of Christ and the love of God.

3. *The Lord calls all sinners, especially those that are weary of sin.* "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Is not this enough to keep your heart from sinking? Remember Bartimaeus, the blind man, sitting by the wayside. "Be of good comfort, arise, the Master calleth thee." So He calls you. Let this cheer your heart. Arise and come to Him, and you shall find rest for your soul. Poor soul, you complain that your sins are great; they may be so, but the mercies of God and the merits of Christ are far greater. Jesus said, "Come to Me, and I will take your cares, and you shall have My comforts. Give Me your sins and take My righteousness. What would you have more than this, to give you rest?"

4. *Has the Holy Ghost given you to see and feel your sins very great?* They are so, yet not greater than God is ready to forgive, when you repent. It is the father of lies that tells you they cannot be pardoned because they are so great. Were they ten thousand times greater than they are, yet are they as nothing to what the grace of God can pardon and the blood of Christ can wash away. Do not limit the goodwill or power of God, when both are infinite. Have no low thoughts of the love of Christ, which passes understanding. Turn to Him and

lay hold on His offered salvation, and He will abundantly pardon. What can possibly exceed this?

5. *But how shall I know whether Satan or the Holy Spirit speaks to me, for both tell me that my sins are very great?* I answer, if they degrade the goodness, love, and mercy of God, you may know that this is of the evil spirit. On the contrary, when the Holy Spirit speaks, He recommends Christ, and allures sinners to embrace Him and accept the grace which the gospel brings. Whatever sinks Christ in your esteem, it is not of God but the enemy. Should any spirit tell your soul that there is mercy with the Lord, but not sufficient to pardon your sins and save such a sinner as you are, he is a liar; bid him to depart, his speech betrays him.

## **2. Assaults under sense of misery**

1. *When the Holy Spirit convinces us of sin, we have a sense of misery.* Paul and the jailer trembled. When a man sees imminent danger near him, he naturally trembles. The Spirit keeps the souls he designs for heaven under a deep sense of sin, that they may dread the ways of sin. And this dread of sin makes the renewed soul cry out, "Oh, wretched man that I am! Oh, that I had never been born!"

Now Satan steps in and tries, first, to divert the soul from thinking of his danger, and then to allay his fears with worldly comforts and false peace. Satan has his comforts to offer, though they are false, momentary, and ruinous. If this way of temptation fails, the enemy changes his mode of attack. He works on our fears, and makes them deeper than the Holy Ghost intended. When the flesh is raw, he probes it and irritates it. He now tells the weeping sinner of God's eter-

nal wrath and of the fire that is never quenched; and, thus, he sinks the soul into deeper dread and fears than God the Spirit intended. The enemy so fills the soul with horror as to make him unfit for all religious duties. When God works fear in the sinner in order to conversion and salvation, the enemy fills his soul with tormenting fears, with the view of driving him to despair.

2. *It is a question how Satan can work this fear on the conscience.* It must be in some such way as this—he aggravates the wounds which the Holy Spirit has made till they become intolerable. He brings home to the conscience of the trembling sinner all the threatenings of the Word of God against hypocrites and self-deluded men, and discharges them all with much violence against the poor, wounded, and doubting soul. His grand stratagem is to keep the afflicted soul from looking at Christ. He fastens the attention of the convinced sinner so fixedly on his wounds and putrefying sores that he cannot look on the great Physician and the all-healing remedy which the gospel brings. Thus does the enemy deal with deeply-wounded souls, keeping them as much in the dark as he can. He darkens their sky with clouds, fogs, mists, and vapors so that they may not see the sun; for he delights to make the children of light to walk in darkness and to torment those whom he is not suffered to destroy.

3. *The grand adversary tries hard to drive those that have a deep sense of sin into dark despair of eternal life.* He speaks in some such horrid language as this: “Vile wretch, would you now turn to God in hopes of mercy and grace? What hope can you have so late as this? And are not your sins without number, and of the most

heinous nature? And have you not continued in your rebellion a very long time? How, then, can you ever be pardoned? Besides, has not Christ often called on you to repent and turn, but you refused. Has He not graciously offered Himself to you, and you said, 'He shall not reign over me.' And have you not been my servant all your days till now, and can you, after all, expect to be numbered with the righteous? Never look for this; the day of salvation is gone by, the acceptable time is past and never, never can be recalled. You may, with Esau, seek with tears your forfeited inheritance, which never can be recovered. What can you now look for as your just reward but the anger of the Almighty, tremendous judgments and endless torments? Do not, then, flatter yourself with vain hopes of mercy, but rather expect to be forever lost." Thus, Satan tries hard to drive convinced sinners into despair and lay violent hands on themselves, but the Lord comes to their help in this time of need.

### **The Christian's duty in this case**

1. *Your defense must meet the enemy's attack in every point.* Would he drive you to despair by persuading you that your sins are too great to be pardoned? Rebuke him by saying that to despair of mercy would be a greater sin than all the rest. Tell him that there is no room for despair while the door of mercy is open and salvation offered in the gospel. Other sins are against the law, but this would be against the whole gospel of grace. Other sins are against the justice of God, but this would be against His love, mercy, and grace. Satan would be glad to drive you to commit such a sin as would be against all the attributes of God at once. All

other sins may be carried away and buried in oblivion, but despair is a rejection of pardoning mercy. Judas sinned more grievously by despairing of mercy than by betraying his Master. Cain sinned more by thinking his sins to be more than God could pardon than by killing his brother. Despair is the sin of hell.

2. *Does the enemy try to frighten you with the rigid justice of Jehovah?* Tell him that justice and mercy have met in the death of Christ and embraced each other. God can be just and yet save the sinner. Our God is both righteous and gracious.

If the enemy asks, "Can God save such a transgressor as you are?" say, "Yes, and He will betroth me in righteousness as well as in mercy, for He offers to marry me in Christ, where all His attributes harmonize gloriously." Let sinners, then, keep an eye on God's justice to keep them from presumption, and on His mercy to save them from despair. Christ has paid your whole debt; and when you come to live on Christ by faith, divine justice cannot condemn you. Then plead the merits of the death of Christ and embrace His offered pardons. Come, then, poor sinner who borders on despair, see and know that divine justice is your friend when you rely on Christ for pardon and peace. Who shall lay anything to your charge when you take refuge in the death of Christ? There is now no condemnation, for God has pardoned you.

3. *Does the enemy frighten you with the holy law because you have so often transgressed it?* The law requires of us absolute perfection and will never justify us without it. But we have sinned and, therefore, can never be justified by our own merits and obedience. "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified." Christ has satis-

fied and fulfilled the law for man and wrought out a perfect righteousness for us; and, in order to be saved, we must believe in Him for righteousness. The way of salvation is to go out of ourselves and to rely on the active and passive obedience of the Son of God, who is the Lord our righteousness. Though we can never be justified before God by any obedience that we now can render unto the holy and perfect law of Jehovah, yet the law must ever be our rule of conduct, for we can never be happy in any other way but by running in the way of His commandments, and we can never glorify God but by doing His will.

4. *Does the enemy torment your soul with a dread of hell?* If he holds you over hell, he cannot send you into hell. When he tells you that you deserve hell, remember that heaven is God's gift. Tell Satan to his face that you will never be his companion in torments when Christ is offering you a kingdom. Tell him, also, that while you have God for your Savior, all the devils in hell cannot send you there nor keep you out of heaven. In dark times, Satan will try to drive you into despair; but hope in God, for you shall yet enjoy the light of His countenance. We are troubled on every side, but not in despair.

5. *Does the enemy tempt you with self-murder?* Be aware that this is by no means an uncommon temptation from the devil. Many of God's people in every age of the world have been harassed and tormented with it. Many that are now in heaven, far out of the reach of temptation, have been exercised with this bitter trial while on the earth. Nay, our Lord and Savior Himself drank of this bitter cup, when Satan would persuade Him to cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the

temple. What wonder, then, if His servants are made to taste of this bitter cup as well as their Lord and Master? Nervous people are more harassed than any other with this black temptation of self-murder and blasphemy; but, black as the temptation is, they may smile at it when they take shelter in the cleft—the wounds of Christ.

We see the strongest proofs of Satan's malice and impudence when he tempts the Redeemer of the world and the redeemed with the most horrid of all sins. For this sin is against law and gospel, against God and man, and against conscience and all happiness. It is, of all others, the strongest mark of Satan's malice against God and man.

Christian, if Satan should ever assault your soul with this trial and provoke you to commit this greatest of all sins, tell him instantly, "Get thee behind me, Satan. Go and bear your own torments without tempting me to come and share your misery." When Satan tempts to such a fearful act as self-murder, never parley with these hellish suggestions, for you cannot but know whose voice you now hear. Then say in a moment, "Away, Satan." If ever your soul is again assaulted with any black temptations of a murderous or blasphemous kind, you must know that these come from the prince of darkness, and can come from no other quarter. Then what have you to do with them? Take no more notice of them than of your midnight dreams, and they will soon vanish away. Go on with your own proper work and you will see that Satan goes on with his. The less you mind him, the sooner you will get rid of him.

6. *We have said enough to show the difference between the Holy Spirit's and the evil spirit's operations on our minds,*

*though each of them may bring us into bondage.* But there is this material difference. Where the Holy Spirit works conviction of sin, He inspires hope in the soul; but the evil spirit excludes all hopes and drives the soul, if he can, to utter despair of mercy.

At times, the convinced sinner is surrounded with tremendous darkness, filled with horror, and knows not where to go or what to do. Do this—go to Jesus, view His cross and His redeeming love. Lay hold on some of His exceeding great and precious promises, such as these: “Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth. Come unto me, all that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. He that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.” If you take this step, hope will soon dawn on your soul, to remove the darkness and lead thereon to the light of life and the liberty which is in Christ Jesus.

### **3. Satan’s assaults when we sorrow for sin**

The next work of the Holy Spirit is to cause sorrow for sin, to take away the stony heart, and to give us a heart of flesh—that is, a soft and tender heart. The Spirit of God works on the affections and melts them into godly sorrow for sin, which is all one with a heart of flesh.

Satan counteracts this work of the Spirit and strives with all his might to keep the heart in a stubborn, hardened state. He well knows that, if the soul of a poor sinner is bruised and made to feel the burden of sin, he will not stay long in his dominion. When he sees the tears of penitence and godly sorrow flowing down, he knows that a sinner, in such a state, will soon fly into the bosom of Jesus Christ, bleeding upon the

cross; and that he will forever lose his interest in that soul. He, therefore, labors to keep that man from mourning for sin. Satan is a determined enemy to true sorrow for sin, and does all in his power to keep every sinner from godly sorrow and repentance.

If the heart begins to be wrought upon by the Word, he raises all possible opposition to his yielding to the power of the Word. And, oh, the backwardness of sinners to depart from the enemy's kingdom! They long withstand the gospel of God and the strivings of His Spirit. They can make light of all the means used to deliver them from hell and conduct them to the land of life and the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Oh, the hardness of men's hearts! What difficulty do ministers find to prick a stony heart to the quick, and make a heart of flint to weep and tremble! Here God must put forth His strength and influence, or it never will be done.

If the enemy can no longer keep sinners from sorrowing for sin, he will change his mode of attack. He will try to swallow them up with overmuch sorrow and, by that means, disqualify them for true repentance, as in the case of the incestuous Corinthian. This is one of Satan's depths. While the hearts of sinners are quite hard, he tries to persuade them that there is no occasion at all for tears of repentance; but when godly sorrow is found in the afflicted soul, Satan tells him that he can never weep enough to be pardoned. When the floodgates of the heart are once opened, he wants to drown the soul in sorrow so that it despairs of God's mercy. Oh, the cruel policy and cursed contradiction of our grand adversary! At one time he tells us that our tears are more in number than our transgressions; at

an other time, that our sorrow is a mere nothing to our offenses, that our sins are numerous and our tears few. He wars with us with a keen two-edged sword. We need the heavenly armor.

**The soul's duties under this assault**

1. *Does the enemy persuade you not to sorrow for sin?* There is cause enough for your heart to weep, for the heart is the fountain of all filthy thoughts, bad passions, polluting speeches, and rebellious actions. There is, therefore, every reason why this heart should be the fountain of godly sorrow, of penitential tears, of mourning, lamenting, and bewailing over all your sins.

There is another cause for godly sorrow for sin: your sins have crucified the Lord of glory and made the Savior bleed to death on the cross of Calvary. Shall the heart of the Son of God bleed to death for your sins, and shall your own heart not weep bitterly, mourn, and lament over the sins of your heart and life? This is another reason for a broken heart. If it be not softened and melted by the ministry of the gospel of God, it will, and must hereafter, be filled with horror that would burst a thousand hearts. Christ said to those who heard the words of eternal life in vain, "Woe to you who laugh now, for ye shall weep." There is weeping of despair in hell; yes, weeping and gnashing of teeth. You must, therefore, either have godly sorrow in time, or have intolerable anguish and weeping through all eternity.

You can weep bitterly for outward troubles, for losses, crosses, disappointments, and death of friends. And is not sin far more grievous than any of these? If all outward miseries require one tear, that least sin of

the soul may justly challenge a whole torrent. If the death of your friend or your relative deserves one sigh, well may the death of your soul challenge the last drop of your heart's blood.

There is the greatest advantage in having a broken heart; it has an interest in all the merits of Christ, the promises of life, and the pleasures of heaven. A broken and a contrite heart shall have God to dwell in it. "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble."

The Lord has appointed two special means for the softening of the heart: the Word of God and prayer. The law of God is a hammer to break the heart of stone, by convincing of sin and proclaiming its terrors against all ungodliness. The gospel of God is a fire that came down from heaven to melt the sinner's heart by revealing to him the mercy of the Most High. When the heart is truly melted by the fire of divine love, the saved sinner exclaims with admiration, "Has the great God of heaven and earth sent Christ into the world to save sinners? And has He passed by all the fallen angels and millions of fallen men, and come to me, the most unworthy of all? My debt of gratitude is infinite and shall endure forever."

Going to God in prayer is the other means to break and melt the heart. You can turn His promises into prayers. The Lord has said, "I will take away their stony hearts, and I will give them hearts of flesh." Entreat Him, for the sake of His Son, to make good this promise to your soul. Cry unto Him, "Come, Lord Jesus, break and melt this heart of mine; whatever I

suffer, probe and lance my heart to the quick, rather than suffering my soul to perish.”

2. *Or does the enemy try to swallow up your heart with overmuch sorrow?* This is more usual with God’s people. Many a godly soul has complained, “My sins are enormously great, and yet my sorrow is very slight and bears no proportion to my offenses; and I dare not yet apply the promises of mercy to myself. Nor can I be persuaded that Christ Jesus belongs to me. I must feel deeper grief and sorrow of heart before I can lay hold on the promises.” Oh, that any should thus torment their own soul and expose themselves to Satan’s horrible injections and cruel temptations! Away with your objections. Venture your soul on the gracious Savior.

It is not the greatness, but the truth of your sorrow for sin that God requires. Satan tells you, “Your sins are great and your sorrow little, there is no proportion between them.” True, nor is it possible that the sorrow of a finite being can bear any proportion to the guilt of sinning against an infinite God. Were your sorrows ever so great, and were they to last forever, they would not satisfy for one transgression of the holy law. All that a lost sinner has to do is to look to Jesus and accept His offered salvation. When the Jews were pricked in their hearts, Peter would not suffer their wounds long to bleed, but applied the healing balm of the gospel and said to them, “Believe on the Lord Jesus.” When you weep in secret, under a sense of condemnation, are you sincere? If not, the gospel cannot relieve you. But if your sorrow is sincere and true, be of good cheer, the Master calls you.

*Remarks*

1. Consider who it is that calls you. It is He that came into the world to bruise the serpent's head. He is Immanuel, God in the flesh; He is the Savior of the world; One that has all power in heaven and earth; One almighty to save. This is the Person that cries now from the throne of heaven, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved. Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Do you say to Him, "I am a grievous sinner?" He says to you that His name is Jesus, who came to save you from your sins, and that He is ready to save to the uttermost all that come to God by Him. With what bowels of mercies does the Lord Jesus pity your miserable condition as a ruined sinner! With what affection and earnestness does He call on you to come to Him, that you may have life! He begs and prays, yea, beseeches you to come to Him for pardon and salvation. Nothing now is lacking but faith to believe what He says to you, and nothing but unbelief keeps you away. But how can you keep away when the meek and lowly Jesus entreats and beseeches you—by all the tears He has shed for you in the days of His flesh, by all the bitter agonies of Gethsemane, and the blood He has shed on Calvary's cross—to come and rest your weary soul on the bosom of His love?

2. Consider next whom He calls. Is it not those who are weary and heavy laden? Is it not those who mourn and groan under the weight of sin? And do not all the invitations and promises of the Gospel belong to those that mourn in Zion? Mourners in Zion, who are meek and lowly of heart, are the very people with whom the most high God delights to dwell. The true mourners

shall not always weep, for they who sow in tears shall reap in joy. Christ will, in due time, wipe all tears from their eyes. He said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor, and He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted." The harvest shall follow the seed time; they who weep now shall laugh.

Indeed, sorrow for sin gives no interest in Christ; faith alone unites the soul to Him. Yet no men will come to the Savior till they feel their need of Him and know they must perish without Him. None will ever come to Christ for salvation till they feel sin a burden and bondage. Were a man, under a heavy load in a dark night, to hear a person passing by, he would earnestly call for help; so the soul, under the painful load of sin, will call to Jesus when He passes by. He runs to the Word of God for direction how to act and where to go. When sinners act so, they shall soon hear the voice of Jesus crying, "Come to Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

3. Consider lastly, for what end does He call you? Is it not to take possession of Christ and all the privileges of His Kingdom? Is it not that we may have fellowship with the Father and with the Son? Is it not that we may have reconciliation with God and sweet communion with our Lord and Savior? Were Jesus to say to you, "Come with Me to the garden to endure bitter sorrow and sufferings," would you not go? How much more when He invites you to come to Him to get rid of the burden of sin, that you may find rest for your soul. If suffering with Christ is an honor, how much more to reign with Him? If, indeed, you come to Jesus, you shall have your pardon now and, at last, the crown of

life and joy that never ends. Ah, poor soul, why do you weep? Why not wipe away your tears and, like Thomas, turn to Jesus and say, “My Lord and my God”?

Do you ask, “When shall I sorrow enough to receive comfort?” When you sorrow in sincerity and truth; when the soul is weary of the fetters of sin more than of the suffering for sin. While you cry louder, “Oh, my grief!” than “Oh, my guilt!” you are not prepared to receive comfort. If you cry louder for comfort than for grace, your soul is in a bad state. Then say, “Lord, if my heart is not sufficiently broken, break it still more. If my wounds are not thoroughly searched, lance them still deeper. If there is any wickedness in me, search me, Lord, and try me till my heart is right with Thee. If I grow proud, turn Thy grace into lasciviousness, and despise my weaker brethren, then let me fast longer from comfort.” Man must come to this humble frame of mind before he is fit to enjoy much comfort. While the sinner is self-confident and froward, his will is not yet properly subdued, and he may expect more stripes and deeper sufferings. “Humble yourselves therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.”

#### **4. Assaults when seeking for comforts**

The soul sorrowing for sin is commanded to seek for comfort. And, for that purpose, the Lord said to His ministers, “Comfort ye, comfort ye My people.” Satan is aware of this and, in order to prevent it, coins false comforts of his own. He says, “Come, soul, I see that nothing but comfort will satisfy you. Here is plenty of comfort ready for you. Your old companions stand at the door, go and join them in their mirth and drive

away your dumps and melancholy fits. They now cry, 'Come, friend, let us enjoy the good things of this world. Let us fill ourselves with wine till our hearts dance for joy. Let none of us go without our full share of all sorts of pleasure.' "

If the soul objects to all this and says, "These pleasures are carnal, but my sorrow is spiritual," then Satan says, "Go to the Word, to prayer, and other duties; yes, go to your religious duties, and rest in them. You need not go farther."

Thus, the enemy tempts the soul to drown his sorrow in worldly pleasures. If he fails to gain his point in this way, he tries to persuade the soul to rest in duties and means of grace and never go to Christ. He cares not where the soul has comfort if he rests short of Christ, well knowing that the sinner can neither be safe nor happy but by resting on Christ the Savior. When the soul flees to Jesus, he is forever delivered from the dominion of Satan and introduced into the land of life and the paradise of grace. When the soul rejects carnal comforts and refuses to rest in religious duties, saying, "None but Christ, give me Christ, or I die," then is Satan full of rage and uses all his wit in devising some secret plots, some conceited snares to entangle the sinner and keep him still in a state of misery, to make him sick of religion.

### **The soul's wrestling against these assaults**

1. *It is not so much your loose companions that are your tempters to evil as much as it is the devil in and by them.* When Peter tried to persuade his Master to avoid sufferings, Christ rebuked the evil spirit that spoke in Peter and said, "Get thee behind Me, Satan." Peter was

set to work by Satan; therefore, Christ calls him by the name of Satan. Those wicked men who propose carnal comforts as a cure for spiritual wounds are instruments in the hand of Satan.

The wounded soul who is seeking for comfort should never go for advice to unregenerate men. This is not God's appointed way. Alas! Such men will think you mad, for they do not know what trouble for sin means. Why, then, reveal your disease to those who are not physicians? Go to Him who heals all manner of diseases, for so does God direct you. When Paul was converted by divine grace, he conferred not with flesh and blood, but instantly obeyed God. So should you do. Does God, by His ministry, convince you of the danger of wicked ways and of your duty to come to Him for safety and comfort? Obey instantly and do not consult with flesh and blood.

What your sinful companions offer to you is not suitable for the healing of your sorrowful, sin-sick soul. What can idle companions do to quiet your conscience, forgive your sin, support your spirit, or fill you with spiritual joy? Alas! All their joys "are but the crackling of thorns under a pot." Dreams and vanity form their highest mirth. What agreement is there between carnal mirth and spiritual sorrow? No more than between light and darkness. Away with them all. Depart from the tents of these wicked men and touch nothing of theirs, lest you be consumed in all your sins.

Nothing is more necessary or advantageous to awakened souls than to depart from evil company. The Apostle said to such, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." He insisted much on this and earnestly entreated young converts, in particular, to

separate from injurious company. Paul knew how injurious they were to young converts. When pious souls seek comfort with the ungodly, they seek for the living among the dead. What living, lasting joys can be found among those that are dead in sin? Oh, save yourself from them in haste! So much for the temptation to keep bad company.

2. *Next, for the temptation to rest in religious duties without going to Christ.* We are all naturally prone to rest on our own works, for, in the beginning, this was the way of life: "Do this and live." Though this door is forever shut against us all, yet still we try to establish our own righteousness. And, even after we are convinced that by the deeds of the law no man living can be justified, our hearts are still cleaving so fast to the law that nothing short of the all-powerful grace of Christ can wean us from seeking life by our own merits and duties.

The means of grace must be used and the duties of religion must be performed by every soul, or the blessings of religion cannot be obtained. The promises are made to those who diligently seek the Lord in the way God has appointed. You must be found in the King's highway or you cannot meet with Him. Without using the means of grace, we can no more have our souls fed and nourished than the husbandman can expect reaping without sowing. They who are above using the means of grace are under the curse. This, then, is a fixed rule of heaven—we must be in the constant use of the means of grace and duly attend to our religious duties.

Yet it is highly perilous to rest in duties and go no further, for the duties of religion are only means to an end. Many deluded souls, when they attend on the

means of grace and go through a round of duties, quiet their conscience and feel satisfied that the work is now done and that all is safe. But they trust what they themselves have done, instead of going on through divine ordinances to rest on what Christ has done by His obedience unto death. Those who rest on duties, instead of resting on Christ, are building on the sand instead of on the rock. Like Lot's wife, they go out of Sodom yet never go in to Zoar, but perish by the way. See the danger of resting on duties. We must go through duties to Christ Himself. We must rest nowhere short of Him. "If ye return, return unto the Lord." It is not enough that we go to all the means of grace, but we must go to Christ Himself. Use the means of grace for this very end. Search the Scriptures to find Christ; hear sermons to bring you to Christ. Get your affections warmed in religion, that they may carry your soul with a full tide to your beloved Lord and Savior. In Him alone is life, and there is salvation in no other. My Christian brother, if you seek for spiritual comfort, go to the means of grace and the duties of religion; but take heed that you do not rely on them. Go on through them and lean your soul on the Savior, then you are safe and may defy Satan with all his wiles and malice, and find rest for your weary soul.

#### **5. Satan's assaults on our sight of Christ**

The soul now understands that there is no true and lasting comfort to be enjoyed but in Christ and begins to seek Him in good earnest. Young converts cry to one another, "Come, let us return unto the Lord, for He has broken us and will bind us up. Let us follow on to know the Lord, for to know Him is life eternal."

“Oh, very well,” says Satan, “if nothing else will do for you but to know Christ, you shall know His whole history. Acquaint yourself with all that is said of His person and character, His offices, and plan of salvation. Acquaint yourself with all that is said of Him from His birth to His taking the throne above. Why, all this,” says Satan, “I am willing you should learn, and gain as much historical and speculative knowledge of Jesus Christ as you can obtain. Then you may sit down quietly and give yourself no further trouble, for now you can talk fast enough about the Savior; and what more can be necessary for you?”

Oh, the depth of Satan! He wants to put men off with mere head knowledge of Christ and salvation, and have them rest there and go no further. The distressed soul longs to have believing views and heart knowledge of the Lord Jesus, and says, “Oh, that I knew where I might find Him. Give me to know Christ, or I die and perish everlastingly.” Now the enemy changes his mode of assault and tries, by all means, to persuade the inquiring soul that no other kind of knowledge of Christ can be obtained in this world but speculative and historical knowledge. The enemy prevails with too many to believe him. They rest in head knowledge and perish there.

### **The soul’s wrestling against this assault**

1. *Labor to see the glory of Christ. His glory is above the heavens, and far above all things that exist.* The stars in the heavens are very brilliant luminaries; but as soon as the sun appears, they are all eclipsed. So the magnificence and glory of the whole universe vanishes and disappears when the glory of Christ, the Sun of Righteous-

ness, is revealed. Take pains to have believing views of the transcendent glory of our great Immanuel till your heart is filled with admiration, wonder, and delight; till your heart cries out with joy, "Oh the height, and depth, and breadth, and length of the glory of God in Jesus Christ!" The beauties and excellencies of the Son of God will afford to all the saints inconceivable and eternal delights. Let this be your study till your heart is weaned from the earth and forever fixed on the glorious Savior.

2. *Labor to have such practical and experimental knowledge of Christ as will deeply influence and win your heart.* Alas! Most men rest in mere notions about Christ. The knowledge they have of Him has no power with the soul; it leaves them the same characters without any change of heart or life. Believing views of Jesus have a powerful influence on the very hearts and souls of men. They quicken the dead and make the barren fruitful. When we know Christ and the power of His resurrection, we are transformed into His likeness and leave all things to follow Him. Are you anxious to know whether your knowledge of the Savior is a true and saving knowledge or not? You may know in this way. If indeed you have a believing, experimental heart-acquaintance with the Lord Jesus, it influences, affects, and impresses your heart and wins your affections. It makes you to admire, love, and delight in Christ; to trust in Him alone for all things in salvation. True knowledge of Him draws the very heart to Him. If you feel this influence, you may safely conclude that you have the knowledge of the Savior.

On the contrary, if the knowledge you have of Christ has no such influence upon you, rest assured

that it is only speculative and historical and will come to nothing. As the influence of the sun makes the earth to bring forth and bud, so the influence of grace on the heart makes it produce the fruits of the Spirit. At one time you hear the gospel preached without any impression at another time the very same gospel comes with power to the soul. Divine influence makes this mighty difference.

3. *Labor to know Christ as the object of faith, as well as of the understanding.* Many search for Christ as mere students and not as believers. If you set Christ before you as the object of faith, this will greatly help to draw your faith into action. As the setting of temptation before a man draws forth his corruptions, so the setting forth of the glory of Christ before the believer has a mighty power to bring his faith into lively exercise. More than this, setting Christ before us as the object of faith is the way to produce faith where it is not.

Do you complain that you have no spiritual faculty to behold the glory of Christ? Then why not set Christ before you as the object of faith. This would have a quickening power to work life in the soul, to cause the eye to see Him and the heart to embrace Him. Sinner, try to see Christ through faith, and pray God the Spirit to shine into your heart to enable you to see the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ.

4. *Labor to know Jesus Christ as your justifying righteousness.* The Spirit of God convinces all the souls that He brings to salvation that they must be saved in the way of righteousness. He gives them to feel that they have no righteousness of their own because they have broken the holy law of God. Then He shows them that Christ came under the law for them, obeyed the whole

law, and paid the penalty for our transgressions; and so wrought out a perfect righteousness which He makes over to all that believe in His name, and so He becomes the Lord our righteousness.

How a guilty and condemned sinner is to be justified before God is a most important point which you should take all pains to understand clearly. As the sins of the world were laid on Christ, so the righteousness of Christ is unto all and upon all them who believe in Him. He was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. The active and passive obedience of Christ forms our justifying righteousness. His death reconciles us to God, and His life saves us. "If when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." Oh, that you would continue to look at the Son of God through faith, till you can joyfully say, "In the Lord I have righteousness and strength!"

### **6. Satan's assaults upon desires after Christ**

1. *When the soul is conducted thus far, the Holy Ghost creates in him some desires and longings after Christ. And, indeed, how can it be otherwise? He has heard so much about the transactions on Calvary and the wonderful mercies of God in Christ that the soul begins to taste some sweetness in them; and this sweetness kindles some longing desires to enjoy the Savior so that it often cries, "Oh, that Christ were mine! Oh, that I had an interest in His wondrous cross and was made a partaker of His resurrection! I thirst, I long, I faint after His salvation. As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. Oh, that*

my poor trembling soul was now received into the blessed arms of the glorious Savior!"

2. *Now Satan sees that this soul is not far from the Kingdom of heaven.* He, therefore, bestirs himself and practices all the policy of hell against him to cause him to break down somewhere. He now summons his legions to use all subtlety against this soul, who is about to shake off their rule and dominion. "Come, my angels, lull him to sleep; lead him astray; entangle him in some secret snare so that he cannot escape. Come, we have hopes of succeeding in keeping him. Have we not destroyed many who once bid fair for the Kingdom of heaven? We may succeed with this man as well. Perhaps it is only a religious fit, a pang, a flash that may soon die away. If we use all craft in time, we may persuade the man who is now hot after religion to be, in a little while, as hot after the world in some form or another. We see that numbers are all for religion, burning with zeal under a touching sermon, but soon cool, when they go away, and are as far from any desires after Christ as ever they were before. Sudden desire seldom ripens into a deliberate choice. Rash and hasty vows rarely settle into a permanent resolution to renounce sin and self, and to cast the soul wholly on Jesus Christ. Come, then, let us blow on these desires and blast them in the bud, so that they never bear fruit nor come to maturity of faith."

Thus Satan calls on his legions, and they arm themselves against the soul, now panting and breathing after Jesus Christ.

### **The soul's wrestling against Satan**

1. *Here attend to these duties. Be not satisfied with sud-*

*den pangs of affection, but labor to preserve those impressions which the Spirit has made on your soul.* So the Apostle said, "Therefore, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip," or run out as leaking vessels. It may be that your desires, at present, are strong, earnest, and vehement; that you have extreme thirst, like the parched earth, for refreshing showers, or as the hunted deer for the water brooks. Surely this is far better than cold, lazy, and heartless desires. But take heed, lest this prove as the early dew which disappears at noonday.

But what should I do to preserve these impressions? If you have gotten this heat from a sermon or in any public ordinance, go from there to your closet and nourish your present frame, that you may pour out your heart more effectually in prayer to God. Oh, beg God not to leave you short of saving faith, beg Him to cherish these beginnings; and keep in mind the promise that He will not quench the smoking flax nor break the bruised reed.

Or, if you have gotten this heat in prayer or in any private duty, hold on in that duty and also wait on God in the use of public means. The spouse that sought Christ by night on her bed would not rest there, but would rise and seek Him in the streets of the city. So should you go from private to public duty, and from public to private duties again. The enquiring soul says, "Is Christ to be found in the public ordinances? Then to the public assemblies let me go. As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? O God,

Thou art my God; early will I seek Thee, that I may see Thy power and Thy glory, so as I have seen Thee in Thy sanctuary.”

2. *Try your desires by the touchstone of God's Word.* But how may I be assured that my desires after Christ are true and not false? Try them by these marks. Every true desire after Christ and salvation is joined with a firm resolution to sell all for Christ, to part with all sin, to bid adieu forever to carnal delights. It is not a hasty wish, like that of Balaam. Many desire to be happy, but are not willing to be holy. They would gladly be saved, but dislike the way. Now if you truly desire to be a Christian, you must live as a Christian and part with sin for Christ. Say now, Christ is a thousand times better to me than the most pleasurable sins. Oh, that I may sin no more!

True desire after Christ and grace will incline your heart to attend on the means of grace, where you soon derive some life, strength, and vigor. It is not a lazy but an active desire. It is not like a man that tells you that he is anxious to live, and yet will neither eat nor drink. So here, it is in vain for you to say that you desire Christ and spiritual enjoyment, and yet will not attend on divine ordinances where Christ is to be found and enjoyed. If you neglect the Word, prayer, and meditation, it is folly to talk of your desire after Him. Mere desires will quickly vanish. Take heed, then, that you do not make light of the ordinances of God, lest you lose salvation finally.

Again, true desire after Christ and grace is both earnest and persevering. It is not like a meteor that vanishes away, but abides in the soul. It is a thirst which nothing can quench but drinking the waters of life.

This kind of desire is not produced by a storm of terrors and alarm, which vanishes away when the storm is over. Many, in a fit of terror, are willing to do or to suffer anything to keep out of hell and go to heaven; but when the fit is over, they will not deny themselves and take up the cross to follow Christ. They will not cross their nature, fight against lusts, wrestle against Satan, or labor after righteousness and holiness. Such vain wishes soon come to nothing. Come, then, and try your desire by this mark. Does your desire take root in true humility and persevere till you drink of the river of life? Does your soul cry, "O give me Christ or I die; my soul is restless, and will continue restless till I have Christ in my arms of faith"? You may safely trust such desire as this and rest assured that Christ will satisfy the desires of those that thus breathe after Him.

### **7. Satan's assaults upon relying on Christ**

The Holy Spirit, who leads the soul by steps, begins now to work in the soul a relying on Christ. And this is that act of faith to which justification is promised. It is called affiancing, dependence, and reliance. Any word that speaks of the humble soul resting upon Christ for pardon of sin and everlasting life means saving faith. And that is what the Spirit now works in the soul that He resolves to save. I would have this to be well understood, for this is the hinge on which the doors of heaven turn. When the soul is enlightened to see the evil of sin, and that Christ alone can deliver from the torments due to sin, he throws himself into the arms of Christ, embraces Him, and hides himself in the clefts of the rock crying, "O Lord, hold me fast or I perish forever." By this act of faith, we are justified through

the merits of Christ Jesus.

Now, when Satan sees this, he knows that the soul is no longer under his dominion but is gone over to the Kingdom of Christ; therefore, the enemy is determined to harass and torment him to the uttermost. Most commonly, he takes these methods of troubling and tormenting the young Christian:

1. *He first of all attacks his faith in various ways.* He strives to keep the hand of faith from laying hold on the promises of God and says to the soul, "These promises are indeed very great and precious, but what have you to do with them? They are not made to you. It would, therefore, be the greatest presumption in you to lay hold on what does not belong to you. You have sinned, therefore the threatenings alone are your portion and not the promises." The tempter now tries to darken the views of the believer with cloudy vapors and misgivings so that he cannot see the promises. Thus, he drives the soul into a state of melancholy that he may be unfit for the actings of faith. But the grand artifice of Satan is to divert the mind from its great concern and amuse it with some earthly things, if he fails to keep the soul from believing in Christ.

2. *He tries next to destroy the comforts of believing.* He breeds in the soul a strong suspicion that he does not believe. And here the soul complains in this mournful strain, "Alas! I cannot think that I really and truly rest on Christ. I seem to cleave more frequently to earthly things than to the things of the Spirit. I do not wholly and constantly cling to the bleeding wounds of Jesus Christ. I am up and down instead of resting continually on the freeness of His grace, the strength of His love, the merits of His cross, and the faithfulness of His

promises. I ought to rest steadfastly on these things as on an eternal rock. And can my constant wavering be a true resting on the Savior?"

Oh, the depth of Satan! He strives hard to keep the soul from believing; and, when he fails in this, he shakes our faith so that we may have neither peace nor joy in believing. See how he dealt with Simon Peter and with Job. When he could not destroy their faith, he endeavored to destroy their comforts. So he deals with believers in general. If he cannot keep them from believing in Christ, he will try, with all his might, to keep them from all comfortable enjoyment of Christ.

#### **The soul's wrestling under this assault**

1. *Does your great enemy try to separate your soul from the promises?* Then take this course to ward off his temptations. First of all, treasure up the promises of God in your mind and memory that they may be ready at hand on all occasions, especially in dark nights of tribulation and severe conflicts. "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Treasure up these, with thousands more of the kind.

Next, take possession of the promises. Make them your own property and inheritance forever, for this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord. When you read in your Bible any promise of Christ or any promise that Christ makes to His believing people, lay hold on it, claim it as your rightful property, and say, "This is part of my heritage on which I am to live."

If Satan pleads that the promises are not made to you and that you have no right to them, tell him to his

face that he was a liar from the beginning. Recollect that, when you were without God in the world, he told you often enough that all the promises belonged to you and none of the threatenings. And now, when you are in Christ, he would persuade you that all the threatenings and none of the promises belong to you. Let the enemy say what he will, if you depart from all iniquity to serve the living God, every promise in Christ is to you a mine of gold.

Take particular notice that the Lord Jesus Christ not only invites but even commands you to believe in Him, that you may have your sins forgiven and your soul saved forever. How often does He command you to believe in Him and lay hold on eternal life? Luther, when under sore temptations which made his heart bleed and his eyes flow with tears, said one day that the Lord's word of command to believe relieved his soul more than all things else. Does Satan tell you not to believe the promises? Remember that Christ commands you to believe them all and claim them for your inheritance. And whom should you obey, the God of truth and love or the father of lies, who was a murderer from the beginning?

2. *Again, does the tempter tell you that your faith is not constant, always the same, and, therefore, no true faith?* This is a fallacy and not truth. The experience of all saints can tell you that faith had its flowings and ebbings. Christians are on the mount of joy and in the valley of tears by turns. At times they could die for Christ and, at other times, they are afraid to suffer for Him. David one day said, "I will not be afraid of ten thousand people." Another day he cried to the Lord, "O spare me, that I may recover my strength." Faith may be so inter-

rupted that the pulse of it cannot always beat alike. Yet the pulse of faith never ceases to beat in some degree.

Faith that is not always equally strong in exercise is always true in principle. If it is faith, it truly relies on Jesus Christ. A Christian may at times only see as in a mist, but he never has his eyes put out. Christians under Satan's temptations are too apt to misjudge their own state, and so injure their happiness. They call their faith presumption, when the ungodly call their presumption faith. The hypocrite calls dross gold, and the Christian, at times, is ready to call his gold dross. Christ may be saying in heaven of such a one, "You are saved, you are saved," while he might be crying on earth, "I am lost, I am lost." The angels in heaven may be rejoicing over him whom we see here mourning, and who will not be comforted. Do you say that you do not believe and rely on Christ? How then do you so hunger and thirst after Christ, if you do not believe in Him? Could there be such a care to please, and fear to offend Him, if you did not believe in His name, and rely on Him for eternal life and salvation? Could there be such a willingness in you to part with all things for Christ if you did not rely on Him as your portion and inheritance? Surely this is impossible. Be content, therefore; if you have no comfort, you have faith, though weak and wavering.

### **8. Satan's assaults on obedience to Christ**

1. *The last act of the Spirit, as to conversion, is to work in the soul an obedience to Christ.* True faith cannot be without works. The soul that truly takes Christ as a Savior, to deliver him from the misery of sin, is willing also to take Him as a Lord and King, to serve, love, honor and

obey Him. For this purpose, the Holy Spirit works in the newborn soul a willingness to spend the remainder of his life in endeavoring to subdue sin and mortify corruptions. He now seeks to be sanctified and purified, aims faithfully to render new obedience to the Lord Christ, and is now willing to do or to suffer anything for His sake. Saving faith is an obedient, active faith. That faith which produces no holiness of heart and life is a dead faith. "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

2. *Here the evil spirit tries first to persuade the believing soul that works are in no way necessary now, when he is saved by grace.* He would make him believe that a naked Christ and a naked faith is quite enough. The enemy says to the young convert, "Hear no sermons but those that hold forth free love, free justification, free grace without any mixture of the works of the law. To what purpose," says he, "is a working faith and the obedience of faith?" He goes on and says, "Christ has redeemed us and requires no obedience but merely to believe and be saved. Why then should you vex and torment your soul by mortifying the body of sin and striving to lead a new life?" Such is the enemy's first sermon; the second is like unto it.

### **The soul's defense under this temptation**

1. *Does the tempter say that a naked faith is enough?* This is false. A naked faith is no faith at all. That faith alone is true which works by love. John Huss used to say that "where good works appeared not without, faith was not within." There is a natural connection between faith and works; where the one is, the other must be. The faith that embraces Christ will obey Christ and be fruit-

ful in all good works. If it apprehends and lays hold on Christ, it also purifies and cleanses the heart. Then, let no man separate what God has joined together. If we are justified by Christ, we are also sanctified by His Spirit. Whosoever is in Christ is a new creature, and all things are become new.

Good works are necessary, for God has ordered them. "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." The law of God still remains as your directory and rule of conduct. Every renewed soul delights in the law of God. How very often are we commanded in Scripture to obey the holy law and practice good works! "Charge them that are rich, that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute," and honor God by their works of faith and labor of love. "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

All who rest on Christ for salvation will, and must, live in the obedience of Christ. "These things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which believed in God, must be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men." To preach the faith that obeys God is true preaching. "Who gave himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." God has raised up Jesus to give repentance unto Israel and forgiveness of sins. The faith that does not obey God and walk in His ways is no saving faith. The true believer can have no happiness but by walking in the way of God's commandments, looking unto Jesus.

2. *Are you trembling and fearing that you are nothing but*

*a hypocrite and not a real believer?* Then examine whether your good works proceed from nature or from grace. If from nature, you seek your own glory, like the Pharisees of old. But, if they proceed from faith, you seek to glorify God. There are many things which nature can never effect, such as these: An unfeigned hatred of sin and every false way, and doing our duty in pure obedience to the command of God. Nature can never produce this state of mind. It must be of grace. To live and act for the glory of God is what a hypocrite can never do. A hypocrite may indeed leave off the practice of some sins, but cannot say with David that he hates "every false way." A hypocrite may perform all outward duties, but does nothing for the glory of God. Then if you serve God from love to His name, you do what the unbeliever never can do.

But are you still afraid that you have no true faith? Then take this course: Go and do your first work in a solemn manner every day. Pant and breathe and thirst after Christ. Rely, rest, and depend on Him for life and salvation. Then go on to your next work of faith. Trust Christ for holiness and righteousness. Go forward, and draw virtue from His death to mortify the whole body of sin. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Draw virtue out of Christ's resurrection to quicken your soul from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness and holiness. As we are buried with Christ, we should rise with Christ to newness of life by faith in His name. Be much in prayer, meditation, reading, and hearing the Word. Lay out your gifts, graces, time, strength, and influence in your Master's service. Contrive how you may do

most to promote the gospel and benefit the souls of men. "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren," is said to you as well as to Peter. Were you to do all this in sincerity, you might well be satisfied that your faith is a true faith, of the operation of God; not a dead faith, but a living, justifying, and saving faith.

Despise not the day of small things. The breathings of faith prove the life of faith as well as the loud voice of faith, when it says, "My beloved is mine, and I am his." Does your faith produce such a temper of mind as unites the condition you are now in? Faith has its change of raiments for gracious souls. Sometimes it employs the soul in joy and rejoicing, sometimes only in cleaving to Christ, trembling. Do you say that you do not experience in your soul such a sense of God's love and joy in God as the Scripture speaks of? It may be so, and that it is a day of darkness with your soul. Then you must try yourself by some other kind of evidences. Is your heart in a fit temper to wait for Him who, at present, hides His face from you? Can you now seek Him who seems to have forsaken you; and can you cling to Him who is now chastening you? Can you say with Job, "though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him"? This is the true trial, and the way to know what your faith is.

Thus much of Satan's assaults in our youth, and at the time of conversion and our wrestling with him then. I do not profess to have mentioned all the devices of Satan and his different modes of tempting. That is impossible, for his different ways of laying his snares are without number. He knows how and when to tempt every man living with the greatest prospect of success. Having such a subtle, diligent, and malicious

enemy, we have need of the whole armor of God. We need to watch and pray that we may overcome and arrive safe in glory.

# Chapter 4

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## *Temptation in Riper Years*

The third period of Satan's assaults is from regeneration to the day of death. I shall handle the subject as before and show, first, how Satan tempts, and then how we are to defend ourselves. He has three ways, in particular, of assaulting us during this last period, i.e., by persecutions from the world, by temptations from the flesh, and by injections or fiery darts from himself. I shall only handle the first two of these here. [The third point is handled in chapter 6 beginning on page 132—Ed.]

### **1. Of Satan's persecutions by the world**

Christ said to the Church of Smyrna, "The devil shall cast some of you into prison." This he did by the aid of his instrument, the world. He rules in the hearts of the wicked and directs their thoughts, wills, and affections; and so he moves them to persecute the children of God and cast some into prison.

No sooner is a man brought truly home to Christ than he becomes the drunkard's song, music to great men at their feasts, a byword to the children of fools, and is hated of them all because he follows Christ. Now the seed of the serpent begins to hiss. Satan and his children begin in earnest to load him with false accusations to blacken his character and distress his soul. Here the wicked are the devil's millers to grind the

grapes. What can be expected from such men but to be squeezed till the blood gushes out? But why should the wicked be so enraged against the godly? Have they done them any wrong? Do they wish them any evil? Nay, they would be glad to do them good, as to their eternal welfare. There can be no doubt of this. But ungodly men are compelled by Satan to act as they do. The old serpent hates God and the holiness that shines in His saints with deadly hatred. He knows that he himself is cast out of heaven and he envies and vexes those that would be entering in. So the wicked, who are his instruments, have sucked in the old serpent's poison till they swell with it and are enraged against the righteous. They say of tigers that they swell with rage on the scent of fragrant spices. So the ungodly are in a rage at the blessed savor of true holiness, wherever it appears. A wicked man is odious to the pious, and he that is upright in the way is an abomination to the children of Belial.

I know not any who fear God but have, in some measure or other, felt this assault. Good Mr. [Robert] Bolton said, "If Satan meets with a man that has, by the grace of God, entered into a state of salvation, he, the great dragon, stands in his way, and casts out of his mouth floods of persecution, vexation and opposition, to overwhelm and crush him, if he can, before he is of any growth and strength in Christ." And to this end, he sets on foot, and fire too, many lewd and profane tongues to scoff, disgrace and discourage him in his narrow, but blessed passage to immortality.

But how do they do it? Why, either by reproaching him with his former misconduct or by charging him with hypocrisy, singularity, and puritanism. They

charge him with being a fellow of factious spirit and troublesome conduct. Nor is this on his first entrance into the way of life but ever after, while he keeps the way to heaven. Every faithful Christian knows by experience that as long as he acts in the good cause and stands up against the evil practices of the place where he lives, he shall have the spirit of profaneness to fly in his face with implacable malice and brutish insolence. "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

### **The Christian's defense**

If the world persecutes only with the tongue in taunts, jeers, and reproaches, practice these rules:

1. *Take heed that you do not slacken your pace in religion because of reproaches.* What, though they cast filth in our way, shall we turn from the heavenly road on that account? What, though clouds and darkness cover us for a time, shall we turn our backs on Christ? No, no; the sun runs its course, though clouds hide it from us for a while. By and by it will break through the clouds and give us light. Say, "I enlisted under the banner of the cross on these terms, to endure reproaches for His sake, which is the common lot of all the followers of the Lord Jesus. I expect heavier trials than these."

2. *Consider how God and Christ are reproached daily.* See how men trample on the laws and government of God every day. See how the tremendous threatenings of God's Word are scorned by a blind world. This made Mr. Bolton to say, "If any man was to receive the insults which God receives for one hour, he would in the next hour set the world on fire," and would not suffer his wrath to be pacified nor the fire to be

quenched. Be then ashamed to fret on account of reproaches or any trivial provocation when you see what God endures every day. Oh, what is our name to the name of the great and holy God? And what are insults to us compared with insults to Him? Yet behold His long-suffering patience! Learn of Him and follow your Master's example.

3. *Consider the great mercy of God in concealing the secret sins of our thoughts.* Were God to turn our inside outwards and reveal all the filth and baseness within the heart, it would make us afraid of the society of men. While we remember what evils abound in human nature, which we partake of, we may well bear the reproaches of wicked men. And let us never forget the mercy of God in keeping the evils of our vile nature from breaking out in our lives.

Consider what honor God has put upon us, besides the honor of reproach for His sake. Has not the Lord been pleased to bring us into the honorable state of sons and daughters? Has He not put His glory upon our souls, and honored us with the nearest relation to Christ? Has He not given us place in the hearts of His saints, who are the excellent ones of the earth and will have the pre-eminence at last? Doeg was great in the king's court, but David, whom he reproached, was like an olive tree in the house of God.

Above all, what are the honors that await us in the world to come? There we shall wear the crown of life in the Kingdom of our Father. If a man was going to be crowned, and was reviled in the way by those that knew him not, what would he care for that? He knows that, within a few days, he shall be honored by those that now revile him. Do we believe that we are going to

reign with Christ in glory? Then why should we be troubled at what the world says of us here? It will not be long till Christ shall bring forth our righteousness as the light, to the confusion of those who cast out our names as evil.

4. *Let us mourn before God and lay our case before Him.* When Rabshakeh reviled God and His people, Hezekiah spread the letter before the Lord and made his moan there. This was the practice of Job and David. "My friends scorn me," said Job, "but mine eyes poureth out tears unto God." And David said, "The mouth of the wicked, and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me, . . . they have compassed me about with words of hatred also, but I give myself unto prayer." As if he should say, "Some call on reviling tongues to help them; but I cry unto my God, and He shall send from heaven and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up."

5. *Return good for evil as occasion occurs.* Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat. Thus, if we can pray for our reproachers, desire good for them, be willing to notice any good in them, be ready to offer any offices of love, respect, and kindness unto them, and so heap coals of fire on their head, this is a great sign of grace and a proof that we have made a great progress in God's way. It was Christ's own command to His apostles, "Bless them that curse you, . . . pray for them which despitefully use you . . . that ye may be the children of your Father." Were they not children before? Yes, but now God owns them for His children and proves it to the world. If we act thus, we have the comfort of bearing reproach as God's people.

## 2. Of Satan's temptations by the flesh

Our temptations come in various ways. There are temptations by Satan himself, some by ourselves, and some jointly by him and us. He can tempt when we do not join with him, and we can tempt ourselves when he lets us alone. But, for the most part, our temptations are mixed; he and we concur, and make one act of tempting. He begins and we join him, or we begin and he joins us. When we begin to indulge any bad temper of the mind, we invite him to join us, which he very readily does. And when he moves our fancies within or proposes any object without to tempt us, we soon join with him. These are the ordinary ways of temptations, and it is very rarely we sin without Satan interposing. Were there no corrupt affections in our flesh, the enemy's temptations would have no effect on us; but we have tinder, and he blows the fire. We have temptations from within, and the tempter sharpens those temptations till all is in a ferment. So we have to wrestle with flesh and blood, and with Satan as well; between both, we have enough to do, and must be warriors all the days of our lives.

Satan suits his temptations to our natural tempers and dispositions. He observes to what sin we are most inclined by our natural temper and bodily constitution, and to that he urges us; and so thrusts us, as it were, downhill where we are apt to run headlong of our own accord. If we are ambitious, he paints honors before us; if fond of pleasures, he leads us to scenes of levity and dissipation; if given to covetousness, he spreads his golden net to entangle our feet. We have numberless corruptions, and the tempter has a bait to suit every one of them all.

In this case, it is the Christian's best skill to observe, as soon as he can, what are his natural tempers, inclinations, and dispositions, and to find out what sin he is most prone to—what is his bosom and right-hand sin, his beloved pleasure, and his chief delight. Be assured that this is Satan's strongest hold and tower of confidence, and this is the door at which he will enter into your soul. Then watch and pray without ceasing at this door of the heart.

In some, this sin is worldliness, wantonness, pride, passion; in others, it may be drunkenness, gluttony, gaming, and many other evil propensities. They are so numerous that I shall only notice some of the most common, and most injurious, of them.

*Temptations to worldliness*

1. The evil spirit sees that worldliness is the right hand and darling sin of some. Then he pushes them forward in that direction. He paints the world in glowing colors before their imagination, as he did to Christ on the mountain. He draws many beautiful pictures of it, and exhibits them in his panoramas before the worldling's eyes, and so wins his heart more strongly to the world than ever.

2. He, at times, brings the world itself, or the things of the world, before men's eyes to allure their senses. Thus he set the Babylonish garment before the eye of Achan, Naboth's vineyard before the eye of Ahab, and Bathsheba before the eye of David. And then, according to the proverb, "He comes to the sea by the rivers," and he comes to the heart by the eye. What poison is there that he does not convey by this passage to the soul? Our eyes are his spokesmen to the heart. We first

look at the world, and then covet it; and this the Apostle calls the lust of the eyes.

3. The enemy, most commonly, comes at the heart through the imaginations and affections, and then gains the will. It is an easy thing for him to win them all when they are so ready to listen to his suggestions and willing, of themselves, to yield to his temptations. They that will be rich very easily fall into Satan's snares. The love of money is the root of all evil. When Satan sees a man who determines to be rich, he has only to work on this man's will and he may carry him, by the tide of his affections, to the sea of sin and perdition. As the stone will fall to the earth by its own tendency, so the man whose heart is set on the world will, of himself, without pulling, fall into temptations and snares.

*The way to overcome this sin*

1. Consider that worldliness produces many other sins. What frauds, what deceits, what perjuries, what cruelties, what hatred, what murders, and what villainies have been practiced for the nourishing of this lust! Other sins have their bad effects; but this is, of all others, the most sordid and base and, in some respects, the most unworthy a man can commit. Why, man has a soul that should aspire after heaven itself. How he degrades himself by being a mere muck-worm who desires nothing so much as the things of earth. This is a sore evil that we have seen under the sun!

2. Consider that worldliness is attended with manifold sorrows. It abounds with cares and is full of snares; it is also full of labor. Men toil all day and cannot rest at night. The fear of losing pierces as much as the pains of getting; there is no end of their travail. It is

full of trouble of conscience and dread of hell. Satan will conceal these pains and griefs as long as he can and show only the gain and pleasures of the world. Yes, he shows only the pleasures and conceals the punishment. He shows the gain and not the pain. But we must try to discover what he conceals. We must look at Jael's nail as well as her milk, the bee's sting as well as her honey, the snake's poison as well as her fine skin. The speech of Abner is true of the world: "Knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end?" Oh, let this be seriously considered by every soul!

3. Consider that a man's life depends not on the abundance he possesses. The usefulness, happiness, and comfort of his life proceed not from earthly treasures, but from the God who made them. Therefore, the meek alone shall inherit the earth, because God is their portion. The wicked may be rich, but he has no true enjoyment. His riches profit nothing when he is without God in the world. If God, in His loving-kindness, gives His children riches, He also gives them wisdom and disposition to make a right use of them. God gives wisdom to a good man and to the sinner He gives travail. To the godly, He gives wisdom to get riches and hearts to make a right use of them. But the wicked heaps up riches to his own sorrow. Godliness is the great gain of man; there, alone, true and lasting happiness can be found. The little that a righteous man has is better than the abundance of the wicked. It is the meek that inherits the earth, because of his nearness to God. Never tell me of this great man and that noble man, for they are to be valued by their nearness to God and not by their earthly distinction.

4. Consider that "no man that warreth entangleth

himself with the affairs of this life." What are we but warriors against sin, Satan, the world, and the flesh? Why, then, should we entangle ourselves with the affairs of this life? To use the world is lawful and right, but to be entangled with it is hazardous and pernicious. As the rivers that flow to the sea touch the coasts and shores by which they run, yet stay not there but glide on till they are lost in the bosom of the ocean, so must our souls act in travelling to heaven. They must only touch the earth, yet stay not there but pass on and rest not till we rest in the bosom of God in eternal glory.

Luther tells us that when the Pope sent his cardinals to tempt and entangle him with the promise of great wealth and honor, turning himself to God he speedily said that God should not put him off with these low things. Oh, that all soldiers under the banner of Christ were of the same mind! Then they might say, "the snare is broken and we are delivered." The silly bird, when he sees his danger, mounts in haste to the skies and defies the fowler's aim. When you apprehend any danger of being entangled in the snares of the world and Satan, lift up your hearts to God in prayer and mount on the wings of faith and love towards heaven, that you may escape. Be much in holy meditation on the joys of heaven so that you may disappoint Satan's hopes and escape the entanglements of this evil world.

5. Consider the words of the Preacher, "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity." Yes, all is vanity. There is nothing under heaven but you may write upon it, "This is vanity." Dr. Arrowsmith said, "O deluded world." Write over your schools, "Let not the wise man glory in his

wisdom”; over all court gates, “Let not the mighty man glory in his might”; over your banks and exchanges, “Let not the rich man glory in his riches”; on your mirrors, “Beauty is vain”; on your artillery yard, “God delighteth not in the strength of a horse”; on the doors of your taverns, “Wine is a mocker and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise”; on your wardrobes, “the moth will corrupt, or the thieves will steal”; on the banqueting houses that both gluttons and wine bibbers shall be destroyed together and shall with Dives ask in vain for a drop of water to cool their burning tongues. Oh, the vanity of this deluded world and all things in it! Will a man hearken to its deceitful promises and give his soul to the destroyer for that which is altogether vanity, emptiness, and deceit? God forbid!

6. Consider the counsel and promise of God Himself. “Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have, for He hath said, I will never, never, never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” Surely such an assurance must fix your heart forever! Hark again, “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I overcame and am set down with My Father in His throne.” One serious thought of sitting on the throne with Jesus Christ would, through grace, be enough to wean a soul forever from worldly-mindedness. But we have more precious promises. “He that overcomes shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son.” Let the world be as nothing, and you shall inherit all things. Sit loose to your relations here, and Christ will be to you better than all relations. “Everyone that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s

sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.”

7. Act your faith upon those promises in Hebrews 13:5, Revelation 3:21, and Matthew 19:29. Oh, the fullness and freeness of these precious promises! How can you lack anything, when you have a commission from God Himself to draw on the bank of heaven? Let him that is without God in the world shift for himself and live by his wits. But you live by faith on the promises of a faithful God who will never disappoint you!

8. Commend yourself to God in prayer that He may present you faultless before the presence of His glory, that He may incline your heart unto His testimonies and not to covetousness, that He may prepare your soul and speed His work and hasten His coming. “Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of spices. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly, Amen, Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus.”

9. Look up to heaven till you grow more and more weary of the world. A man who would always live here knows nothing of heaven. Christian, you cannot but long for your heavenly home for, in those blessed mansions above, you shall have a pure company, out of the reach of danger and temptations. There is no devil in heaven; they were cast out long ago, and we are to fill up their vacant places. When the devil rebelled, he was cast into the world of torments and misery. And now he compasses the earth to and fro, seeking whom he may devour. Oh, who in this pilgrimage would not often look heavenwards and mind his eternal home!

10. Go beforehand into that world to come. Mind your eternity, into which you must enter (the Lord

knows how soon). It is a wonder that men of reason, who are here today and tomorrow in endless joy or misery, should ever forget such an inexpressible concern. Come, shake off your worldly-mindedness and dwell intensely on this thought, and within a few days and nights your soul will be either in heaven or in hell. If in heaven, you will care but little about the world then; and why should your care be so excessive now? If in hell, the world will be gone; but a recollection of your former anxious care about it will remain to torment you forever. Oh, feel this now, as if you were entering this hour into the world of spirits! Certainly, you stand at the door; you are daily dying, and getting nearer death every breath you draw; and there is but a thin veil of flesh between you and the great eternity. And shall not this wean you from the world?

11. Think of your beginning and your ending. As to your beginning, you sprang from nothing. What and where were you a few years ago? Where were you when your father was born? Not one now living on the earth had a being a few years ago. And those that are now alive, after moving for a little while up and down the earth, will soon disappear and be gone. And you, who are today full of life and contrivance for earthly things, will, in a very short time, lie down in the silent grave. Many things in creation were here some hundreds of years ago, but where were you one hundred years past? Not on the earth, not in existence. Think most seriously how lately you came into being.

And what will be your latter end? It will be worse than nothing, if you continue a worldling still. I think I see you lying on your sick or dying bed. Oh, how pale and wan you are! You had a fresh and youthful color

the other day. Alas, how much you are changed from being the gallant man you were! How your strength fails, your breath labors, your joints tremble, and your life is ready to depart! Oh, how little do your worldly gains and pleasures profit you now! Such rich purchase, such favor of the great, and such merry meetings yield no comfort now, nor offer any help in the agonies of death! Your friends surround your dying bed but can do nothing for you, only look at you lying helpless in the jaws of death. And, as to yourself, you can only look at death aiming a blow at your heart. Now the blow is given; the soul is fled to the world of spirits, never to return! Keeping this in constant view would give a death blow to worldly-mindedness.

*Temptations to fleshly lusts*

The sin of incontinence is called by the Apostle turning aside after Satan. The devil and this sin act together on man, and it is properly called uncleanness (see Romans 1:24, Ephesians 4:19). Some call these lusts the devil's captains that smite at the soul especially. "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." But how does Satan stir up these lusts in men?

1. He observes the temperament and complexion of such a man. If the man is sanguine, Satan takes advantage of it and tempts him to incontinency and all pleasures of the flesh. All ought to, but few can, say with Paul, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection." Our outward enemies, though great tempters, could not materially hurt us were it not for our inbred adversaries that betray us into their hands.

Sinful lusts in the body are like fire, which any temptation can kindle into a flame. When Satan knows man's temperament, he knows how to suit his temptation.

2. Satan frequently sets before a lascivious man some tempting object, as he tempted David with the beauty of Bathsheba in the garden. Satan needs do no more with a wanton man than to say, "See! Yonder is a naked breast, a naked neck, and a naked arm." When you see such signs hang at the doors, you may guess what immodesty is within. Satan destroys his tens of thousands by conveying his temptation through the eye to the heart.

3. The enemy goes farther than presenting the object; he works on the imagination (which is Satan's chief seat in the soul). There he works in the children of disobedience and, by their imagination, moves to many base lusts. In this respect, who has not reason to cry out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" A man whose life is clean may yet have his imagination like a cage of unclean birds. Peter speaks of some who had eyes full of adultery and who could not cease from sin. Their imagination sets their eyes continually on the adulteress, though out of sight. The prophet said of those who live in uncleanness, "They are all adulterers, as an oven heated by the baker," ready to bake anything that is put into it. So these sinners' hearts are always prepared for every temptation. Oh, the power of Satan on the imagination! There he works perpetually on the slaves of sin, even during their midnight dreams as well as when awake.

4. Satan can do somewhat more than inject and suggest evil thoughts, for he can mightily irritate and

provoke. He can stir up the heart to be willing to entertain such a passion, as he provoked David to number the people and to commit adultery with Bathsheba. When he began with David, he never let him alone but followed him and stirred him up to act wickedly. It is true, he could not force David to sin. The will cannot be forced, yet Satan can strongly work on the imagination, and that exceedingly influences the will to consent. And indeed, if the soul is destitute of grace, it cannot overcome the suggestions and provocations of the tempter, but will soon yield. And this is the way in which the enemy stirs up the sinful passions of the children of men.

*Directions how to overcome this sin*

1. Avoid all occasions of lusts. The Jewish doctors advised their young men never to feed their eyes by staring at tempting objects. It will be our wisdom to check the beginning of temptations, to cast away the first thoughts of any vile sin with indignation. Surely, if we begin to parley with sinful thoughts, they will soon gain strength and power against us; then our difficulty to resist will increase. He walks more safely who flees from temptation and keeps at a distance from that which would ensnare him, than he who plays with the bait or walks among snares. David would have escaped as well as Joseph, had he been as much on his guard. None wrestle so successfully with sin and Satan as those who turn their backs on temptation the moment it appears. "Flee youthful lusts" is Paul's advice to Timothy. He calls on him not only to run away, but to fly, or make all possible haste out of the way of temptation. "Come not nigh the door of her house" is the language

of one who well knew the danger. Another said, "Take away the fire, for I have chaff within me."

2. Set a guard on the outward senses. "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart," are the words of Christ. Looking at alluring beauties is the way to be ensnared. "I made a covenant with mine eyes," said Job, "why then should I think upon a maid?" The eyes must be guarded; but that is not all. Take heed, also, of lending your ears to filthy talking, corrupt speeches, wanton discourse, and profane songs. It was the Apostle's charge, "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not once be named among you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers." Oh, that any should delight to speak or hear filthy conversation!

Some will ask, "May we not jest and be merry without all this ado?" But have you no other mirth than these polluting speeches? Will you feed on what poisons the soul? Will you make merry with what God condemns, and for which He threatens to shut you out of His Kingdom? Have you nothing but filthiness, the service of Satan, and the wrath of God to play with and excite your mirth? Polluting speeches and wanton songs are the devil's music to prepare sinners for all uncleanness. Thoughts and words prepare for deeds. The same may be said of all lascivious behavior. All such things must be avoided, for a small spark may kindle a great fire and a little leaven may soon leaven the whole lump.

3. Exercise all your affections of desire, love, and joy, on Jesus Christ. Is He not your Bridegroom? Has He not betrothed you to Himself in holiness? And will you serve His enemy by indulging base affections? Oh, what indignity is this to your Savior? If there is anything of Christ in you, turn the stream of your affections towards Him whose comeliness should always delight your heart, whose beauty should forever enflame your soul, whose love should draw all your affections towards Himself, and whose conduct should win you altogether to go after Him. Here is one that should lead you captive both body and soul. Should you give your love to a harlot in preference to your Lord and Savior, in what light will you appear to God and His Christ? What! Do you not know that your bodies are the members of Christ, and will you make them members of a harlot? God forbid.

4. Avoid idleness, for that is the proper soil for these filthy weeds to grow in. Vile thoughts seldom occur when the soul is usefully employed. A man who is diligent in his calling has employment for his thoughts; but if a man is idle, the devil soon employs him. As a standing pool grows filthy of itself, and full of toads and vermin, so the heart that is not engaged in something good and useful is a fit place for the devil to breed evil thoughts and filthy passions in. The inhabitants of Sodom were not worse by nature than other men; but they grew rich in a fertile land, lived at ease in luxury, and then gave themselves up to all abominations.

5. Keep under your body and bring it into subjection. Subdue your flesh to the obedience and discipline of the Spirit of God. Mortify your members in the

exercise of piety and be temperate in all things. The body must be so dieted that it may be always ready for the holy war. Paul said, "I keep under my body"; and so must we, or be unfit soldiers of Christ.

6. Be regular and sincere in studying the Scriptures. Read, hear, and meditate on the Word of God, which Paul calls "the sword of the Spirit." When Christ had His combat with Satan, He did not use His authority and command him away but referred to the Scriptures. Mere reasoning will never drive away Satan, but the sword of the Spirit will make him fly when duly wielded. "I have suffered many great passions," said Luther, "but so soon as I laid hold on any piece of Scripture, and stayed myself upon it, as upon my chief anchor-hold, straightway my temptations vanished." Search the Scripture, which is a mine of pure gold, and treasure it up in your mind, memory, and heart.

Treasure up the precepts that forbid the sins you are most addicted to. If it is uncleanness, urge these texts: "Away, Satan, for it is written, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery; but mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence. . . . For this is the will of God, even your sanctification. . . . For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.' "

You must have in mind the threatenings. If then you sin, you endanger all. Eve recollected what God had forbidden, but forgot the threatening, "You shall surely die if you eat of the tree." Take heed, then, that you keep in mind not only that adultery is forbidden, but that "whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are

these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness . . . they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” As lust is kindled in hell, so there it shall be perpetually punished. The holy angels will, in the last day, bind such transgressors in bundles and cast them into eternal torments. See 2 Peter 2:9-10.

7. Keep in view the promises to warriors, “Whoso pleases God shall escape temptation.” And, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, “The very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it.” Keep also in view the reward of conqueror: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads. . . . These are they which were not defiled with women, but follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.” Oh, live by faith and feed on these promises!

8. Live in prayer. A man is never overcome by temptation while he continues praying. If you persevere in prayer, Satan can never prevail against you. But what should I pray for? Pray that God may purify your heart and sanctify it by His Holy Spirit. Pray that God may strengthen you to overcome the tempter. Tell Him that your corruptions are too strong for you to subdue and ask Him for strength. Pray that He may give you grace to persevere in prayer and patience to wait till He comes to deliver you.

9. Be much in meditation on God’s presence, who sees in darkness as in the day. You would be ashamed

to be seen of men, and is not God of purer eyes? Think that sinful pleasures are but for a moment, but the gnawing of your guilty conscience will abide forever. Let the thoughts of your death be the death of your lusts. "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." Meditate on hell. Fiery sins will beget fiery torments.

A young man tempted a virgin to an act of uncleanness. She said, "Grant me one favor, and I will consent." He promised and asked what it was. "That you burn your finger for one hour in the flame of that candle."

"Oh!" said he, "that is unreasonable."

She replied that it was far more unreasonable to ask her to burn forever in the flames of hell.

A young man, when he feels his temptations strong, should put his finger in the fire and exclaim, "If my flesh cannot endure this fire for a moment, how can my soul and body endure the fire of hell through all eternity?"

10. Look to Jesus in His death and sufferings. Did He endure such intolerable agonies, torture, and torments for your sins, and can you still practice those sins with delight? Rather, cry aloud that virtue may flow from His wounds to mortify your lusts and purify your heart. Looking long and seriously on a crucified Redeemer will bring strength and blessing from God into your soul and make an effectual impression on your heart. Though sin lives in you, yet, by the grace of Christ, it shall not reign and have the dominion over you. The death of Christ will, by degrees, be the death of sin in all believers.

11. The last thing that I shall mention is marriage. The principal end of marriage is to keep a man chaste, and all that do not have the gift of continency should marry. "To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife." Yet marriage, without repentance of former sins, will not abate sinful propensities. O Christian, act as a man of God. Avoid studiously all occasions to sin. Set a strict guard on your senses; watch your eye, your ear, and your tongue continually. Set all your desires and the affections of your hearts on Jesus the Savior of your soul. Nothing will purify the heart and mortify sin like looking unto Jesus in His love, agonies, and death. If God mercifully delivers you from the power of your inbred corruptions and the snares of the devil and blesses you with a pure heart and a quiet mind, spend the remainder of your days on earth in gratitude to God for such peculiar favors.

*Temptations to pride*

This sin is naturally stronger in some than others, though none are free from this "pride of life." It is often difficult to ascertain which is the master sin in most men. Yet some particular sin takes the lead in every man. And this proceeds from constitution, education, condition, and other causes, and often changes with our circumstances and situations. Now it is this sin, and, in a few years, it is another sin. But pride is the sin of all, and the sin of ages. This is the most prevalent of all others. It is the pride of life. It is the sin of the whole world. Unbelief may be considered the greatest bar to justification; yet pride is the greatest hindrance to sanctification. All sins do homage to pride as their captain and their king. The Lord frequently makes use

of other sins to humble the sin of pride in His saints, but pride is not employed to weaken any other sin. Pride was the root of original sin in our first parents, and is, of all others, the most offensive to the great Jehovah. God resists the proud, and God will know him afar off. He cannot abide the sight of it.

Now, Satan knows all this full well and labors with might and main to nourish pride in all the children of men. It was his own first sin, and that which turned him from a holy angel into a cursed devil. And he prevailed in ruining the whole race of man by persuading our first parents that they should be as gods, Genesis 3:5. Ever since the fall, pride claims the first place in the heart of every man. As we are all sinful, we are all proud. All love flattery. "Ye shall be as gods" is a temptation to all sorts of men. Pride is a seed that grows in every soil and will feed on every vice, till "men glory in their shame." Men can be proud of their humility, and will pretend to be very humble that they may be admired and rise high in the estimation of others. What self-denial and hardship will men and women endure in order to gratify this fashionable sin? When the fashion is to go more than half-naked, how few have the sense or courage to resist such indecencies? Pride must be fed even if they starve themselves. This was the leading sin in Adam, and is the most prevailing sin in all his posterity. We have this lust or pride from Adam, and he has it from Satan. Oh, the pride of devils! It sank them into hell! Oh, the pride of Adam! It destroyed a world! Oh, the pride of our own hearts! Unless we repent, we shall perish forever!

*The soul's wrestling with this sin*

1. I shall speak first of men's pride in natural things and outward objects, such as beauty, strength, riches, and apparel.

BEAUTY. This is but skin deep. None are so beautiful but are excelled by some flowers of the field, such as the rose and the lily. "Beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised." That is the best beauty which a picture cannot express. Boast not of your comeliness, for you are not so fair as the swan or the peacock, and even harlots may excel you in fairness. Besides, what loathsome matter lies hidden under this fair skin? What filthy excrements issue out of the nostrils, the mouth, the eye, the ear, to go no farther? A view of all within might humble you. Beauty is the devil's chief bait to set men's passions on fire. Why, then, are you so proud of it? Alas! Nothing is more mutable than beauty. The scratch of a pin may lessen it. A wound or a disease may ruin it. Even old age plows deep furrows in the finest face, and death turns it into deformity. Oh, then, turn your affection from such fading vanity to spiritual and heavenly beauty which God admires. What beauty is as great as the image of Christ on the soul of man, holiness of heart and life? This is truly excellent and will endure forever. Grief and sorrow cannot injure this comeliness. Affliction, old age, and death cannot impair it but will turn it, at last, into glory which can never fade.

STRENGTH. This is common to man and beast. The lion and the tiger far excel man. The vilest of men may excel the best in strength of body. Can you be proud of that in which you are outdone by thieves and ruffians, lions and bears? If you are ever so strong, can

this deliver you from pain, sickness, and death? It can neither defend you from the wrath of God nor the wiles of the devil. Oh, that you were “strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might”! Oh, that you would “put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil”! This is true strength, in which you may glory; and, going in this strength, you can do all things—subdue your enemies and win the crown of life. When you are strong in the Lord, you shall stand manfully in the day of battle and come off victorious. Bodily strength, without the strength of grace, is of little value.

**RICHES.** Consider that your riches will not avail in the day of the Lord’s fierce wrath. What is a fat portion to a lean soul? Outward things never mend us but often make us worse. For a man to be proud of his riches is as if a horse was proud of his trappings.

Your riches are but thorns which, without great care, will penetrate your hands. Many names are given in Scripture to riches to wean us from them, such as mammon of unrighteousness, riches that fly away, deceitful riches. St. Augustine says that they are an evil master, a treacherous servant, fathers of flattery, sons of grief, a cause of fear to those who have them, and a cause of sorrow to those who lack them. Christian professors should never be choked with these thorns, nor entangled with these snares. O Christian, never be proud of things that are so transient, injurious, and uncertain as the riches of this evil world! But set your heart on the true and durable riches of grace in Christ Jesus.

**APPAREL.** Consider that had Adam and his posterity continued without sin, they would have been glori-

ous and had no need of garments. But sin brought shame and made garments necessary. Our apparel is our daily monitor to call our sin and shame to remembrance. Can we then be proud of what is a badge of our shame? It would be as reasonable for a thief to be proud of the halter that he has about his neck to hang him for his crimes. Why, our apparel is the very sign of our sin. And shall we convert this into sin itself? Had we been without sin, garments would have been to us like clouds to the sun. God clothed Adam not with silks or velvets, curiously wrought with embroidered gold, but with the skins of beasts, to humble him and not to puff him up with pride; yea, to remind him of his brutish condition and mortality. O that you would consider these words: "Array thyself with shamefacedness and modesty, not with embroidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly apparel; but with humility!" A nobleman would be ashamed to borrow clothes of a beggar; and will you glory in the ornaments which you borrow from birds and beasts? You wear nothing but what beasts, birds, and silkworms wore before you. They were their natural property but became yours by force of arms and violence.

Sinner, remember that your fine clothing does not make you more humble or acceptable with God. It does not abate your pride but increases it. It does not warm your heart with charity, nor ward off the darts of Satan, but rather exposes you to his blows. A vile man adorned with fine clothing is like a dead corpse stuck with flowers, or like the ornamental temples of Egypt, full of reptiles within. If many were stripped of their fine clothing and outward fineries, we should find within, instead of God's image, nothing but pride,

wantonness, and enmity. Shame on Christians who are slaves to vanity!

2. Spiritual gifts. As the natural man is tempted with natural things such as beauty, strength, riches, and apparel, so the Christian is tempted with spiritual things such as gifts, graces, and privileges.

GIFTS. Do you have gifts? Know that they are not your own but God's gifts. What do you have that you have not received? And will you be proud of another's free bounty? You do not know how soon God may take all your talents from you. Matthew Paris says that a preacher grew proud of a sermon which he delivered and said that Christ was his debtor for that sermon. He was instantly struck with ignorance for his blasphemy and obliged to learn the Lord's prayer of a little child. Your gifts were bestowed on you for the benefit of others, for the edification of the church of God. And will you be proud of your Master's money? Suppose He gave you a great sum to distribute among the poor. What folly would it be to call that money your own property? Bernard grew proud of his gifts in the middle of his sermon and turned suddenly to Satan and said, "This sermon was not begun for you, nor shall it end in you." Never forget that you must soon go and give an account of all your gifts to God, who lent them to you for His own service, and said, "Occupy till I come." Should you pride yourself on your gifts instead of laying them out for the glory of your Lord and Master and the benefit of His church and people, what woeful account will you have to give to Christ at His coming? Keep in constant mind that pride of gifts is like a worm bred in a rose. It is the sin of Satan. Avoid it.

**GRACES.** The very nature and design of every grace is to humble the heart of man. Yet some grow proud of their graces, which plainly proves that they are very low in grace, if they have any. Pride of heart is the destruction of grace. It would be as reasonable for a man to think highly of himself because the sun shines upon him and the air breathes on him, as for a sinner to be proud of his grace. Yet not a few trust to their own righteousness for salvation. How little do such men resemble St. Paul! Though he excelled all men in gifts and grace, yet he rested on Christ alone for salvation and said, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." We learn here that the most eminent in grace trust Christ alone for the whole of their salvation. Indeed, we can never be saved without the grace of God in our hearts; yet the very end of this grace is to empty us of self and bring us to live by faith on Christ Jesus.

**PRIVILEGES.** It pleases God at times to give to His people high enjoyment of spiritual things, such as clear views of Christ, manifestations of His love, a sense of pardon, and assurance of hope with peace and joy. The devil often makes these privileges occasions of pride, and this pride soon drives God away, for He knows the proud afar off. High enjoyment seldom lasts long. This is well for us; for, had we always a heavenly feast, our corrupt hearts would be puffed up with

pride. Even Paul, after the heavenly vision, had to have a thorn in the flesh to keep his heart from swelling. If ever God dandles you on the knees of His love till joy and comforts abound, take heed then of this sin of pride. Our fine frames and high enjoyments are generally given us before some bitter trials. The three disciples no sooner beheld the glory of Christ on the Mount than they entered trembling into a dark cloud. The Lord gave Israel the manna, first to feed them, then to humble them in the wilderness. So, in all our comforts, God means first to humble us that He may exalt us in the end. The way to heaven is along the dark valley of humiliation. And they that humble themselves, God will exalt. Take heed, then, of pride, lest Satan is sent to buffet you.

*How to resist and mortify the sin of pride*

I shall here propose some general rules for us to observe, at all times and on all occasions, to resist and mortify the sin of pride.

1. Press into God's presence. Consider the purity, majesty, and glory of God. One view of His glorious majesty would overwhelm your soul with fear. When Job had a glimmering view of the great God, he cried, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." This made Elisha wrap his face in a mantle. This made the angels cover their faces with their wings, and the four and twenty elders cast their crowns before the throne of the Lamb. When we behold, through faith, the glory of the great God, all other glories vanish as the stars before the sun. Come, then, and look at God and be humbled and ashamed that a creature as vile as you are should ever be proud. When once you see the King,

the Lord of Hosts, you will cry, "Woe is me. I am undone, because I am all uncleanness."

Note that sin, especially, which has prevailed most with you for any length of time and dwell on it. David said, "My sin is ever before me. Lord, my heart is not haughty, but I am even as a weaned child." Paul, in looking at his past transgressions, cried that he was the least of all saints and the greatest of sinners. Men are proud because they know not themselves. When Agar had studied himself, he exclaimed, "Surely I am more brutish than any man, I have not the understanding of a man." Were we to examine ourselves and call to mind our foulest sins and worst practices, we should see sufficient cause for deep humiliation and weeping.

2. Observe God's judgments on pride. Nebuchadnezzar was lifted up in pride, and God sent him to dwell with the beasts of the field. And his son Belshazzar took no warning but followed his father's example, and God caused the handwriting on the wall to terrify him. The Lord dealt in a similar manner with Pharaoh, Antiochus, Herod, and other proud tyrants. Attila proudly boasted that the earth trembled and the stars fell before him; he was choked with blood on his wedding day. See by this what God thinks of pride.

3. Look unto Jesus till you are made like Him. He now calls to you and says, "Come and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. This is one great end of My coming unto the world, to be a pattern of humility." Therefore, sinners, come and learn of Him to be humble, for God dwells with the humble and resists the proud, and will know him afar off, Psalm 138:6. A humble Savior and a proud sinner cannot walk together. Christ will never

come up to you in pride; therefore, you must come down in humility before you can ever enjoy communion with Him. Oh, then, “let this same mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.” So He humbled himself for man, and left us an example that we should follow His steps. As pride is the resemblance of the devil and what brought him to ruin, so humility is the resemblance of Christ, which exalted Him to honors. Oh, then, let the same mind be in you as was in Christ Jesus. Look at Him in all the actions of His life; drink of His spirit and tread in His steps, and then go to dwell with Him forever.

4. Be humbled for every act of pride. Check your pride at its first appearing as did Hezekiah on his recovery, and the wrath of the Lord was turned away. It is high time to be humbled when you provoke God to anger. If you are not humbled, judgment must come down. If your hearts are lifted up in pride, “Be afflicted and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to heaviness.” But, if you humble yourselves, God will exalt you.

Cultivate holy principles to keep down the pride of life. Fill the bushel with wheat that there may be no room for the tares and the chaff. Keep in constant mind that “Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.” Humility is the way to glory. “He that shall humble himself shall be exalted.” How is it that we so often forget this, that the way to glory is to go down in humility? What an admirable pattern of this have we in Christ, who first emptied and

humbled Himself to death on the cross, “wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name above every name.” I know not any good but that humility is a means to obtain it; though places of advancement are slippery, yet the humble shall be upheld there. “Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” Oh, think much of these principles and constantly remember that pride leads to hell, but humility to heaven! God ever beats down the proud, and lifts up the humble.

*Temptation to angry passions*

Some are constitutionally choleric and prone to anger, and some grow into that temper of mind by indulging their bad passions. When Satan finds one in a bad passion, he urges him on till he is furious. He takes great advantage of the ill humors of the bodies to drive us into anger and other sins as well. Angry and violent passion give place to the devil, Ephesians 4:26-27. There is a just and lawful anger, for it is said, “Be ye angry and sin not.” We may be angry where God is angry, as Jacob, Moses, Nehemiah, and Jeremiah were. But their anger was holy, temperate, and short. Jonah said that he did well to be angry, when nobody thought so but himself, and when none but God would have put up with his petulancies and passions. His anger gave place to the devil. Some are so foolish and wicked as to indulge their evil tempers, till they fly into evil passions on the most trifling occasion and often grow angry without any cause at all. Such persons are an easy prey to Satan; their spirits are like gunpowder, and one spark of the enemy’s fire causes an explosion. “He that

is soon angry dealeth foolishly.”

We say of some that they are very hasty; but recollect that “he who is of a hasty spirit exalts folly, and he that is slow to wrath is of great understanding,” Proverbs 14:29. Some are in angry moods even when they enter on religious duties, but these can no more ascend to heaven in their spirits than birds without wings can mount to the skies.

You should never retain anger. “Let not the sun go down upon your wrath, neither give place to the devil.” Some will say, “Shall I yield and give place to one that has done me such injury?” Why, better to yield to your brother than to give place to the devil. If you love peace, drink as little as possible of the waters of strife and “let not the sun go down upon your wrath, for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.” God does not retain His anger forever; how much less should we do so? The passion of anger is a fire that will always burn so long as you supply it with fuel.

What are the ends which a passionate man aims at? He aims at the gratification of his evil tempers, he aims at superiority, or he seeks passions. Selfishness is at the root of this sin, as well as all other sins. The passionate man gets angry now that he may have his will at another time; but the aim and end of a real Christian, when he is angry, is that God’s will may be done on earth as it is in heaven. It is not that he may avenge himself, but that he may do good to others by opposing sin. This holy anger differs as widely from sinful anger as a healing balm differs from poison or love from hatred. You now see what sort of anger gives place to the devil.

*The way to conquer angry passions*

1. Be humbled for past transgressions, especially for the sins that you have been most prone to. Oh, the good you would get by this humiliation! Is not this the way to mortify sin at the heart-root? Weeds are easier to get up when the root is moistened than when the root is dry. Anger and passions are more easily subdued when the soul is humbled than when it is hardened and lifted up in pride. Without this humiliation, you can never mortify your sins of anger and passion. Many try, but they all fail till the heart is softened with godly sorrow. Then begin here—weep for your past evil tempers of anger, peevishness, and passions that you may hope to overcome and subdue them in time.

2. Renew your covenant with God day by day. It may be that you are naturally overcome with passions; then say each morning, "I may, in the course of the day, meet with something to disquiet my heart. I will, therefore, in the strength of Christ, resolve, whatever trial meets me this day, to bear it with meekness of spirit." Were you thus to renew your covenant with God day by day and go forth in the strength of the Lord God, then you would soon break the power of your pride and passions.

3. Set a high price upon quietness of spirit and peace of mind. "Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than a houseful of sacrifices with strife." There is as much difference between quietness and strife as there is between a stormy, dark, tempestuous winter night and a calm, sweet, sunshiny summer's day. You soon know which to prefer of these; why not give the same preference to a mild temper and a quiet mind? "A meek spirit is, in the sight of God, of great

price.” It should be so in our eyes also, for it is worth a great deal. It is a jewel of great value. Kings and princes may wear pearls and jewels worth thousands of pounds, but the meek man or woman, however poor, wears a pearl worth a world. Do you not find great benefit and comfort in this quiet and meek frame of mind, especially in times of trial and provocations? Never part with this pearl. What! Would you throw away a pearl because men throw dirt at you? What if some revile and reproach you, will you on that account part with that meek and quiet spirit with which God has adorned your soul? Oh no! Prize it too highly to ever part with it on any account!

4. Remove the occasion of anger. When curious vessels were presented to the king of Thrace, he admired their beauty; but knowing them to be very brittle, he broke them, lest his servants should do so and put him in a passion which he was prone to fall into. When Saul cast a javelin at Jonathan, he departed instantly from his presence. It will be our wisdom to get away from the company of those that have offended us, lest our anger kindle and break out to our sorrow and shame.

5. Divert your attention from what provokes you. It was no bad counsel that was given to a choleric man by a friend who said, “Check your passions till you have time to count twenty or go over the alphabet.” When the mind is once diverted, there will be room to deliberate. As the physician will open a vein to stop bleeding at the nose by diverting the flow of blood another way, so those who are passionate should divert their mind to cool their tempers. The grand remedy of all is to “set God before our eyes,” to look at death, judg-

ment, and the endless eternity. Call the fire of love into action to quench the fire of anger, as the light of the sun puts out the light of fire. Surely, the fire of love to God and man should, at all times, put out the fire of passions towards your enemy. Much may be done by diverting the mind in time.

6. Resist this sin of passion at its first breaking out. A little thing may quench a spark before it breaks out into a flame; but if you stay awhile, buckets of water will not do it. Meddle not with contention. Take as great care to quench the first spark of anger as you would to put out a spark of fire in the midst of barrels of powder. The fire of contention, though small at first, yet, if not suppressed in time, will soon grow into a vehement flame.

Camerarius tells us a story of two brothers walking out in the evening, with the sky full of shining stars. One of them, being a grazier, wished he had as many oxen as there were stars in the firmament. Then said the other brother, "I wish I had pasture as big as the world, then where would you keep your oxen?"

He answered, "In your pasture."

"What! Whether I would or not?"

"Yes," said the other.

This led to a serious quarrel, which proved fatal to them both. The matter was very light at first, but was serious at last. Do we not see many neighbors fall out about very small matters? Were some wise man to mediate in the beginning between them, how easily might they be reconciled. Otherwise, the fire kindles to such a flame that none can extinguish or make them friends again.

7. Be convinced that it is much better to endure

wrong than to be sinfully angry for that wrong. When you bear wrong, Satan cannot hurt you; but if he can put you into an angry fit, he has advantage against you. Augustine said, "When the fowler has laid his nets, he throws stones into the hedges to frighten the birds into his nets." So, when the devil has set his nets to catch poor souls in, he then employs his agents to injure their neighbors to drive them into the nets. Oh, then, take heed of anger! Take heed of the enemy's net, the other side of the hedge. Better to suffer wrong from another than to endure sin in your own soul.

But what am I to do when I am injured? Look at God, consider your own offenses against Him, and see that you commit your cause into His hands. He will manage all for you. God overrules all the evils you meet with. Then say with David, "I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, because Thou didst it." Thus, Joseph looked beyond his brothers' barbarous conduct and said, "God hath sent me before you." Thus Job looked beyond the Chaldean's outrage and said, "The Lord hath taken away." And David looked beyond Shimei's bitter rancor and said, "Let him alone and let him curse, the Lord hath bidden him," 2 Samuel 16:11. And when Christ Jesus endured all manner of cruel sufferings at the hands of His malicious enemies, He called this the cup which His Father had given Him to drink. Then learn to say under all injuries, "This is from God for my good. It is the cross He has appointed for me to carry."

8. Take unto you the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Satan provokes men to anger to prepare them for his own service; if once they yield to anger, they will yield to serve him. But, that you may

resist and conquer him, get your sword always ready at hand. He dreads nothing like the Word of God. It is with this sword you can slay corruptions and satanical temptations.

Do you ask, "How am I to do this?" In this way: when Satan tempts you to any sin and to any wrong temper of mind such as hatred, wrath, emulation, or strife, these, and all such evil tempers, must be subdued. How can you think that you are a true Christian till these corruptions are mortified? "For they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts"; and this must be done with the sword of the Spirit. When you are tempted to any evil temper of mind, seek for the Scriptures that condemn that sin. A belief in that Scripture will arm your soul against the temptation to that sin. Satan may try to persuade you that you may be gracious and yet peevish, holy and fretful, an angry Christian and a wrathful saint! Tell the enemy that you can find no such characters in Scripture. On the contrary, I read that they who are Christ's have crucified the flesh and its affections and lusts. Satan will invent a thousand ways to make you believe that the provocations you have to be in an evil temper will justify you. But go hear what the Lord God said about this, and mark the example which Christ has set before you that you might follow His steps. He cries, "Come and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart." There is your pattern.

9. Therefore, set before you the example of Christ. Imitate this example till it affects your heart and changes it into the same image. It is reported of a very pious earl, who was remarkable for a quiet spirit under all the injuries he met with, that his wife asked him

how he came to have such a meek, humble, and quiet spirit. He answered, "When anyone wrongs me, I instantly turn to look at the injuries that Jesus Christ suffered and continue to look at them till my own spirit is wholly quieted." Does not Christ say to you and to me, "Come, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart"? All Christians should learn this lesson well of their divine Master, to be meek and lowly of heart.

10. Pray down the sin of anger and earnestly beg for the spirit of meekness. Entreat the Lord to quiet and sweeten your froward nature. Pray for heavenly-mindedness, that you may not be disquieted with worldly cares. A heavenly-minded Christian is not soon cast down with worldly troubles. Pray also for faith to cast all your cares upon Him who cares for you. Trust Him who has promised that all things shall work together for your good. God will turn the injuries you endure to your benefit and advantage in the end. Why, then, would you be angry with those who trouble you? If the wicked curse, God will turn their curses into blessings to those who love and serve Him. Pray also for love, which is of more force to restrain you from revenge than any injury is to provoke you to anger, for love "suffereth long and is kind."

Love will induce you to look on him who offends you as your brother whom, therefore, you must forgive as you would have God forgive you. Love will lead you to think of the unbounded mercies of God, whose virtues you must imitate if you are His child. He forgives you and your enemies, and cannot you forgive them? You stand in need of infinite mercy to wash away your many foul offenses, and will you not let one drop of mercy fall on your brother to forgive some trifling

wrong against you? Oh, pray for love, pray for patience, and pray for the assistance of God's Spirit to mortify your anger and sanctify your nature, so that you may serve God, benefit mankind, and extend the kingdom of salvation upon earth!

# Chapter 5

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## *Of Our Outward Conditions*

### **1. On condemning our brethren**

This is a very common sin. Paul blames the Corinthians and James rebukes the Jews for their extreme partiality to the rich and their contempt of their poor brethren. There is a warrantable respect due to the aged, the gifted, the good, and the great; but we must not prefer the ungodly rich to the pious poor, nor show more respect to worldly luster than to spirituality of character. But strong faith should be preferred to a gold ring, and true holiness to worldly riches. "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven?" He has filled the hungry soul with good things, and the rich He sends away empty. The men of the world who grow rich in earthly treasures are apt to despise the poor. What do they care for the poor? They value their dogs before them. They too often despise their poor brethren because they bear the image of the Lord Christ. They who idolize the world despise the poor both for their poverty and piety while God esteems them as the excellent of the earth.

### **2. The Christian's duties**

1. *Own the people that fear God, let them be ever so poor in this world.* "Hath not God chosen the poor of this

world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven?" They are the glory of God, the treasure of God, the portion of God, and His peculiar people. And shall we be ashamed of them who are the children of grace because they are poor? What is this but to be ashamed of Christ? For He counts these as His members, looks upon what is done to them as done to Himself, and will say in the day of judgment, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto them, ye have done it unto Me." Oh, then, be not ashamed of them, as you would not have Christ to be ashamed of you! They are the treasure of the church and the glory of Christ, and, on that account, we should highly value them. The pious poor are precious treasures, indeed, for Christ dwells in them. What jewels are so precious as those in whom Christ has His habitation? Then, for shame, be not ashamed of the godly poor.

When pious Lawrence was to suffer martyrdom, the tyrant who persecuted him took him to be a rich man and demanded that he reveal where his treasures were kept. Lawrence gathered a company of the pious poor and said, "These are the precious treasures of the church which I am to take care of, and in whom Christ dwells and reigns."

2. *Cleave close to them who fear God.* "Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate." Jerome advised his friends to go often to the cells of the poor and needy. Rich men will associate with the rich and also with the profane and debauched poor who will flatter their vices. They can be hospitable to the wicked rabble but will have nothing to do with the needy members of Christ. Alas! This is not the life of Christians but of heathens. One soul, be the man ever so

poor, if he has Christ dwelling in him, is of far more value than a whole town of debauched profligates and atheistic wretches. God's people, whether poor or rich, are the glory of the world. God speaks of all the rest as vile and worthless. "Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth like dross." God's people are usually called in Scripture His portion, "The Lord's portion is His people," Deuteronomy 32:9; His treasure, His peculiar treasure, "Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people," Exodus 19:5; His glory, the crown of His glory, "Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God," Isaiah 62:3. What! Is it so? Poor saints in such esteem with God that He esteems them as His portion, His treasure, and His glory! Oh, then, how you ought to cleave to such a people and associate much with them whose society is, indeed, the communion of saints.

3. *Delight in these people, as those in whom God Himself delights.* King David said unto the Lord, "My goodness extendeth not to thee, but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight." Kings have their delights, and the poor saints were King David's chief delight on earth. No wonder, for in this he conforms to God, whose chief delight is in His saints. Hence, some observe that the lion and the eagle were not offered in sacrifice to God, but the poor lamb and the meek dove were. The great of the world, though high as the eagle and strong as the lion, are not regarded of God; but those that are contemptible in the eyes of the world are precious in the sight of God. Then you should delight in those that are the delight of the Lord God.

4. *Do them good as the best and chief objects of charity.* “Do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.” There is a mistaken charity. If you are loving and charitable to all sorts of men without distinction, it may get you a name, a good report, and the praise of men, but it is the will of God that you should give a decided preference to the household of faith. These are they who represent Christ and are, indeed, the members of Christ. So He will tell you in the last day. “For I was hungry, and ye gave Me meat; thirsty, and ye gave Me drink. I was a stranger, and ye took Me in; naked, and ye clothed Me, sick, and ye visited Me; in prison, and ye came unto Me. Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.” The proud and wicked are not Christ’s brethren. The pious poor, the humble, and the meek are those that He owns as His brethren, and what is done unto them He reckons as done unto Himself. Oh, then, act towards these as you would act towards Christ himself, for they are His members!

### **3. On the use of unlawful means**

If we are in adversity, Satan will tempt us to use unlawful means to relieve ourselves. Thus, when Christ had no ordinary means of getting bread, the enemy tempted Him to work a miracle. When Esau came out of the field, weary and hungry, then Satan said “Sell your birthright.” And so he did. When Peter was in a perilous situation, Satan said, “Deny your Master and swear to a lie.” He did so and soon wept bitterly, as Esau had done. Satan still says to those who are in adversity and want, “You must live. You must not send your family begging. You must sell your wares, though

by lying, swearing, and deceiving.”

Time of necessity is the devil’s opportunity to set upon us. Fowlers usually set their snares for birds in cold winter days, when they can find no food. We see that both poverty and riches have dangers attending them. Let me not be poor, lest I steal and take the name of God in vain. In poverty, we are strongly tempted to distrust God, to lie, to swear, to steal, or to use some unlawful means to help ourselves. Many a time have I seen a poor professor put to his shifts; and little do we know the strength of his temptation to do wrong. To such, let me give my counsel.

#### 4. The Christian’s duties

1. *Consider that all good things are beautiful when rightly performed.* Therefore, the godly man ever inquires what is just and right in the sight of God, not what may be gained by fraud, deceit, and falsehood. “Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues without right.”

2. *Consider that when ordinary and lawful means fail, it is never necessary to use unlawful means.* Do you say, “I must live, and I must maintain my family”? You had better perish than live by breaking God’s commandments. If you die for want of means to live, you may go to heaven like Lazarus and exchange a miserable life for a life of glory. But, in saving your life by unlawful means, you lose your soul. Where then is your gain? You had better starve than provoke God to anger and go to hell. Oh, take heed, and be ashamed to say that you found it necessary to break God’s commandments and send your soul to destruction!

3. *Consider that what is gotten with ill means is gotten*

*with God's anger and the shipwreck of a good conscience.* A hard bargain indeed! What if you get riches by a false oath or a lie? Surely, truth and a good conscience, which you part with, are of far greater value. Oh, it is a pitiful exchange to part with our most precious jewels for dung and dross! "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Oh, the folly of getting a little wealth by the loss of your God, your soul, and the crown of life! A good conscience is of far more worth than the whole world.

Mr. [William] Perkins relates a story of a good man who, being ready to starve, stole a lamb. He was about to eat it with his poor children, and going, as his manner was, to crave a blessing, he durst not do it but fell into a great perplexity of conscience, acknowledged his fault to the owner and promised to make restitution, if ever God enabled him. If ever you repent of sins committed, thus will your conscience smite you; but if you never repent, your conscience will be like a worm, gnawing on you forever.

4. *Labor to live a life of faith.* If lawful means fail, as bread in famine, even then, "Trust in the Lord, and do good, and verily thou shalt be fed." Yes, verily, you shall be fed. In troublesome times, the just must live by faith on the promises of God. Abraham did so when he said to his son, "God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering." It may be you are low and can hardly find bread to eat. God can make a dry crust to nourish you as well as richer food. If you cannot find lawful means, never use unlawful shifts to help yourself. "He that believeth shall not make haste." Christ, in His greatest need, would not turn stones into bread to save His life. And will you, in order to increase your wealth, be guilty

of oppression and extortion? Oh, remember that “man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” The Lord would have us live by faith and depend on Him in the greatest straits, for He is “God all-sufficient.”

# Chapter 6

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## *Of Our Spiritual Condition*

There are weak Christians and some who are strong in the faith. Satan has temptations for each of them. The weak he tempts to errors, despondency, and blind zeal. The strong he tempts to pride, hypocrisy, presumption, and boasting. I shall here speak only of one temptation for each of these.

### **1. The weak are tempted to errors.**

1. *If Christians are weak in knowledge, the deceiver leads them into some false doctrines and persuades them that such are some precious truths of the gospel.* If men are godly, he cannot seduce them into damnable errors; but he often leads them into very injurious errors, to their loss and shame. When the deceiver fails to seduce weak Christians into error, he will try to make them question the truth of the doctrines which they have already received. If he fails in this, he will try to shake and perplex them so that they may neither enjoy religion nor grow in grace. The various opinions, errors, and disputes which are in the Christian church are very perplexing and hurtful to weak Christians. What numbers of unwary souls have been entangled in these nets!

2. *Satan's great design in all ages of the church has been to raise up some impostors and notable seducers to perplex and trouble the church of God.* Having no comfort in himself,

he envies those who have and casts stumbling blocks in their way to disturb them in their journey heavenward. He presents errors to divert men from the truth and destroy their spiritual enjoyments. Satan knows that glorious times are coming on the church, when the knowledge of the gospel shall be universal. Now, the deceiver of mankind will invent many errors and false views of that glorious period in order to perplex men's minds and cause divisions in the church of God. When God is sowing His wheat, Satan is busy sowing his tares. The enemy is never so busy as when the work of God goes on prosperously. He hopes, in the heat of the market, to sell his own dirty wares. He now contrives to blind men's eyes with the light and drive them on furiously till they are led in a winding way into his own territories. Errors are sown thicker in times of revival in the church of God than at any other times. And, if men refuse to swallow these errors, Satan will try to perplex their minds and destroy their enjoyment of divine truth. No wonder that he prevails with weak Christians who know not how to resist his temptations.

#### **Directions how to resist these assaults**

1. *That you may be able to overcome Satan, take care that you clearly understand and firmly believe the grand fundamental doctrines of the gospel, without which there is no heaven, no salvation.* The ripest Christians must have daily recourse to the first principles of Christ's religion. All Christians must continually live on them as their daily bread. The lack of this knowledge is the cause of much heresy, hypocrisy, and self-deception, which prevail in our day. Come, then, and be well grounded in these fundamentals. You have them in the catechism of

your church and, especially, in the Scripture. When you are well grounded and rooted in the truth, you are likely to stand fast in the day of trial, to ward off Satan's fiery darts, and to grow in every grace. It is to our misery, and Satan's advantage, that Christians are so earnest about the circumstantial, and so negligent about the essentials of religion, upon which the eternal happiness of man depends.

2. *Take heed that you never spend your time and thoughts in controversies.* The enemy has not prevailed in anything like to this. Controversies are fuel for the fire of contention, which is blown up by evil spirits. What fierce contests do we see about church government and discipline! Different parties, like foolish children, throw dirt in each other's faces, while the common enemy prevails and triumphs over them all. Those divines who decline these angry controversies act like wise men. It is recorded of Zachary Ursinus that, when his enemies reviled and provoked him, he moved to a far country rather than dispute, so that he might avoid brawling and live in peace. None are so likely to fall into heresies as those who are fond of wrangling about trivial points. If the form of church government had been as necessary to salvation as the doctrine of Christ, He would not have left one in the dark when the other is made so clear. All ought to avoid doubtful disputations, and to view them as the devices of Satan against the saints. One of the best books on this subject is *Irenicum* by Mr. [Edward] Stillingfleet.

3. *Get a humble heart and a meek spirit. God reveals His secrets to the humble and meek.* "The meek will He guide in judgment and the meek will He teach His way." God will break open His mind to the broken in

heart. These are the men that will find out truth in controversy. Oh, what contention have we about the form of government in church and state! What firing as enemies upon one another is there among the soldiers of Christ, till they appear more like Satan's soldiers than the saints of God! They appear more like tempters to sin than helpers in grace to each other. Oh, that we would serve one another and help one another in holy faith and love! Let us be ashamed of our iniquities. This would be the way to find out truth in controversies and make progress heavenward.

4. *Walk according to the truths you have received and, when you are found faithful over a little, more shall be given you.* When you act according to the light you have, God will lead you on and reveal more of His mind to you. We have a plain Scripture for this: "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded; and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you." That is, as many as are well grounded and walk in the truth, let these walk by the Word of God as their rule of faith and practice, and this will teach them to agree among themselves and love one another.

5. *Be much in reading and hearing the Word of God.* So Jesus directed the Jews that they might be convinced that He was their expected Messiah. "Search the Scriptures . . . for these are they which testify of Me." There is enough in the Scriptures to keep us from errors in all things necessary to salvation.

**OBJECTION.** Different men put different senses on many parts of Scripture. How, then, can I know which is the right sense?

ANSWER. To this I answer, look at the occasion, connection, and circumstances of what is spoken. Compare one place of Scripture with another, where the same thing is more clearly expressed. Consult the most approved commentators. Cultivate a humble and devotional spirit, and pray much for the teaching and guidance of the Holy Ghost to enlighten your eyes and to guide you into all truth by the Scriptures. Cry in the words and spirit of holy David: "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law, that I may understand the wonderful things of Thy law." Should you, after all this, fail to understand some passages, you may be sure that this will not affect your salvation, for what is necessary to salvation is clearly revealed.

## **2. Strong Christians' temptations**

If Christians are strong in grace, Satan tempts them to boast and pride themselves in their strength of grace already received. Thus He dealt with Peter when he made that confident boasting and said to his Master, "Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended." And thus the enemy deals with too many in our day. Strong Christians, in their right mood, do not openly boast of their strength. A man of grace could not do this; but, in the hour of temptation, Satan may drive him to proud boasting, and many, as well as Peter, have yielded to the enemy in this very sin. Indeed, it is rare to see a great Christian who is at no time too sensible of his strength and too full of conceit of his own abilities. I have already spoken of the sin of pride and given directions how to subdue it. I shall now proceed to give a few more direc-

tions for the same end.

1. *Consider, if you are conceited of your strength in grace, that you are in danger of neglecting your duties and in the ready way to despise ordinances, unless some favorable preacher enters the pulpit.* Such were the Corinthians whom Paul reproved in this ironical style: "Now ye are full. I remember the time when you were empty and heard me with gladness of heart and rejoiced when I arrived in your town; but then you were poor and empty. Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us." To the Corinthians, Paul is now a plain man. He may go and preach to some ignorant people; but, as for them, they are above such plain babbling. Oh, that we had no occasion to speak so to some who extol themselves above others and conceive that they want nothing! Would to God that such people had a little more self-knowledge and humility of heart. We may expect to hear of those who are lifted up in pride, that they soon sink into degradation and become offensive to God and man.

2. *Consider that a high conceit of your strength in grace will make you too bold and presumptuous.* Mr. [William] Gurnal tells us, "The humble Christian is the wary Christian, he knows his weakness, and this makes him afraid; with my weak head, saith he, I may soon be led into error and heresy. I dare not dispute with such men, nor read their books." But the confident man is afraid of no poison. He thinks himself so established that he can safely venture on the most dangerous ground. The humble will not trust himself with the company of loose characters, lest he should learn their wicked ways; but the self-confident will rush into places where the plague reigns, fearing no infection, till he is

struck with death.

3. *Consider that a conceit of your strength in grace will make you cruel to your weak brothers in their infirmities.* Surely this sin becomes a saint. It is the Apostle's counsel, "If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness." May you may have this spirit, "Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Why are many so sharp in their censures, but because they have too much self-confidence, as if they could never fall? When Bernard heard of any scandalous sin of a professor, he would say, "He fell today, and I may stumble tomorrow."

Turn away your thoughts, for a while, from your own conceited worthiness and fasten them on your corruptions and infirmities, upon your deficiencies in religious duties, wants and weaknesses in prayer, omissions in trying to enlarge the kingdom of Christ, and many other feelings. Then you will be so far from indulging self-confidence and pride of your own gifts and graces that you will find great cause for repentance and shame. Guard against spiritual pride to the uttermost.

4. *Consider that the strongest Christian has not his strength in himself but in the Lord Christ.* "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." As all the myrrh and odors of Esther's purification, her riches and costly apparel were all given her out of the king's house, and the royal crown that she wore was put on her head by the king's own hands, so all the purity and perfection, all the righteousness and holiness, all the dignity and excellency of a holy, gracious soul are drawn from Christ. He alone is the root by whom the Christian is sustained, the spring by which he is replenished, the sun

by which he is enlightened, and the garment by which he is clad and covered. Whatsoever goodness, grace, or excellency is in the Christian, he derives all from Christ, and nothing is his own. Paul was not ashamed to acknowledge his own poverty and ascribe all he had to Christ when he said, "We are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God." So very lowly did the great Apostle think of himself; and shall any of us think highly of ourselves, and so rob God of His glory and Christ of His grace? Every ray of grace proceeds from the Sun of righteousness, and shall the dunghill boast because the sun shines upon it? Or shall the Christian admire himself because the Sun of righteousness has shone upon him? Oh, God forbid!

5. *Consider, Christian, that the stronger you are in grace, the lower you should be in humility.* "The more holy, the more lowly." Who so exalted as Christ, and who so humble? We see in Him that the highest excellence and the deepest humility go together.

Some think that great humility in a great Christian would be counted meanness, but was there ever a character so eminent as the Lord Christ, and yet was there ever one of such a humble spirit in this world? Men are mistaken in this thing, for a proud spirit is the base spirit and a humble spirit is the noble spirit. Humility is a grace that puts luster, beauty, and glory on all other graces. Therefore, the Apostle said to strong Christians, "Be clothed with humility." Humility is the highest glory of the Christian, and the chief ornament of every grace. It graces all graces, and makes the Christian beautiful in the sight of God. Be, therefore, clothed with humility.

6. *Consider that the more lowly and meek the soul is made, the more it is fitted for all the duties of religion and to make progress in grace.* It makes him to profit by affliction like the vine under the hand of the dresser. A broken heart, like the broken ground, is prepared to receive the seed or, like the empty vessel, ready to be filled. A deep sense of our poverty makes Christ appear precious and the chiefest among ten thousand. Humility of heart disposes the soul for every spiritual duty and makes the yoke of Christ easy. The soul never thrives more than when it is humble under the strength which God has given it. "He hath filled the hungry with good things"; but, when the soul begins to swell, it is time for God to stop His hand. If what God gives to feed the soul goes to feed self-applause, that soul will soon fall into consumption. "Proud hearts, and lofty mountains, are never fruitful." When a Christian tries to live on the old stock, instead of carrying on trade with heaven to bring in more, he will very soon be in a state of bankruptcy. Oh, the difference between one who is lowly of heart and one who is proud and insolent! When humble, he prays for strength; when proud, he prays to show his strength that others may admire him. If God loves him, He will soon take away from him that which takes his heart away from God.

### **Of Satan's suggestions**

When his temptations do not prevail, he has recourse to these injections.\* He opens his quiver, sends out a shower of arrows, and fills the soul with conster-

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\* This begins the section to which the author referred in the beginning of chapter 4 on page 77.

nation and horror. These blasphemous thoughts which the enemy pours into our fancies, much against our wills, are terrible and set all within on fire. These horrid thoughts come so quickly and powerfully that our flesh, as well as our spirit, trembles till the soul is filled with dread of speedy vengeance.

But are the children of grace ever troubled with these black temptations and horrid blasphemies? Yes, and none more common. The most holy hearts are often most haunted with them. Satan seldom disturbs his own willing servants with these fearful injections, unless it is to prevent their conversion or to drive them to despair. He lets them alone in this world, knowing that he will have eternity to torment them. The devil knows full well that the children of God have already happily escaped out of his kingdom, are beyond his power to destroy them, and will be wholly out of his reach to torment them in the world to come. He will, therefore, to the utmost of his power, harass and distress them on their way home to heaven. I very much doubt whether any of the godly are always free from these horrid and infernal injections of Satan. Such foul and fearful thoughts are put into their heads as they dare not mention to their friends. They think that none of the people of God ever had such vile and dreadful thoughts as dart into their minds, and how they got there, they know not how.

A very pious minister once said from the pulpit, "I would kiss the feet of the messenger that would bring me the glad tidings that I should never more be troubled with degrading and blasphemous thoughts of Christ my God." A deep groan was heard instantaneously throughout the whole congregation, which

seemed to imply that they also had experienced something of the same bitter trial.

### **Directions to the Christian warrior**

Before we come to the directions, I would briefly observe that it is very difficult, if not impossible, to always distinguish between the injections of Satan and the workings of our own corruptions. I have, at different times, thought much on this matter, and few had more reasons for so doing, but I confess that the subject is still covered with darkness. If these blasphemous suggestions come after conversion and not before, we may conclude that they are from Satan as revenge on the soul for departing from his kingdom and service. Again, Satan's injections are usually violent and sudden, and leave man no time to know what he is doing. If man resists and prays against them, there is reason to conclude that the enemy has a great hand in them. It would, indeed, be very gratifying to be able to distinguish between the injections of the devil and the evils that spring up in our own hearts; yet it is far more desirable to know how to overcome these black temptations. Then let us proceed to consider these directions.

1. *Let us beat them back as much as we can.* Let us never consent or approve of them, and we are safe. This may comfort us whether they come from Satan or ourselves, and we should not perplex ourselves much in inquiring where they come from. Let them come from where they may, if we hate and reject them, they are not imputed unto us. The rule runs thus: that only is ours which we accept and assent unto. "Now, if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it"; therefore, God imputes no more to us than that which we allow.

What we do not allow, but abhor and reject, is no sin to us but our cross.

2. *Let us not stop to debate and argue the point with the tempter, but instantly bid him to depart.* So did Christ deal with him when he tempted Him to fall down and worship him. “Away, Satan!” said Christ. Let us follow this example, for we have no chance to debate with such a subtle sophister. He has been, for nearly six thousand years, practicing his hideous temptations and his infernal policies. We are mere novices and know but little of the devices and depths of Satan; if we then stop to debate with him, we are sure to be more and more confounded. Surely, it is far wiser to bid Satan to depart than parley and dispute with him on any point. When he suggests evil thoughts to our minds, we should loathe, abhor, and cast them away at once after the example of our Lord and Savior; then the tempter will, for a season, depart from us as he did from Christ.

A very pious woman said one day to her minister, “I am so pestered with Satan’s vile and blasphemous suggestions that I have no peace of mind, nor comfort of my life.”

The minister gave her this advice: “When any of these evil thoughts are suggested to your mind, take no manner of notice of them, but go on with what you have in hand, whether it be your worldly employment or religious duties, and care not what Satan says to you; he is doing his work, and you must go on with yours, without ever stopping to listen to his blasphemies; for he was a liar from the beginning.”

After a few weeks, the said good woman accosted her minister thus, “Sir, the devil is very angry with you.”

“What for?”

“I followed your advice, and the tempter now lets me alone, to my peace and comfort.” So let every tempted soul act.

3. *During the hour and power of darkness, avoid solitariness and desert places where Satan has the greatest advantage for all his assaults.* When Christ was to be tempted, the Holy Spirit led Him into the wilderness that Satan might have the utmost advantage against Him. He attacked Adam, Lot, and David when he found them alone. He tempts in the public assemblies; yet none are so much to his purpose as solitary places. When he possessed individuals, he took them into the wilderness. He is the prince of darkness and chooses darkness for his work. I shall here give my own experience. I spent my time in very public places till I was wearied with the envy, jealousy, and discord I found among men, which made me go to spend the remainder of my life in solitude. But alas! I soon found that retirement is not free from temptations of another sort, especially Satan’s hideous and horrible injections. I soon found that it is a mistaken policy to leave society for solitude, for there the enemy has more advantage against us; but if God, in His providence, leads us there, we may trust in Him for protection and deliverance. If it is your lot to be very much in solitude, take care of a wandering heart. The mind, like a mill, will be ever going; take much pains to give it a right direction. Strive so to spend your time in solitude that you may say, with Scipio, that you are never less alone than when alone; or rather, with Christ, “I am not alone, for the Father is with Me.” No place is so sweet or profitable as retirement, if time and talents are rightly employed; for there we have less interruption of our conversation

with God about everlasting things and of our worship of Him in spirit and in truth.

4. *We must guard against idleness.* Holy exercises and the duties of our lawful callings should occupy our whole time. converse much with wise and pious persons. Consult them and follow their direction. Be frequent and fervent in prayer that you may not be led into temptation. Say to Christ, "Lord, rebuke Satan, and restrain his malice. Suffer him not to harass my mind with his fiery darts or hellish blasphemies." Or, if you are tempted, "Save my soul from sinning."

Be diligent in your worldly calling also so that the enemy may not find you idle, which is his favorite opportunity to ensnare the soul. Very nervous people, above all others, should have their minds constantly employed, for Satan delights to torment them with wicked thoughts more than any class of men because they, of all others, are the most likely to yield to his suggestions and to think his injections to be their own sins. Good Mr. William Gurnal says that "Satan lays his brats before their doors, and they, in their simplicity, take them in and nurse them for their own children." If we give constant employment to our thoughts, we shall have no leisure to listen to Satan's suggestions.

If, after all, we cannot get rid of these sad injections, let us not grieve over much but look on them as Satan's sin and not ours. Let them pass as they come, without any great trouble. Say to Satan, "Oh, my enemy, do your worst. I am safe, having committed myself into the care and keeping of One almighty to save. God is my rock and refuge, and under the shadow of His wings will I hide myself till the indignation is past."

# Chapter 7

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## *Assaults at the End of Life*

We have already considered the assaults of our enemies at three different periods of our lives, that is: (1.) In childhood; (2.) In the time of conversion; (3.) In later life. And now we shall notice the assaults at death, and show how we are then to act.

### **1. Assaults at the end of life**

1. *God permits some of the best of men to have their fiercest conflicts at the end of life.* The excellent Mr. [Robert] Bolton says, "It is Satan's policy to conceal his most desperate assaults unto the last. He reserves his keenest darts, his most deadly poisons, and his sharpest sting, until he finds us on our deathbed."

Another great divine says, "As evil spirits are ever busy and restless in their assaults, so their last conflicts are generally the most vehement, when the soul is about departing forever out of his reach. Cruel and cowardly enemies always take advantage of the weakness and suffering condition of those they wish to crush." So Satan deals with dying men; but the Christian is as safe as Noah in the ark.

2. *I have often wondered why some of the saints are not most troubled in death.* We see many of them pass out of the world without any molestation, but it is not the will of the enemy to let them go free. God has him in a

chain and restrains his malice so that he is compelled to let them die quietly. God gives His angels charge concerning them, to guard them unmolested through the dark valley of death; otherwise, not one of them all would escape the enemy's fiery darts while passing from time to eternity. Some of these Christian warriors, after contending with Satan and his angels all the way through life, have the fiercest encounters of all when they come to leave the world. I shall now proceed to speak of some of these final conflicts.

3. *There can be no doubt that such a subtle enemy as the devil has an endless variety of temptations for dying men, but our time is too short to fathom the depths of Satan.* We can yet only guess at the variety of the enemy's assaults on Christians at their death. A few of them are these: Some he drives to unfounded confidence, others to distrust. Some he fills with spiritual pride, others with dejection. He persuades some that they are rich and have need of nothing, and tells others that they have no grace at all. Some he fills with too confident assurance of their election, others with fear that they are reprobates. Some he fills with overmuch sorrow through fear of eternal death, others he so stupefies that they mind neither death nor judgment. I cannot here attend to all these particulars and shall pass on to speak of these two things: presumption and despair.

### 1. *Presumption at death*

Some may be tempted on their deathbed to trust the goodness of their past lives. They see that their lives have been holy, that they have walked before God in truth and with a perfect heart, and that they have

done that which was good in His sight. Happy for those who can look back on such a life as this. It has the image of Christ upon it. Such a holy life was the fruit of the Spirit and preparation for glory. Yea, such a life of piety every Christian ought to lead and to bless God most heartily when He has given him grace to walk in the ways of the Lord.

But should the Christian, in reviewing the goodness of his life, trust this in whole or in part for salvation, he is guilty of great presumption which calls for repentance. It is our duty to attribute all the good we have done and the holiness of our character to the grace of Christ and to give Him the glory of our salvation. If we trust our good works, or rest on them for salvation, or pride ourselves in anything we have done, we are guilty of high presumption and rob Christ of the glory due to His name. After we have done all, let us say, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to Thy name be all the praise and glory."

### *The Christian warrior's duty*

1. Trust nothing in yourself, for all is of grace. Whatsoever good you have done or however holy your life has been, it was not of yourself but of the free gift and grace of God in Christ Jesus. What have we that we have not received; and, if we have received it, why do we glory as if we have not received it?

It is related of Mr. [John] Knox that, the night before his death, he slept some hours with great unquietness, often sighing and groaning. When he awoke, the bystanders asked him why he mourned so heavily. He answered, "In my lifetime, I have been as-

saulted with temptations from Satan, and he has often cast my sins in my teeth, to drive me to despair; yet God gave me strength to overcome all his temptations. But now the subtle serpent takes another course, and seeks to persuade me that all my labors in the ministry, and my fidelity in that service, have merited heaven and immortality. But blessed be God who has brought to my mind these Scriptures: "What hast thou that thou hast not received? Not I, but the grace of God in me, with which he is gone away ashamed, and shall no more return. And now I am sure that the battle is at an end, and that without pain of body or trouble of mind I shall shortly change this mortal and miserable life for a glorious immortality."

Oh, that thus it may be with us, that God's grace may be all, and we nothing. We are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God.

2. Rest not on anything short of Christ Jesus, neither on grace, nor duties, nor holiness. None of these are to be trusted for a foundation. We must, indeed, hold them fast in point of practice and obedience; but it would be our sin and danger to hold them fast in reliance and confidence. Do them we must, but glory in them we must not. We may remember, on deathbeds, what we have done and how holy we have been in obedience to God by the grace of Christ. Yea, we may go farther and desire God to remember us, concerning them, as Nehemiah did, who said to God, "Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of Thy mercy." He had done many good offices to the Church, and he desired God to remember him concerning them. "Think upon me,

my God, for good, according to all I have done for this people." Yet we are not to boast of them, nor trust in them, nor expect to be paid for them. It is not *for* all I have done, but *according* to all. Christ will reward His people "according to their works." They are the best evidences we can give of our inward grace. But He does not give us heaven in the way of payment, as if we merited it by our works; no, our Savior tells us that, when we have done all we can do, we must confess that we are unprofitable servants. All the wicked are called "unprofitable servants," and are sent to destruction; and all the righteous can give God nothing. "Can a man be profitable unto God?" If you are righteous, what do you give Him? Or what does He receive from your hands? Then, take heed of resting on or trusting any righteousness or works of your own. They are not the cause of salvation; therefore, to trust in them is dangerous presumption.

3. We must roll ourselves on Christ, and Christ alone, for life and salvation. Bellarmine, the self-righteous Papist, went so far as to say, "It is well to rely on works, on saints and angels; but it is safer to rely on Christ himself." Angels are ministering servants and are commissioned to do many kind offices for the heirs of salvation, but all the angels in heaven are not sufficient without Christ Himself. Faith is not content with the presence and services of angels, unless the Lord Jesus comes along with them, for He alone is "our righteousness and strength." David, in his difficulties, said to the Lord, "I will trust in Thee." All the saints must say the same, for whom have we in heaven or earth that can save us but Jesus Himself? We must not trust in works however good, but in the Lord our righteous-

ness. We must expect all from the pure mercy of God in Christ and have no confidence in the flesh. This act of faith is so highly pleasing to God that He engages that such a soul shall never be ashamed. A heathen could say, when a bird, scared by a hawk, flew into his bosom, "I will not betray you unto your enemy, seeing that you come to me for sanctuary." How much less will God yield up a soul unto its enemy when it takes refuge in the bosom of His love saying, "Lord, I am troubled with such a temptation, but I trust in Thee; I rest upon Thee for life and salvation. O take me into the bosom of Thy love for Christ's sake! O, enfold me in the arms of Thine everlasting strength! I have no confidence in myself, or in any other, but Thee alone. Into Thy hands I commit my cause, my life, my soul, my all. Whether I live or die, here will I cleave and abide forever."

Oh, blessed soul that acts in this manner and rolls himself on Christ for salvation! He is forever out of Satan's power.

## 2. *Of despondency in death*

When Satan fails to lead men to presumption, he will strive to send them to despondency and despair. This is the gulf that swallowed up many souls. If he prevails here, he gains his point and makes sure of his prey. That he may prevail, he sets before them all the gross sins which they have ever committed and all the judgments which those sins deserve. These are what he tries to fasten on their minds by day and by night. He says to them, as it were, "Come, sinner, read here the

character, the number, and the magnitude of your scarlet sins. See the heinousness of your transgressions. And can these ever be washed away? You know that no unclean thing shall enter into the kingdom of God. And can you hope, with all your sins, to pass through those golden gates? 'There shall in no wise enter into it, any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie.' And do you not stand guilty of all these sins? What hope then can you have of entering through those gates into the city? Come, despair and die; expect nothing but the wrath of the Judge and the wages of sin, which is death eternal for soul and body."

Satan knows that when these souls enter into heaven, he can never afterwards trouble them. He will, therefore, torment them now to the utmost of his power.

### *Directions to the Christian warrior*

1. Consider that it is as easy with God, upon true repentance, to forgive the greatest sins as the least; and that He is as willing to forgive many sins as to pardon one. His mercy indeed shines more in pardoning great sinners than small offenders, as appears in the case of Manasseh, Magdalene, Peter, Saul, and others. "Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." What glad tidings are these to penitents who cry for mercy!

2. Consider that Christ is the remedy appointed by God the Father to save sinful souls. If Satan then tells us that we are miserable sinners and must despair, we

may answer that Christ came into the world to save sinners. A good woman, who was sorely harassed with temptations, said to Satan, "What are you doing here, Satan? Have you come to distress a servant of the Lord? I tell you, you have no part or portion in me. I am, and forever shall be, the Lord's portion. What can you lay to my charge, when my God has acquitted me of guilt? 'Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!' The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses me from all sin and delivers me from condemnation. My heavenly surety has nailed my sins to His cross, has atoned for them with His precious blood, and has applied that blood to my conscience, and so has made me free from sin and death." By pleading these things in faith, she was happily delivered from her temptations and began to rejoice in God her Saviour.

3. Many of the saints of God have reaped no small benefit by recording the dealings of God with their own souls and looking over them in times of distress. Dr. [Edmund] Calamy speaks of a very good woman who had, for many years, written down her evidences for heaven. Before she died, she was for a time suffered to sink into darkness and despondency. By reading over her own diary and observing the past loving-kindness of the Lord and the sweet communion she had often enjoyed with Christ her God and Savior, her gloomy fears vanished and her soul began to triumph in her great Deliverer.

4. Study the promises which best suit your trials and conditions, such as these: "Behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor

principalities, nor powers, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," Romans 8. And, "having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them on the cross; and so through death, destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; that He might deliver them which, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage." "The God of peace shall shortly bruise Satan under your feet."

The devil's rage is greatest when his time is shortest, as the darkness is greatest a little before daylight; but his rage is a sign that a calm is at hand. Do you say that your sins are as black as hell and as red as blood? Still the voice from heaven is, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow." Where is the sinner who can despair of pardoning mercy while the voice from heaven is crying, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts"?

Surely, this language of transcendent mercy is sufficient to cheer the spirits of the most desponding sinner on earth who cries for mercy in the spirit of repentance. See that the most guilty of all is invited to the fountain of grace. Whosoever will, let him come and drink of the waters of life freely. Will any, after all, cry, "There is no mercy for me because of the nature and

greatness of my transgression”?

“What!” says God, “will you measure your sins against My mercies? You sin as a creature and I pardon as God. Do not forget that My ways are higher than your ways, as far as the heavens are higher than the earth.”

Desponding sinner, will not this suffice? Cannot all the riches of grace in God supply your wants? Away with your unbelief and despondency together. Honor God with faith and He will honor you with salvation.

5. Pray earnestly that the Lord may step in and help you by the power of His might. This was the way of the saints of old. I shall mention a few. Jerome speaks of two ladies, eminent in holiness, who prayed earnestly that those envious spirits might not disturb them in their last passage, and were heard. St. Bernard, when he drew near his end, entreated his friends to pray that the heel of his life might be so safe that the serpent might have nowhere to fix his sting. Bishop [Joseph] Hall made this prayer at the close of life: “Arm me, O my God, for the last brunt, and stand by me in my last combat. Make me faithful unto death, that Thou mayest give me the crown of life.”

Should we be assaulted by the enemy in death, let us pray thus: “Remember me, O my God, according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies; blot out all my iniquities from the good of Thy remembrance, for Thy name’s sake. Impute not unto me those hellish thoughts, suggested by Satan, which I detest and long to be delivered from. O Lord, cause the light of Thy countenance to shine upon me. Refresh my weary soul with a sense of Thy mercy. Dispel the mist of this black temptation. Rebuke the enemy and restrain his malice.

Thou art the God of my peace. Tread Satan, I beseech Thee, shortly under my feet so that I may finish my course with a quiet and cheerful spirit. Oh, plead my cause against all my enemies and rescue my soul from these fierce assaults that sorely trouble me! I am in heaviness all the day long, and my soul is exceedingly disquieted within me. O Lord, be not far from me, but come to my help and strengthen my feeble soul that I may conquer my enemies and triumph in Thy name. Then my soul shall rejoice in the Lord and joy in the God of my salvation. 'Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him?' "

6. "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." Our faith in Jesus will do wonders when we set Him to fight our battles. We are not as weak, then, in the hands of Satan as Satan is in the hands of Christ. Then turn him over to Christ. Say to the enemy, "If you have anything against me, go and tell my Savior and He shall answer for me, for He is my Advocate, my strength and my Redeemer." Do as the sailors do in the storm—they leave all and flee to the anchor of faith in Christ, and He, as your pilot, will bring you safely to land.

A story of this kind is told of a pious Senator. When he was on his deathbed, he fancied that he heard one saying unto him, "Let me write down, in order, all the sins you have ever committed."

The dying man knew he had now to do with Satan and said, "Write first this sentence: 'The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head.' Then write all

my sins under it." The enemy left him and vanished.

Does Satan try to drive us to despair of salvation? Let us flee to Jesus and hide ourselves under the wings of His mercy and protections. There we shall be perfectly safe from all our enemies.

7. Mind the witness of the Spirit in times past or present. Sometimes, when the enemy is most busy, the Lord steps in with His testimony and stops the lion's mouth so that he can say no more. Surely, this should be noticed by us. One Edward Gee had a sore temptation on his deathbed. When a friend visited him, he was as happy and full of heavenly joys as his heart could hold. He spoke for some time of his high enjoyment, so that his friend had only to listen to him and give God the glory; but about two hours after, the enemy assaulted him with deep despondency and dread of death. But God soon enabled him to say, "Away, Satan, away! You accuser of the brethren, you have no right to torment me; for God has justified me, and I know that He will soon bring down Satan under my feet." He then went on and exclaimed, "The enemy is conquered; I am nothing in the war, but God is all."

The same Mr. Gee had another most bitter conflict with the tempter, which I shall give in his own words. "I was praying to God, my merciful Father, in Christ Jesus, for the main thing, that is, that He would perfect His work in my soul and give me life eternal. In my prayer I used that scripture in Psalm 138:8, "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me: Thy mercy. O Lord, endureth forever: forsake not the works of Thine own hands." Then the devil came to me and suggested thus, 'It is true, you pray and use Scripture as an argument in prayer and you say that you believe. But God

will show mercy only to true believers; now what proof or evidence can you give that you are a true believer?’ ”

Upon this, Mr. Gee was in a most woeful condition and said, “Now it was worse with my soul than any pangs of death. I was full of horror and amazement, and ready to cry out, I am lost forever. I was the more full of horror, because I had said so much before of my assurance and joy to them that were about me. But this temptation did not last long, for the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost came into my soul with their united testimony that my soul was safe in Christ; and God enabled me to say, ‘Away, Satan, away, you deceiver! It is, indeed, true that none but real believers can receive any comfort and joy in God. But see here, I have a three-fold testimony that I am a true believer. God my merciful and heavenly Father, Christ my most blessed and dear Savior, and the Holy Ghost, my Guide and Comforter, bear witness together that I am safe in the Savior’s keeping. Therefore, away with you, Satan!’ And on this, the devil’s mouth was stopped and my soul rejoiced in God my Savior. After this conflict, I had the fullest testimony of the Spirit, and more joy, than I ever had in my life. Yea, more joy than I can conceive of, or angels express. I tell this for the glory of God and the encouragement of tried and tempted souls. Go and tell it to others, that they may know what to expect from Satan and from the Saviour.”

Should any of us be tempted as he was, let us act as he did. Flee to the refuge. Then we may expect, like him, to obtain complete and final victory over sin, Satan, death, hell, and the grave. Then we shall be released from the war and enter into the joy of God our Savior.