SOMETHING HIGHER AND BETTER

COMPANION TO VOLUME 2 FREE READING EDITION

Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices

Salve for Believers' and Unbelievers' Sores

Thomas Brooks

TRAIN FOR ETERNITY

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The 12-lesson study guide that goes with it, *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices: A 12-Lesson Study of Thomas Brooks's Classic*, is available in participant and leader's editions at trainforeternity.com.

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A note on this edition

This reading edition follows the second edition of 1653, “corrected and enlarged” by Brooks, which added the Appendix of five more devices. Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization have been modernized; Brooks’s wording is unchanged, except that older verb forms (hath, doth, saith) and his addresses to the reader and his own prayers use you and your in place of thou and thy; Scripture quotations and others’ quoted sayings keep their original wording, as Brooks gave them. Greek and Hebrew words are left out where Brooks gives the English beside them. His marginal notes are omitted, except Scripture references, which appear in parentheses. English translations of his Latin phrases appear in [brackets], and the part and device headings are added for ease of reference. Obvious misprints in the 1653 printing, including some Scripture references, have been corrected, and the rare word missing from the printed text is supplied in [brackets].

The Epistle Dedicatory

To his most dear and precious ones, the sons and daughters of the most high God, over whom the Holy Ghost has made him a watchman.

Beloved in our dearest Lord,

Christ, the Scripture, your own hearts, and Satan's devices are the four prime things that should be first and most studied and searched. If any cast off the study of these, they cannot be safe here, nor happy hereafter. It is my work as a Christian, but much more as I am a watchman, to do my best to discover the fullness of Christ, the emptiness of the creature, and the snares of the great deceiver; which I have endeavored to do in the following discourse, according to that measure of grace which I have received from the Lord. God once accepted a handful of meal for a sacrifice, and a gripe of goats' hair for an oblation; and I know that you have not so learned the Father as to despise the day of small things.

Beloved, Satan, being fallen from light to darkness, from felicity to misery, from heaven to hell, from an angel to a devil, is so full of malice and envy that he will leave no means unattempted whereby he may make all others eternally miserable with himself. He, being shut out of heaven, "and shut up under chains of darkness till the judgment of the great day" (Jude 6), makes use of all his power and skill to bring all the sons of men into the same condition and condemnation with himself. Satan has cast such sinful seed into our souls that now he can no sooner tempt but we are ready to assent; he can no sooner have a plot upon us but he makes a conquest of us. If he does but show men a little of the beauty and bravery of the world, how ready are they to fall down and worship him!

Whatever sin the heart of man is most prone to, that the devil will help forward. If David be proud of his people, Satan will provoke him to number them, that he may be yet prouder (2 Samuel 24). If Peter be slavishly fearful, Satan will put him upon rebuking and denying of Christ, to save his own skin (Matthew 16:22; 26:69-75). If Ahab's prophets be given to flatter, the devil will straightway "become a lying spirit in the mouths of four hundred of them," and they shall flatter Ahab to his ruin (1 Kings 22). If Judas will be a traitor, Satan will quickly enter into his heart, and make him sell his master for money, which some heathens would never have done (John 13:2). If Ananias will lie for advantage, "Satan will fill his heart, that he may lie" (with a witness) "to the Holy Ghost" (Acts 5:3).

Satan loves to sail with the wind, and to suit men's temptations to their conditions and inclinations. If they be in prosperity, he will tempt them to deny God; if they be in adversity, he will tempt them to distrust God (Proverbs 30:9). If their knowledge be weak, he will

tempt them to have low thoughts of God. If their conscience be tender, he will tempt them to scrupulosity; if large, to carnal security. If we be bold-spirited, he will tempt us to presumption; if timorous, to desperation; if flexible, to inconstancy; if stiff, to impenitence.

From the power, malice, and skill of Satan proceed all the soul-killing plots, devices, stratagems, and machinations that are in the world. Several devices he has to draw souls to sin; several plots he has to keep souls from all holy and heavenly services; and several stratagems he has to keep souls in a mourning, staggering, doubting, and questioning condition. He has several devices to destroy the great and honorable, the wise and learned, the blind and ignorant, the rich and the poor, the real and the nominal saints.

One while he will refrain from tempting, that we may think ourselves secure and neglect our watch; another while he will seem to fly, that he may make us proud of the victory. One while he will fix men's eyes more on others' sins than their own, that he may puff them up; another while he will fix their eyes more on others' graces than their own, that he may overwhelm them. A man may as well tell the stars, and number the sands of the sea, as reckon up all the devices of Satan. Yet those which are most considerable, and by which he does most mischief to the precious souls of men, are discovered in the following treatise, and the remedies against them prescribed.

Beloved, I think it necessary to give you and the world a faithful account of the reasons moving me to appear in print in these days, wherein we may say there was never more writing, and yet never less practicing. They are these that follow.

1. First, because Satan has a greater influence upon men, and higher advantages over men (having the wind and the hill, as it were), than they think he has; and the knowledge of his high advantages is the highway to disappoint him, and to render the soul strong in resisting and happy in conquering.

2. Your importunity, and the importunity of many other precious sons of Zion, has, after much striving with God, my own heart, and others, made a conquest of me, and forced me to do that at last which at first was not a little contrary to my inclination and resolution.

3. The strange opposition that I met with from Satan in the study of this following discourse has put an edge upon my spirit, knowing that Satan strives mightily to keep those things from seeing the light that tend eminently to shake and break his kingdom of darkness, and to lift up the kingdom and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ in the souls and lives of the children of men.

4. Its exceeding usefulness to all sorts, ranks, and conditions of men in the world. Here you have salve for every sore, a plaster for every wound, and a remedy against every disease; especially against those that tend most to the undoing of souls and to the ruin of the state.

5. I know not of any one or other that has written of this subject. All that I have ever seen have only touched upon this string; which has been no small provocation to me to attempt to do something this way, that others who have better heads and hearts may be the more stirred to improve their talents in a further discovery of Satan's devices, and in the making known of such choice remedies as may enable the souls of men to triumph over all his plots and stratagems.

6. I have many precious friends in several countries who are not a little desirous that my pen may reach them, now my voice cannot. I have formerly been, by the help of the mighty God of Jacob, a weak instrument of good to them, and cannot but hope and believe that the Lord will also bless these labors to them, they being in part the fruit of their desires and prayers.

7. Lastly, not knowing how soon my glass may be out, and how soon I may be cut off by the hand of death from all opportunities of doing further service for Christ or your souls in this world, I was willing to sow a little handful of spiritual seed among you. So when I put off this earthly tabernacle, my love to you, and that dear remembrance of you which I have in my soul, may strongly engage your minds and spirits to make this book your companion; and under all external or internal changes, to make use of this heavenly salve. I hope it will, by the blessing of the Lord, be as effectual for the healing of all your wounds as looking up to the brazen serpent was effectual to heal those that were bitten and stung with fiery serpents (Numbers 21:8-9). I shall leave this book with you as a legacy of my dearest love, desiring the Lord to make it a far greater and sweeter legacy than all those carnal legacies that are left by the high and mighty ones of the earth to their nearest and dearest relations.

Beloved, I would not have affection carry my pen too much beyond my intention. Therefore only give me leave to signify my desires for you, and my desires to you, and I shall draw to a close.

My desires for you are, "that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man. That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love

of Christ that passeth knowledge; that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God" (Ephesians 3:16-19). "And that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increased in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness" (Colossians 1:10-11). "That ye do no evil" (2 Corinthians 13:7). "That your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ" (Philippians 1:9-10). "And that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power; that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 1:11-12).

And that you may be eminent in sanctity, sanctity being Zion's glory (Psalm 93:5); that your hearts may be kept upright, your judgments sound, and your lives unblamable. That as you are now my joy, so in the day of Christ you may be my crown; that I may see my labors in your lives; that your conversation may not be earthly when the things you hear are heavenly, but that it may be as becomes the gospel. That as the fishes which live in the salt sea yet are fresh, so you, though you live in an uncharitable world, may yet be charitable and loving. That you may, like the bee, suck honey out of every flower; that you may shine in a sea of troubles, as the pearl shines in the sky, though it grows in the sea; that in all your trials you may be like the stone in Thrace that neither burns in the fire nor sinks in the water. That you may be like the heavens, excellent in substance and beautiful in appearance; that so you may meet me with joy in that day wherein Christ shall say to his Father, "Lo, here am I, and the children that thou hast given me" (Hebrews 2:13).

My desires to you are that you would make it your business to study Christ, his word, your own hearts, Satan's plots, and eternity, more than ever; that you would endeavor more to be inwardly sincere than outwardly glorious; to live, than to have a name to live; that you would labor with all your might to be thankful under mercies, faithful in your places, humble under divine appearances, and fruitful under precious ordinances; that as your means and mercies are greater than others', so your account before God may not prove worse than others'.

That you would pray for me, who am not worthy to be named among the saints, that I may be a precious instrument in the hand of Christ to bring in many souls unto him, and to build up those that are brought in, in their most holy faith; and that utterance may be given to me, that I may make known all the will of God; that I may be sincere, faithful, frequent, fervent, and constant in the work of the Lord, and that my labor be not in vain in the Lord;

that my labors may be accepted of the Lord and his saints, and I may daily see the travail of my soul.

But above all, pray for me, that I may more and more find the power and sweetness of those things upon my own heart that I give out to you and others; and that my soul may be so visited with strength from on high that I may live up fully and constantly to those truths that I hold forth to the world; and that I may be, both in life and doctrine, a burning and a shining light; that so, when the Lord Jesus shall appear, I may receive a crown of glory, which he shall give to me in that day, and not only to me, but to all that love his appearing.

For a close, remember this: your life is short, your duties many, your assistance great, and your reward sure. Therefore faint not; hold on, and hold up, in ways of well-doing, and heaven shall make amends for all.

I shall now take leave of you, when my heart has by my hand subscribed that I am

Your loving pastor under Christ, according to all pastoral affections and engagements in our dearest Lord,

Thomas Brooks

A Word to the Reader

Dear friend,

Solomon bids us "buy the truth" (Proverbs 23:23), but does not tell us what it must cost, because we must get it, though it be never so dear. We must love it both shining and scorching. Every parcel of truth is precious, as the filings of gold; we must either live with it or die for it. As Ruth said to Naomi, "Whither thou goest, I will go, and where thou lodgest, I will lodge, and nothing but death shall part thee and me" (Ruth 1:16-17), so must gracious spirits say, "Where truth goes, I will go, and where truth lodges, I will lodge, and nothing but death shall part me and truth."

A man may lawfully sell his house, lands, and jewels, but truth is a jewel that exceeds all price, and must not be sold. It is our heritage: "Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever" (Psalm 119:111). It is a legacy that our forefathers have bought with their blood, which should make us willing to lay down anything, and to lay out anything, that we may, with the wise merchant in the gospel, purchase this precious pearl (Matthew 13:45-46), which is more worth than heaven and earth, and which will make a man live happily, die comfortably, and reign eternally.

And now, if you please, read the work, and receive this counsel from me.

First, you must know that every man cannot be excellent who yet may be useful. An iron key may unlock the door of a golden treasure; yea, iron can do some things that gold cannot.

Secondly, remember, it is not hasty reading, but serious meditating upon holy and heavenly truths, that makes them prove sweet and profitable to the soul. It is not the bee's touching of the flower that gathers honey, but her abiding for a time upon the flower that draws out the sweet. It is not he that reads most, but he that meditates most, that will prove the choicest, sweetest, wisest, and strongest Christian.

Thirdly, know that it is not the knowing, nor the talking, nor the reading man, but the doing man, that at last will be found the happiest man. "If you know these things, blessed and happy are you if you do them" (John 13:17). "Not every one that saith Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father that is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). Judas called Christ "Lord, Lord," and yet betrayed him, and is gone to his place. Ah! How many Judases have we in these days, that kiss Christ and yet betray Christ; that in their words profess him, but in their works deny him; that bow their knee to him,

and yet in their hearts despise him; that call him Jesus, and yet will not obey him for their Lord.

Reader, if it be not strong upon your heart to practice what you read, to what end do you read? To increase your own condemnation? If your light and knowledge be not turned into practice, the more knowing man you are, the more miserable man you will be in the day of recompense. Your light and knowledge will torment you more than all the devils in hell. Your knowledge will be that rod that will eternally lash you, and that scorpion that will forever bite you, and that worm that will everlastingly gnaw you. Therefore read, and labor to know, that you may do, or else you are undone forever.

When Demosthenes was asked what was the first part of an orator, what the second, and what the third, he answered, "Action." The same may I say if any should ask me what is the first, the second, and the third part of a Christian: I must answer, action. The man that reads that he may know, and labors to know that he may do, will have two heavens: a heaven of joy, peace, and comfort on earth, and a heaven of glory and happiness after death.

Fourthly, and lastly, if in your reading you will cast a serious eye upon the margin, you will find many sweet and precious notes that will oftentimes give light to the things you read, and pay you for your pains with much comfort and profit. [Brooks's marginal notes are not included in this edition, except his Scripture references.]

So, desiring that you may find as much sweetness and advantage in reading this treatise as I have found (by the overshadowings of heaven) in the studying and writing of it, "I commend thee to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build thee up, and to give thee an inheritance among them which are sanctified" (Acts 20:32). And rest,

Reader, your soul's servant in every office of the gospel,

Thomas Brooks

The Text: 2 Corinthians 2:11

"Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices" (2 Corinthians 2:11).

In the fifth verse, the apostle shows that the incestuous person had, by his incest, saddened those precious souls that God would not have saddened. Souls that walk sinfully are Hazaels to the godly, and draw many sighs and tears from them (2 Kings 8:11-12). Jeremiah weeps in secret for Judah's sins, and Paul cannot speak of those belly-gods with dry eyes (Philippians 3:18-19). And Lot's righteous soul was burdened, vexed, and racked by the filthy Sodomites (2 Peter 2:7-8); every sinful Sodomite was a Hazael to his eyes, a Hadadrimmon to his heart (Zechariah 12:11). Gracious souls use to mourn for other men's sins as well as their own, and for their souls and sins who make a mock of sin and a jest of damning their own souls. Guilt or grief is all that gracious souls get by communion with vain souls.

In the sixth verse, he shows that the punishment that was inflicted upon the incestuous person was sufficient, and therefore they should not refuse to receive him, who had repented and sorrowed for his former faults and follies. It is not for the honor of Christ, the credit of the gospel, nor the good of souls, for professors to be like those bloody wretches that burnt at the stake some who had recanted, saying that they would send them out of the world while they were in a good mind. (Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* tells the story.)

In the seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth verses, the apostle stirs up the church to forgive him, to comfort him, and to confirm their love towards him, lest he should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow; Satan was going about to mix the detestable darnel of desperation with the godly sorrow of a pure, penitent heart. It was a sweet saying of one, "Let a man grieve for his sin, and then joy for his grief." That sorrow for sin that keeps the soul from looking towards the mercy seat, that keeps Christ and the soul asunder, or that renders the soul unfit for the communion of saints, is a sinful sorrow.

In the eleventh verse, he lays down another reason to work them to show pity and mercy to the penitent sinner who was mourning and groaning under his sin and misery: "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices." A little for the opening of the words.

"Lest Satan should get an advantage of us": that is, lest Satan overreach us. The Greek word signifies to have more than belongs to one. The comparison is taken from the greedy mer-

chant, that seeks and takes all opportunities to beguile and deceive others. Satan is that wily merchant that devours not widows' houses, but most men's souls.

"For we are not ignorant of his devices," or plots, or machinations, or stratagems. He is but a titular Christian who has not personal experience of Satan's stratagems: his set and composed machinations, his artificially molded methods, his plots, darts, and depths, whereby he outwitted our first parents, and fits us a pennyworth still, as he sees reason.

The main observation that I shall draw from these words is this: that Satan has his several devices to deceive, entangle, and undo the souls of men.

I shall first prove the point; secondly, show you his several devices; thirdly, the remedies against his devices; and fourthly, how it comes to pass that he has so many several devices to deceive, entangle, and undo the souls of men. Fifthly, I shall lay down some propositions concerning Satan and his devices.

For the proof of the point, take these few Scriptures: "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Ephesians 6:11). The Greek word that is here rendered "wiles" is a notable, emphatic word.

1. It signifies such snares as are laid behind one, such treacheries as come upon one's back unawares. It notes the methods, or waylayings, of that old subtle serpent, who, like Dan's adder in the path, bites the heels of passengers, and thereby transfuses his venom to the head and heart (Genesis 49:17). The word signifies an ambush, or stratagem of war, whereby the enemy sets upon a man *ex insidiis* [from ambush], unawares.

2. It signifies such snares as are set to catch one in one's road. A man walks in his road and thinks not of it; on the sudden he is caught by thieves, or falls into a pit.

3. It signifies such as are purposely, artificially, and craftily set for the taking of the prey at the greatest advantage that can be. The Greek word, being derived from two other words, signifies properly a waylaying, circumvention, or going about, as they do who seek after their prey. Julian, by his craft, drew more from the faith than all his persecuting predecessors could do by their cruelty. So Satan does more hurt in his sheepskin than by roaring like a lion.

Take one Scripture more for the proof of the point, and that is in the second chapter of Second Timothy, the last verse: "And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will" (2 Timothy 2:26). The Greek word that is here rendered "recover themselves" signifies "to awake themselves." The apostle alludes to one that is asleep, or drunk, who is to be awakened and restored to his senses. And the

Greek word that is here rendered "taken captive" signifies "to be taken alive." The word is properly a warlike word, and signifies to be taken alive as soldiers are taken alive in the wars, or as birds are taken alive and ensnared in the fowler's net.

Satan has snares for the wise and snares for the simple; snares for hypocrites and snares for the upright; snares for generous souls and snares for timorous souls; snares for the rich and snares for the poor; snares for the aged and snares for youth. Happy are those souls that are not taken and held in the snares that he has laid!

Take one proof more, and then I will proceed to the opening of the point, and that is in the second chapter of Revelation: "But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak, I will put upon you no other burden, but to hold fast till I come" (Revelation 2:24-25). Those poor souls called their opinions the depths of God, when indeed they were the depths of Satan. You call your opinions depths, and so they are; but they are such depths as Satan has brought out of hell. They are the whisperings and hissings of that serpent, not the inspirations of God.

Now the second thing that I am to show you is his several devices. And herein I shall first show you the several devices that he has to draw the soul to sin. I shall instance in these twelve, which may bespeak our most serious consideration.

PART 1

Devices to Draw the Soul to Sin

Device 1: Presenting the bait and hiding the hook

His first device to draw the soul to sin is to present the bait and hide the hook; to present the golden cup and hide the poison; to present the sweet, the pleasure, and the profit that may flow in upon the soul by yielding to sin, and to hide from the soul the wrath and misery that will certainly follow the committing of sin.

By this device he took our first parents: "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die. For God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:4-5). "Your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods": here is the bait, the sweet, the pleasure, the profit. Oh, but he hides the hook: the shame, the wrath, and the loss that would certainly follow. There is an opening of the eyes of the mind to contemplation and joy, and there is an opening of the eyes of the body to shame and confusion. He promises them the former, but intends the latter, and so cheats them, giving them an apple in exchange for paradise, as he deals by thousands nowadays.

Satan with ease puts fallacies upon us, and then by his golden baits leads us, and leaves us in a fool's paradise. He promises the soul honor, pleasure, and profit, but pays the soul with the greatest contempt, shame, and loss that can be.

By a golden bait he labored to catch Christ (Matthew 4:8-9). He shows him the beauty and the bravery of a bewitching world, which doubtless would have taken many a carnal heart. But here the devil's fire fell upon wet tinder, and therefore took not. These tempting objects did not at all win upon his affections, nor dazzle his eyes. Yet many have eternally died of the wound of the eye, and fallen forever by this vile strumpet the world, who, by laying forth her two fair breasts of profit and pleasure, has wounded their souls and cast them down into utter perdition. She has, by the glistering of her pomp and preferment, slain millions; as the serpent Scytale, when she cannot overtake the fleeing passengers, does with her beautiful colors astonish and amaze them, so that they have no power to pass away till she has stung them to death. Adversity has slain her thousand, but prosperity her ten thousand.

Now the remedies against this device of the devil are these.

First, keep at the greatest distance from sin, and from playing with the golden bait that Satan holds forth to catch you. For this you have Romans 12:9: "Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good." When we meet with anything extremely evil, and contrary to us, nature abhors it, and retires as far as it can from it. The Greek word that is there rendered "abhor" is very significant: it signifies to hate it as hell itself, to hate it with horror.

Anselm used to say that if he should see the shame of sin on the one hand, and the pains of hell on the other, and must of necessity choose one, he would rather be thrust into hell without sin than go into heaven with sin; so great was his hatred and detestation of sin.

It is our wisest and our safest course to stand at the furthest distance from sin; not to go near the house of the harlot (Proverbs 5:8), but to fly "from all appearance of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:22). The best course to prevent falling into the pit is to keep at the greatest distance. He that will be so bold as to attempt to dance upon the brink of the pit may find by woeful experience that it is a righteous thing with God that he should fall into the pit. Joseph keeps at a distance from sin, and from playing with Satan's golden baits, and stands. David draws near, and plays with the bait, and falls, and swallows bait and hook with a witness. David comes near the snare, and is taken in it, to the breaking of his bones, the wounding of his conscience, and the loss of his God.

Sin is a plague, yea, the greatest and the most infectious plague in the world; and yet, ah, how few are there that tremble at it, that keep at a distance from it! "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" (1 Corinthians 5:6). As soon as one sin had seized upon Adam's heart, all sin entered into his soul and overspread it. How has Adam's one sin spread over all mankind! "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Romans 5:12). Ah, how does the father's sin infect the child, the husband's the wife, the master's the servant! The sin that is in one man's heart is able to infect a whole world, it is of such a spreading and infectious nature. The story of the Italian who first made his enemy deny God, and then stabbed him, and so at once murdered both body and soul, declares the perfect malignity of sin. And oh, that what has been spoken upon this head may prevail with you to stand at a distance from sin!

The second remedy is to consider that sin is but a bittersweet. That seeming sweet that is in sin will quickly vanish, and lasting shame, sorrow, horror, and terror will come in the room thereof. "Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth, though he hide it under his tongue; though he spare it, and forsake it not, but keep it still within his mouth: yet his meat in his bowels is turned, it is the gall of asps within him" (Job 20:12-14). Forbidden profits and plea-

sures are most pleasing to vain men, who count madness mirth. Many long to be meddling with the murdering morsels of sin, which nourish not, but rend and consume the belly, the soul, that receives them. Many eat that on earth that they digest in hell. Sin's murdering morsels will deceive those that devour them.

Adam's apple was a bittersweet; Esau's mess was a bittersweet; the Israelites' quails, a bittersweet; Jonathan's honey, a bittersweet; and Adonijah's dainties, a bittersweet. After the meal is ended comes the reckoning. Men must not think to dance and dine with the devil, and then to sup with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; to feed upon the poison of asps, and yet that the viper's tongue shall not slay them. When the asp stings a man, it does first tickle him so as it makes him laugh, till the poison by little and little gets to the heart, and then it pains him more than ever it delighted him. So does sin: it may please a little at first, but it will pain the soul with a witness at last. Yea, if there were the least real delight in sin, there could be no perfect hell, where men shall most perfectly be tormented with their sin.

The third remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that sin will usher in the greatest and the saddest losses that can be upon our souls (Isaiah 59:2, 8; Psalm 51:12; 2 Chronicles 15:3-4; Jeremiah 17:18). It will usher in the loss of that divine favor that is better than life; the loss of that joy that is unspeakable and full of glory; the loss of that peace that passes understanding; the loss of those divine influences by which the soul has been refreshed, quickened, raised, strengthened, and gladdened; and the loss of many outward desirable mercies which otherwise the soul might have enjoyed (Jeremiah 5:25).

It was a sound and savory reply of an English captain at the loss of Calais. When a proud Frenchman scornfully demanded, "When will you fetch Calais again?" he replied, "When your sins shall weigh down ours." Ah, England! My constant prayer for you is that you may not sin away your mercies into their hands that cannot call mercy mercy, and that would joy in nothing more than to see your sorrow and misery, and to see that hand to make you naked that has clothed you with much mercy and glory.

The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider that sin is of a very deceitful and bewitching nature. Sin is from the greatest deceiver; it is a child of his own begetting; it is the ground of all the deceit in the world; and it is in its own nature exceeding deceitful. "But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Hebrews 3:13). It will kiss the soul, and pretend fair to the soul, and yet betray the soul forever. It will, with Delilah, smile upon us, that it may betray us into the hands of the devil, as she did Samson into the hands of the Philistines

(Proverbs 5:22-23). Sin gives Satan a power over us, and an advantage to accuse us, and to lay claim to us as those that wear his badge.

It is of a very bewitching nature. It bewitches the soul where it is upon the throne, so that the soul cannot leave it, though it perish eternally by it. Sin so bewitches the soul that it makes the soul call evil good and good evil, bitter sweet and sweet bitter, light darkness and darkness light. And a soul thus bewitched with sin will stand it out to the death, at the sword's point with God. Let God strike, and wound, and cut to the very bone, yet the bewitched soul cares not, fears not, but will still hold on in a course of wickedness, as you may see in Pharaoh, Balaam, and Judas. Tell the bewitched soul that sin is a viper that will certainly kill when it is not killed; that sin often kills secretly, insensibly, eternally; yet the bewitched soul cannot, nor will not, cease from sin.

When the physicians told Theotimus that except he did abstain from drunkenness and uncleanness he would lose his eyes, his heart was so bewitched to his sins that he answered, "Then farewell, sweet light." He had rather lose his eyes than leave his sins. So a man bewitched with sin had rather lose God, Christ, heaven, and his own soul than part with his sin. Oh, therefore, forever take heed of playing or nibbling at Satan's golden baits!

Device 2: Painting sin in virtue's colors

The second device of Satan to draw the soul to sin is by painting sin with virtue's colors. Satan knows that if he should present sin in its own nature and dress, the soul would rather fly from it than yield to it; and therefore he presents it unto us, not in its own proper colors, but painted and gilded over with the name and show of virtue, that we may the more easily be overcome by it, and take the more pleasure in committing it. Pride he presents to the soul under the name and notion of neatness and cleanliness; and covetousness (which the apostle condemns for idolatry) to be but good husbandry; and drunkenness to be good fellowship; and riotousness under the name and notion of liberality; and wantonness as a trick of youth.

Now the remedies against this device of Satan are these.

First, consider that sin is never a whit the less filthy, vile, and abominable by its being colored and painted with virtue's colors. A poisonous pill is never a whit the less poisonous because it is gilded over with gold; nor is a wolf ever a whit the less a wolf because he has put on a sheepskin; nor is the devil ever a whit the less a devil because he appears sometimes like an angel of light. So neither is sin any whit the less filthy and abominable by its being painted over with virtue's colors.

The second remedy is this: that the more sin is painted forth under the color of virtue, the more dangerous it is to the souls of men. This we see evident in these days, by those very many souls that are turned out of the way that is holy (and in which their souls have had sweet and glorious communion with God) into ways of highest vanity and folly, by Satan's neat coloring over of sin, and painting forth vice under the name and color of virtue. This is so notoriously known that I need but name it. The most dangerous vermin is too often to be found under the fairest and sweetest flowers; the fairest glove is often drawn upon the foulest hand; and the richest robes are often put upon the filthiest bodies. So are the fairest and the sweetest names put upon the greatest and the most horrible vices and errors that are in the world. Ah, that we had not too many sad proofs of this amongst us!

The third remedy against this device is to look on sin with that eye with which, within a few hours, we shall see it. Ah, souls! When you shall lie upon a dying bed, and stand before a judgment seat, sin shall be unmasked, and its dress and robes shall then be taken off; and then it shall appear more vile, filthy, and terrible than hell itself. Then that which formerly appeared most sweet will appear most bitter; that which appeared most beautiful will appear most ugly; and that which appeared most delightful will then appear most dreadful to the soul. Ah, the shame, the pain, the gall, the bitterness, the horror, the hell, that the sight of sin, when its dress is taken off, will raise in poor souls!

Sin will surely prove evil and bitter to the soul when its robes are taken off. A man may have the stone who feels no fit of it. Conscience will work at last, though for the present one may feel no fit of accusation. Laban showed himself at parting. Sin will be bitterness in the latter end, when it shall appear to the soul in its own filthy nature. The devil deals with men as the panther does with beasts: he hides his deformed head till his sweet scent has drawn them into his danger. Till we have sinned, Satan is a parasite; when we have sinned, he is a tyrant.

Ah, souls! The day is at hand when the devil will pull off the paint and garnish that he has put upon sin, and present that monster sin in such a monstrous shape to your souls that it will cause your thoughts to be troubled, your countenance to be changed, the joints of your loins to be loosed, and your knees to be dashed one against another; and your hearts to be so terrified that you will be ready, with Ahithophel and Judas, to strangle and hang your bodies on earth, and your souls in hell, if the Lord has not more mercy on you than he had on them. Oh, therefore, look upon sin now as you must look upon it to all eternity, and as God, conscience, and Satan will present it to you another day!

The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that even these very sins that Satan paints, and puts new names and colors upon, cost the best blood, the noblest blood, the lifeblood, the heart's blood of the Lord Jesus.

That Christ should come from the eternal bosom of his Father to a region of sorrow and death; that God should be manifested in the flesh, the Creator made a creature; that he that was clothed with glory should be wrapped with rags of flesh; that he that filled heaven and earth with his glory should be cradled in a manger; that the power of God should fly from weak man, the God of Israel into Egypt; that the God of the law should be subject to the law, the God of circumcision circumcised, the God that made the heavens working at Joseph's homely trade; that he that binds the devils in chains should be tempted; that he whose is the world, and the fullness thereof, should hunger and thirst; that the God of strength should be weary, the judge of all flesh condemned, the God of life put to death; that he that is one with his Father should cry out of misery, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"; that he that had the keys of hell and death at his girdle should lie imprisoned in the sepulcher of another, having in his lifetime nowhere to lay his head, nor after death to lay his body;

that that head, before which the angels cast down their crowns, should be crowned with thorns; and those eyes, purer than the sun, put out by the darkness of death; those ears, which hear nothing but hallelujahs of saints and angels, to hear the blasphemies of the multitude; that face, that was fairer than the sons of men, to be spit on by those beastly, wretched Jews; that mouth and tongue, that spoke as never man spoke, accused for blasphemy; those hands, that freely swayed the scepter of heaven, nailed to the cross; those feet, like unto fine brass, nailed to the cross for man's sins; each sense annoyed: his feeling, or touching, with a spear and nails; his smell with stinking savor, being crucified about Golgotha, the place of skulls; his taste with vinegar and gall; his hearing with reproaches; and his sight with his mother and disciples bemoaning him; his soul comfortless and forsaken; and all this for those very sins that Satan paints and puts fine colors upon!

Oh, how should the consideration of this stir up the soul against it, and work the soul to fly from it, and to use all holy means whereby sin may be subdued and destroyed!

After Julius Caesar was murdered, Antonius brought forth his coat, all bloody and cut, and laid it before the people, saying, "Look, here you have your emperor's coat, thus bloody and torn." Whereupon the people were presently in an uproar, and cried out to slay those murderers; and they took their tables and stools that were in the place, and set them on fire, and ran to the houses of them that had slain Caesar, and burned them. So when we consider that

sin has slain our Lord Jesus, ah, how should it provoke our hearts to be revenged on sin, which has murdered the Lord of glory, and has done that mischief that all the devils in hell could never have done!

It was good counsel one gave: "Never let go out of your minds the thoughts of a crucified Christ. Let these be meat and drink unto you; let them be your sweetness and consolation, your honey and your desire, your reading and your meditation, your life, death, and resurrection."

Device 3: Making sin seem small

The third device that Satan has to draw the soul to sin is by extenuating and lessening of sin. "Ah!" says Satan, "it is but a little pride, a little worldliness, a little uncleanness, a little drunkenness." As Lot said of Zoar, "It is but a little one, and my soul shall live" (Genesis 19:20). "Alas!" says Satan, "it is but a very little sin that you stick so at. You may commit it without any danger to your soul. It is but a little one; you may commit it, and yet your soul shall live."

Now the remedies against this device of Satan are these.

First, solemnly consider that those sins which we are apt to account small have brought upon men the greatest wrath of God: as the eating of an apple, gathering a few sticks on the Sabbath day, and touching the ark. Oh, the dreadful wrath that these sins brought down upon the heads and hearts of men! The least sin is contrary to the law of God, the nature of God, the being of God, and the glory of God; and therefore it is often punished severely by God. And do we not see daily the vengeance of the Almighty falling upon the bodies, names, estates, families, and souls of men for those sins that are but little ones in their eyes? Surely, if we are not utterly left of God and blinded by Satan, we cannot but see it. Oh, therefore, when Satan says, "It is but a little one," do you say, "Oh, but those sins that you call little are such as will cause God to rain hell out of heaven upon sinners, as he did upon the Sodomites."

The second remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider that the giving way to a lesser sin makes way for the committing of a greater. He that, to avoid a greater sin, will yield to a lesser, ten thousand to one but God in justice will leave that soul to fall into a greater. If we commit one sin to avoid another, it is just that we should avoid neither, we having neither law nor power in our own hands to keep off sin as we please; and we, by yielding to the lesser, do tempt the tempter to tempt us to the greater.

Sin is of an encroaching nature. It creeps on the soul by degrees, step by step, till it has brought the soul to the very height of sin. David gives way to his wandering eye, and this led him to those foul sins that caused God to break his bones, and to turn his day into night, and to leave his soul in great darkness. Jacob and Peter and other saints have found this true by woeful experience: that the yielding to a lesser sin has been the ushering in of a greater. The little thief will open the door, and make way for the greater; and the little wedge knocked in will make way for the greater.

Satan will first draw you to sit with the drunkard, and then to sip with the drunkard, and then at last to be drunk with the drunkard. He will first draw you to be unclean in your thoughts, and then to be unclean in your looks, and then to be unclean in your words, and at last to be unclean in your practices. He will first draw you to look on the golden wedge, and then to like the golden wedge, and then to handle the golden wedge, and then at last by wicked ways to gain the golden wedge, though you run the hazard of losing God and your soul forever; as you may see in Gehazi, Achan, and Judas, and many in these our days.

Sin is never at a stand (Psalm 1:1): first ungodly, then sinners, then scorners. Here they go on from sin to sin, till they come to the top of sin, that is, to sit in the seat of scorners, or, as it is in the Septuagint, to affect the honor of the chair of pestilence.

Augustine, writing upon John, tells a story of a certain man that was of the opinion that the devil made the fly, and not God. Said one to him, "If the devil made flies, then the devil made worms, and God did not make them; for they are living creatures as well as flies." "True," said he, "the devil did make worms." "But," said the other, "if the devil did make worms, then he made birds, beasts, and man." He granted all. Thus, says Augustine, by denying God in the fly, he came to deny God in man, and to deny the whole creation.

By all this we see that the yielding to lesser sins draws the soul to the committing of greater. Ah, how many in these days have fallen, first to have low thoughts of Scripture and ordinances, and then to slight Scripture and ordinances, and then to make a nose of wax of Scripture and ordinances, and then to cast off Scripture and ordinances, and then at last to advance and lift up themselves, and their Christ-dishonoring and soul-damning opinions, above Scripture and ordinances!

Sin gains upon men's souls by insensible degrees: "The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness: and the end of his talking is mischievous madness" (Ecclesiastes 10:13). Corruption in the heart, when it breaks forth, is like a breach in the sea, which begins in a narrow passage, till it eats through and casts down all before it. The debates of the soul are quick, and soon ended; and that may be done in a moment that may undo a man forever.

When a man has begun to sin, he knows not where, or when, or how he shall make a stop of sin. Usually the soul goes on from evil to evil, from folly to folly, till it is ripe for eternal misery. Men usually grow from being naught to be very naught, and from very naught to be stark naught; and then God sets them at naught forever.

The third remedy against this third device that Satan has to draw the soul to sin is solemnly to consider that it is sad to stand with God for a trifle. Dives would not give a crumb; therefore he should not receive a drop (Luke 16:21, 24). It is the greatest folly in the world to adventure going to hell for a small matter. "I tasted but a little honey," said Jonathan, "and I must die" (1 Samuel 14:43).

It is a most unkind and unfaithful thing to break with God for a little. Little sins carry with them but little temptations to sin; and then a man shows most viciousness and unkindness when he sins on a little temptation. It is devilish to sin without a temptation; it is little less than devilish to sin on a little occasion. The less the temptation is to sin, the greater is that sin. Saul's sin in not staying for Samuel was not so much in the matter, but it was much in the malice of it; for though Samuel had not come at all, yet Saul should not have offered sacrifice. But this cost him dear: his soul and his kingdom.

It is the greatest unkindness that can be showed to a friend to adventure the complaining, bleeding, and grieving of his soul upon a light and slight occasion. So it is the greatest unkindness that can be showed to God, Christ, and the Spirit for a soul to put God upon complaining, Christ upon bleeding, and the Spirit upon grieving, by yielding to little sins. Therefore, when Satan says, "It is but a little one," do you answer that oftentimes there is the greatest unkindness showed to God's glorious majesty in the acting of the least folly; and therefore you will not displease your best and greatest friend by yielding to his least enemy.

The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider that there is great danger, yea, many times most danger, in the smallest sins. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (1 Corinthians 5:6). If the serpent wind in his head, he will draw his whole body after. Greater sins do sooner startle the soul, and awaken and rouse up the soul to repentance, than lesser sins do. Little sins often slide into the soul, and breed and work secretly and undiscernibly in the soul, till they come to be so strong as to trample upon the soul and to cut the throat of the soul.

There is oftentimes the greatest danger to our bodies in the least diseases that hang upon us, because we are apt to make light of them, and to neglect the timely use of means for the removing of them, till they are grown so strong that they prove mortal to us. So there is of-

ten most danger in the least sins. We are apt to take no notice of them, and to neglect those heavenly helps whereby they should be weakened and destroyed, till they are grown up to that strength that we are ready to cry out, "The medicine is too weak for the disease! I would pray, and I would hear; but I am afraid that sin is grown up by degrees to such a head that I shall never be able to prevail over it; but as I have begun to fall, so I shall utterly fall before it, and at last perish in it, unless the power and free grace of Christ act gloriously, beyond my present apprehension and expectation."

The viper is killed by the little young ones that are nourished and cherished in her belly; so are many men eternally killed and betrayed by the little sins, as they call them, that are nourished in their own bosoms. "I know not," says one, "whether the maintenance of the least sin be not worse than the commission of the greatest; for this may be of frailty, that argues obstinacy." A little hole in the ship sinks it; a small breach in a sea bank carries away all before it; a little stab at the heart kills a man; and a little sin, without a great deal of mercy, will damn a man.

The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that other saints have chosen rather to suffer the worst of torments than they would commit the least sin, that is, such as the world accounts. So you may see in Daniel and his companions, who would rather choose to burn and be cast to the lions than they would bow to the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. When this peccadillo (in the world's account) and a hot fiery furnace stood in competition, so that they must either fall into sin or be cast into the fiery furnace, such was their tenderness of the honor and glory of God, and their hatred and indignation against sin, that they would rather burn than sin. They knew that it was far better to burn for their not sinning than that God and conscience should raise a hell, a fire, in their bosoms for sin.

I have read of that noble servant of God, Marcus Arethusius, minister of a church in the time of Constantine, who in Constantine's time had been the cause of overthrowing an idol's temple. Afterwards, when Julian came to be emperor, he would force the people of that place to build it up again. They were ready to do it, but he refused. Whereupon those that were his own people, to whom he preached, took him, and stripped him of all his clothes, and abused his naked body, and gave it up to the children to lance it with their penknives; and then caused him to be put in a basket, and anointed his naked body with honey, and set him in the sun to be stung with wasps. And all this cruelty they showed because he would not do anything toward the building up of this idol temple. Nay, they came to this: that if he would do but the least towards it, if he would give but a halfpenny to it,

they would save him. But he refused all, though the giving of a halfpenny might have saved his life.

And in doing this he did but live up to that principle that most Christians talk of, and all profess, but few come up to: that is, that we must choose rather to suffer the worst of torments that men and devils can invent and inflict than to commit the least sin, whereby God should be dishonored, our consciences wounded, religion reproached, and our own souls endangered.

The sixth remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider that the soul is never able to stand under the guilt and weight of the least sin when God shall set it home upon the soul. The least sin will press and sink the stoutest sinner as low as hell, when God shall open the eyes of a sinner, and make him see the horrid filthiness and abominable vileness that is in sin.

What so little, base, and vile creatures as lice or gnats? And yet by these little, poor creatures God so plagued stout-hearted Pharaoh and all Egypt that, fainting under it, they were forced to cry out, "This is the finger of God" (Exodus 8:16-19). When little creatures, yea, the least creatures, shall be armed with a power from God, they shall press and pull down the greatest, proudest, and stoutest tyrants that breathe. So when God shall put a sword into the hand of a little sin, and arm it against the soul, the soul will faint and fall under it.

Some who have but projected adultery, without any actual acting of it; and others, having found a trifle and made no conscience to restore it, knowing by the light of natural conscience that they did not do as they would be done by; and others that have had some unworthy thought of God, have been so frightened, amazed, and terrified for these sins, which are small in men's account, that they have wished they had never been; that they could take no delight in any earthly comfort; that they have been put to their wits' end, ready to make away with themselves, wishing themselves annihilated.

Mr. Perkins mentions a good man, but very poor, who, being ready to starve, stole a lamb; and being about to eat it with his poor children, and (as his manner was before meat) to crave a blessing, he durst not do it, but fell into a great perplexity of conscience, and acknowledged his fault to the owner, promising payment if ever he should be able.

The seventh remedy against this device is solemnly to consider that there is more evil in the least sin than in the greatest affliction. And this appears as clear as the sun by the severe dealing of God the Father with his beloved Son, who let all the vials of his fiercest wrath fall upon him; and that for the least sin as well as for the greatest. "The wages of sin is death"

(Romans 6:23): of sin indefinitely, whether great or small. Oh, how should this make us tremble as much at the least spark of lust as at hell itself, considering that God the Father would not spare his bosom Son, no, not for the least sin, but would make him drink the dregs of his wrath!

And so much for the remedies that may fence and preserve our souls from being drawn to sin by this third device of Satan.

Device 4: Showing the saints' sins and hiding their repentance

The fourth device that Satan has to draw the soul to sin is by presenting to the soul the best men's sins, and by hiding from the soul their virtues; by showing the soul their sins, and by hiding from the soul their sorrows and repentance: as by setting before the soul the adultery of David, the pride of Hezekiah, the impatience of Job, the drunkenness of Noah, the blasphemy of Peter; and by hiding from the soul the tears, the sighs, the groans, the meltings, humblings, and repentings of these precious souls.

Now the remedies against this device of the devil are these that follow.

The first remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider that the Spirit of the Lord has been as careful to note the saints' rising by repentance out of sin as he has to note their falling into sin. David falls fearfully, but by repentance he rises sweetly: "Blot out my transgressions; wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation" (Psalm 51:1-3, 7, 14).

It is true, Hezekiah's heart was lifted up under the abundance of mercy that God had cast in upon him; and it is as true that Hezekiah "humbled himself for the pride of his heart, so that the wrath of the Lord came not upon him, nor upon Jerusalem, in the days of Hezekiah" (2 Chronicles 32:25-26).

It is true, Job curses the day of his birth; and it is as true that he rises by repentance. "Behold, I am vile," says he; "what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further" (Job 40:4-5). "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye sees thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:5-6).

Peter falls dreadfully, but rises by repentance sweetly. A look of love from Christ melts him into tears. He knew that repentance was the key to the kingdom of grace. As once his faith

was so great that he leaped, as it were, into a sea of waters to come to Christ, so now his repentance was so great that he leaped, as it were, into a sea of tears, for that he had gone from Christ. Some say that after his sad fall he was ever and anon weeping, and that his face was even furrowed with continual tears. He had no sooner taken in poison but he vomited it up again, before it got to the vitals. He had no sooner handled this serpent but he turned it into a rod to scourge his soul with remorse for sinning against such clear light, and strong love, and sweet discoveries of the heart of Christ to him. Clement notes that Peter so repented that all his life after, every night when he heard the cock crow, he would fall upon his knees, and, weeping bitterly, would beg pardon of this sin.

Ah, souls! You can easily sin as the saints; but can you repent with the saints? Many can sin with David and Peter that cannot repent with David and Peter, and so must perish forever. Theodosius the emperor, pressing that he might receive the Lord's Supper, excused his own foul fact by David's doing the like. To which Ambrose replied, "Thou hast followed David transgressing; follow David repenting, and then think thou of the table of the Lord."

The second remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that these saints did not make a trade of sin. They fell once or twice (and rose by repentance), that they might keep the closer to Christ forever. They fell accidentally, occasionally, and with much reluctance; and you sin presumptuously, obstinately, readily, delightfully, and customarily. You have, by your making a trade of sin, contracted upon your soul a kind of cursed necessity of sinning, so that you can as well cease to be, or cease to live, as you can cease to sin. Sin is by custom become as another nature to you, which you cannot, which you will not, lay aside; though you know that if you do not lay sin aside, God will lay your soul aside forever; though you know that if sin and your soul do not part, Christ and your soul can never meet.

If you will make a trade of sin, and cry out, "Did not David sin thus, and Noah sin thus, and Peter sin thus?" No! Their hearts turned aside to folly one day, but your heart turns aside to folly every day. And when they had fallen, they rose by repentance, and by the actings of faith upon a crucified Christ; but you fall, and have no strength nor will to rise, but wallow in sin, and will eternally die in your sins, unless the Lord be the more merciful to your soul.

Do you think, O soul, this is good reasoning: "Such a one tasted poison but once, and yet narrowly escaped; but I do daily drink poison, yet I shall escape"? Yet such is the mad reasoning of vain souls: "David and Peter sinned once foully and fearfully; they tasted poison but once, and were sick to death; but I taste it daily, and yet shall not taste of eternal death." Remember, O souls, that the day is at hand when self-flatterers will be found self-deceivers, yea, self-murderers.

The third remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider that though God does not (nor ever will) disinherit his people for their sins, yet he has severely punished his people for their sins. David sins, and God breaks his bones for his sin: "Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice" (Psalm 51:8). "And because thou hast done this, the sword shall not depart from thy house to the day of thy death" (2 Samuel 12:10). "Though God will not utterly take from them his loving-kindness, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail, nor break his covenant, nor alter the thing that is gone out of his mouth, yet will he visit their transgressions with a rod, and their iniquity with stripes" (Psalm 89:30-35). The Scripture abounds with instances of this kind. This is so known a truth, among all that know anything of truth, that to cite more Scriptures to prove it would be to light a candle to see the sun at noon.

The Jews have a proverb, that "there is no punishment comes upon Israel in which there is not one ounce of the golden calf": meaning that that was so great a sin that in every plague God remembered it; that it had an influence into every trouble that befell them. Every man's heart may say to him in his sufferings, as the heart of Apollodorus in the kettle, "I have been the cause of this." God is most angry when he shows no anger. God keep me from this mercy! This kind of mercy is worse than all other misery. One, writing to a sick friend, has this expression: "I account it a part of unhappiness not to know adversity. I judge you to be miserable, because you have not been miserable."

It is mercy that our affliction is not an execution, but a correction. He that has deserved hanging may be glad if he escape with a whipping. God's corrections are our instructions, his lashes our lessons, his scourges our schoolmasters, his chastisements our advertisements (Psalm 94:12; Proverbs 3:11-12; 6:23; Isaiah 9). And to note this, both the Hebrews and the Greeks express chastening and teaching by one and the same word, because the latter is the true end of the former, according to that in the proverb, "Smart makes wit, and vexation gives understanding" (Job 36:8-10). Whence Luther fitly calls affliction "the Christian man's divinity." So says Job: "God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, that he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man. He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword" (Job 33:14-18).

When Satan shall tell you of other men's sins, to draw you to sin, do you then think of the same men's sufferings, to keep you from sin. Lay your hand upon your heart, and say, "O my soul, if you sin with David, you must suffer with David."

The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that there are but two main ends of God's recording of the falls of his saints. The one is to keep those from fainting, sinking, and despair under the burden of their sins who fall through weakness and infirmity. The other is that their falls may be as landmarks, to warn others that stand to take heed lest they fall. It never entered into the heart of God to record his children's sins that others might be encouraged to sin; but that others might be warned to look to their standings, and to hang the faster upon the skirts of Christ, and to avoid all occasions and temptations that may occasion the soul to fall as others have fallen.

When they have been left by Christ, the Lord has made their sins as landmarks, to warn his people to take heed how they come near those sands and rocks, those snares and baits, that have been fatal to the choicest treasures, to wit, the joy, peace, comfort, and glorious enjoyments of the bravest spirits and noblest souls that ever sailed through the ocean of this sinful, troublesome world; as you may see in David, Job, and Peter. There is nothing in the world that can so notoriously cross the grand end of God's recording of the sins of his saints as for any from thence to take encouragement to sin. And wherever you find such a soul, you may write him Christless, graceless, a soul cast off by God, a soul that Satan has by the hand; and the eternal God knows whither he will lead him.

Device 5: Presenting God as all mercy

The fifth device that Satan has to draw the soul to sin is to present God to the soul as one made up all of mercy. "Oh!" says Satan, "you need not make such a matter of sin. You need not be so fearful of sin, nor so unwilling to sin; for God is a God of mercy, a God full of mercy, a God that delights in mercy, a God that is ready to show mercy, a God that is never weary of showing mercy, a God more prone to pardon his people than to punish his people; and therefore he will not take advantage against the soul. And why then," says Satan, "should you make such a matter of sin?"

Now the remedies against this device of Satan are these.

The first remedy is seriously to consider that it is the sorest judgment in this world to be left to sin upon any pretense whatsoever. O unhappy man, when God leaves you to yourself, and does not resist you in your sins! Woe, woe to him at whose sins God winks! When God lets the way to hell be a smooth and pleasant way, that is hell on this side hell, and a dreadful sign of God's indignation against a man; a token of his rejection, and that God does not intend good unto him.

That is a sad word: "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone" (Hosea 4:17). He will be uncounselable and incorrigible; he has made a match with mischief; he shall have his bellyful of it; he falls with open eyes; let him fall at his own peril. And that is a terrible saying: "So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lusts, and they walked in their own counsels" (Psalm 81:12). A soul given up to sin is a soul ripe for hell, a soul posting to destruction.

Ah, Lord! This mercy I humbly beg, that whatever you give me up to, you will not give me up to the ways of my own heart. If you will give me up to be afflicted, or tempted, or reproached, I will patiently sit down and say, "It is the Lord: let him do with me what seems good in his own eyes." Do anything with me, lay what burden you will upon me, so you do not give me up to the ways of my own heart.

The second remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that God is as just as he is merciful. As the Scriptures speak him out to be a very merciful God, so they speak him out to be a very just God. Witness his casting the angels out of heaven, and his binding them in chains of darkness till the judgment of the great day. Witness his turning Adam out of paradise, his drowning of the old world, and his raining hell out of heaven upon Sodom. Witness all the crosses, losses, sicknesses, and diseases that are in the world. Witness Tophet, that is prepared of old. Witness his "treasuring up of wrath against the day of wrath, unto the revelation of the just judgments of God" (Romans 2:5). But above all, witness the pouring forth of all his wrath upon his bosom Son, when he bore the sins of his people, and cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46).

The third remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider that sins against mercy will bring the greatest and the sorest judgments upon men's heads and hearts. Mercy is alpha; justice is omega. David, speaking of these attributes, places mercy in the forefront and justice in the rearward, saying, "My song shall be of mercy and judgment" (Psalm 101:1). When mercy is despised, then justice takes the throne.

God is like a prince that sends not his army against rebels before he has sent his pardon, and proclaimed it by a herald of arms. He first hangs out the white flag of mercy; if this wins men in, they are happy forever. But if they stand out, then God will put forth his red flag of justice and judgment. If the one be despised, the other shall be felt with a witness.

See this in the Israelites. He loved them and chose them when they were in their blood, and most unlovely. He multiplied them, not by means, but by miracle; for from seventy souls they grew in a few years to six hundred thousand. The more they were oppressed, the more they prospered: like chamomile, the more you tread it, the more you spread it; or like a palm tree, the more it is pressed, the further it spreads; or like fire, the more it is raked, the

more it burns. Their mercies came in upon them like Job's messengers, one upon the neck of another. "He put off their sackcloth, and girded them with gladness, and compassed them about with songs of deliverance; he carried them on the wings of eagles; he kept them as the apple of his eye."

But they, abusing his mercy, became the greatest objects of his wrath. As I know not the man that can reckon up their mercies, so I know not the man that can sum up the miseries that are come upon them for their sins. For as our Savior prophesied concerning Jerusalem, that "a stone should not be left upon a stone," so it was fulfilled forty years after his ascension by Vespasian the emperor and his son Titus. They besieged Jerusalem, and the Jews were oppressed with a grievous famine, in which their food was old shoes, old leather, old hay, and the dung of beasts. There died, partly of the sword and partly of the famine, eleven hundred thousand of the poorer sort. Two thousand in one night were disemboweled; six thousand were burned in a porch of the temple; the whole city was sacked and burned, and laid level to the ground; and ninety-seven thousand were taken captive and applied to base and miserable service, as Eusebius and Josephus say. And to this day, in all the parts of the world, are they not the offscouring of the world? None less beloved, and none more abhorred, than they. And so Capernaum, that was lifted up to heaven, was threatened to be thrown down to hell.

No souls fall so low into hell, if they fall, as those souls that by a hand of mercy are lifted up nearest to heaven. You slight souls that are so apt to abuse mercy, consider this: that in the gospel days, the plagues that God inflicts upon the despisers and abusers of mercy are usually spiritual plagues, as blindness of mind, hardness of heart, and benumbedness of conscience; which are ten thousand times worse than the worst of outward plagues that can befall you. And therefore, though you may escape temporal judgments, yet you shall not escape spiritual judgments. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" says the apostle (Hebrews 2:3).

Oh, therefore, whenever Satan shall present God to the soul as one made up all of mercy, that he may draw you to do wickedly, say unto him that sins against mercy will bring upon the soul the greatest misery; and therefore, whatever becomes of you, you will not sin against mercy.

The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider that though God's general mercy is over all his works, yet his special mercy is confined to those that are divinely qualified. So in Exodus 34:6-7: "And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness

and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." Exodus 20:6: "And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments." Psalm 25:10: "All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies." Psalm 32:10: "Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about." Psalm 33:18: "Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy." Psalm 103:11: "For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him." Verse 17: "But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him."

When Satan attempts to draw you to sin by presenting God as a God all made up of mercy, oh, then reply that though God's general mercy extends to all the works of his hand, yet his special mercy is confined to them that are divinely qualified: to them that love him and keep his commandments; to them that trust in him, that by hope hang upon him, and that fear him; and that you must be such a one here, or else you can never be happy hereafter; you must partake of his special mercy, or else eternally perish in everlasting misery, notwithstanding God's general mercy.

The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that those that were once glorious on earth, and are now triumphing in heaven, did look upon the mercy of God as the most powerful argument to preserve them from sin, and to fence their souls against sin, and not as an encouragement to sin. Psalm 26:3-5: "For thy loving-kindness is before mine eyes: and I have walked in thy truth. I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers. I have hated the congregation of evildoers; and will not sit with the wicked."

So Joseph strengthens himself against sin from the remembrance of mercy: "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" says he (Genesis 39:9). He had fixed his eye upon mercy, and therefore sin could not enter. Though the irons entered into his soul, his soul, being taken with mercy, was not moved by his mistress's impudence. Satan knocked often at the door, but the sight of mercy would not suffer him to answer or open. Joseph, like a pearl in a puddle, keeps his virtue still.

So Paul: "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Romans 6:1-2). There is nothing in the world that renders a man more unlike to a saint, and more like to Satan, than to argue from mercy to sinful liberty, from divine goodness to licentiousness. This is the devil's logic; and in whomever you find it, you may write, "This soul is lost." A man may as truly say the sea

burns, or fire cools, as that free grace and mercy should make a soul truly gracious to do wickedly. So the same apostle: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1).

So John: "These things I write unto you, that you sin not" (1 John 2:1). What was it that he wrote? He wrote that "we might have fellowship with the Father and his Son"; and that "the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin"; and that "if we confess our sins, he is just and faithful to forgive us our sins"; and that "if we do sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 1:3, 7, 9; 2:1-2). These choice favors and mercies the apostle holds forth as the choicest means to preserve the soul from sin, and to keep at the greatest distance from sin. And if this will not do it, you may write the man void of Christ and grace, and undone forever.

Device 6: Persuading the soul that repentance is easy

The sixth device that Satan has to draw the soul to sin is by persuading the soul that the work of repentance is an easy work, and that therefore the soul need not make such a matter of sin. "Why, suppose you do sin," says Satan, "it is no such difficult thing to return, and confess, and be sorrowful, and beg pardon, and cry, 'Lord, have mercy upon me'; and if you do but this, God will cut the score, and pardon your sins, and save your souls." By this device Satan draws many a soul to sin, and makes many millions of souls servants, or rather slaves, to sin.

Now the remedies against this device of Satan are these that follow.

The first remedy is seriously to consider that repentance is a mighty work, a difficult work, a work that is above our power. There is no power below that power that raised Christ from the dead, and that made the world, that can break the heart of a sinner, or turn the heart of a sinner. You may as well melt adamant as melt your own heart; turn a flint into flesh, as turn your own heart to the Lord; raise the dead, and make a world, as repent. Repentance is a flower that grows not in nature's garden. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil" (Jeremiah 13:23).

Repentance is a gift that comes down from above. Men are not born with repentance in their hearts, as they are born with tongues in their mouths. "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:31). So in 2 Timothy 2:25: "In meekness instructing those that oppose them-

selves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." It is not in the power of any mortal to repent at pleasure.

Some ignorant, deluded souls vainly conceit that these five words, "Lord, have mercy upon me," are efficacious to send them to heaven. But as many are undone by buying a counterfeit jewel, so many are in hell by mistake of their repentance. Many rest in their repentance, though it be but the shadow of repentance; which caused one to say, "Repentance damneth more than sin."

The second remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider the nature of true repentance. Repentance is some other thing than what vain men conceive. Repentance is sometimes taken in a more strict and narrow sense, for godly sorrow; sometimes repentance is taken in a large sense, for amendment of life. Repentance has in it three things: the act, the subject, and the terms.

1. The formal act of repentance is a changing and converting. It is often set forth in Scripture by turning: "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned," says Ephraim; "after that I was turned, I repented," says he (Jeremiah 31:18-19). It is a turning from darkness to light.

2. The subject changed and converted is the whole man. It is both the sinner's heart and life: first his heart, then his life; first his person, then his practice and conversation. "Wash ye, make you clean": there is the change of their persons. "Put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well": there is the change of their practices (Isaiah 1:16-17). So, "Cast away," says Ezekiel, "all your transgressions, whereby you have transgressed": there is the change of the life; "and make you a new heart and a new spirit": there is the change of the heart (Ezekiel 18:31).

3. The terms of this change and conversion, from which and to which: both heart and life must be changed, from all sin, to God. The heart must be changed from the state and power of sin, the life from the acts of sin; but both unto God: the heart to be under his power in a state of grace, the life to be under his rule in all new obedience. As the apostle speaks, "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God" (Acts 26:18). So the prophet Isaiah says, "Let the wicked forsake their ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord" (Isaiah 55:7).

Thus much of the nature of evangelical repentance. Now, souls, tell me whether it be such an easy thing to repent as Satan suggests.

Besides what has been spoken, I desire that you will take notice that repentance includes a turning from the most darling sin. "Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols?" (Hosea 14:8). Yea, it is a turning from all sin to God. "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord God. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin" (Ezekiel 18:30). Herod turned from many, but turned not from his Herodias, which was his ruin. Judas turned from all visible wickedness, yet he would not cast out that golden devil, covetousness, and therefore was cast into the hottest place in hell.

He that turns not from every sin turns not aright from any one sin. Every sin strikes at the honor of God, the being of God, the glory of God, the heart of Christ, the joy of the Spirit, and the peace of a man's conscience. And therefore a soul truly penitent strikes at all, hates all, conflicts with all, and will labor to draw strength from a crucified Christ to crucify all. A true penitent knows neither father nor mother, neither right eye nor right hand, but will pluck out the one and cut off the other. Saul spared but one Agag, and that cost him his soul and his kingdom.

Besides, repentance is not only a turning from all sin, but also a turning to all good: to a love of all good, to a prizing of all good, and to a following after all good. "But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die" (Ezekiel 18:21). That is, only negative righteousness and holiness is no righteousness nor holiness. David fulfilled all the wills of God, and had respect unto all his commandments; and so had Zacharias and Elizabeth. It is not enough that the tree bears not ill fruit; but "it must bring forth good fruit," else "it must be cut down, and cast into the fire." So it is not enough that you are not thus and thus wicked; but you must be thus and thus gracious and good, else divine justice will put the axe of divine vengeance to the root of your souls, and cut you off forever. "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire" (Matthew 3:10).

Besides, repentance includes a sensibleness of sin's sinfulness: how opposite and contrary it is to the blessed God. God is light, sin is darkness; God is life, sin is death; God is heaven, sin is hell; God is beauty, sin is deformity.

Also, true repentance includes a sensibleness of sin's mischievousness: how it cast angels out of heaven, and Adam out of paradise; how it laid the first cornerstone in hell, and brought in all the curses, crosses, and miseries that are in the world; and how it makes men liable to all temporal, spiritual, and eternal wrath; how it has made men godless, Christless, hopeless, and heavenless in this world.

Further, true repentance includes sorrow for sin, contrition of heart. It breaks the heart with sighs and sobs and groans, for that a loving God and Father is by sin offended, a blessed Savior afresh crucified, and the sweet Comforter, the Spirit, grieved and vexed.

Again, repentance includes not only a loathing of sin, but also a loathing of ourselves for sin. As a man does not only loathe poison, but he loathes the very dish or vessel that has the smell of the poison, so a true penitent does not only loathe his sin, but he loathes himself, the vessel that still smells of sin. So Ezekiel 20:43: "And there shall ye remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein ye have been defiled; and ye shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that ye have committed." True repentance will work your hearts not only to loathe your sins, but also to loathe yourselves.

Again, true repentance does not only work a man to loathe himself for his sins, but it makes him ashamed of his sin also. "What fruit have ye of those things, whereof ye are (now) ashamed?" says the apostle (Romans 6:21). So Ezekiel: "And thou shalt be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God" (Ezekiel 16:63). When a penitent soul sees his sins pardoned, the anger of God pacified, and divine justice satisfied, then he sits down (and blushes, as the Hebrew has it) as one ashamed.

Yea, true repentance works a man to cross his sinful self, and to walk contrary to sinful self, to take a holy revenge upon sin; as you may see in Paul, the jailer, Mary Magdalene, and Manasseh. This the apostle shows in 2 Corinthians 7:10-11: "For godly sorrow worketh repentance never to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold the selfsame thing that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge!"

Now, souls, sum up all these things together, and tell me whether it be such an easy thing to repent as Satan would make the soul believe. I am confident your hearts will answer that it is as hard a thing to repent as it is to make a world, or to raise the dead.

I shall conclude this second remedy with a worthy saying of a precious holy man: "Repentance," says he, "strips us stark naked of all the garments of the old Adam, and leaves not so much as the shirt behind. In this rotten building it leaves not a stone upon a stone. As the flood drowned Noah's own friends and servants, so must the flood of repenting tears drown our sweetest and most profitable sins."

The third remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider that repentance is a continued act. The word "repent" implies the continuation of it. True repentance inclines a man's heart to perform God's statutes always, even unto the end. A true penitent must go on from faith to faith, from strength to strength. He must never stand still, nor turn back. Repentance is a grace, and must have its daily operation, as well as other graces. True repentance is a continued spring, where the waters of godly sorrow are always flowing. "My sins are ever before me." A true penitent is often casting his eyes back to the days of his former vanity, and this makes him morning and evening "to water his couch with his tears." "Remember not against me the sins of my youth," says one blessed penitent; and "I was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious," says another penitent.

Repentance is a continued act of turning, a repentance never to be repented of, a turning never to turn again to folly. A true penitent has ever something within him to turn from. He can never get near enough to God; no, not so near him as once he was. And therefore he is still turning and turning, that he may get nearer and nearer to him, that is his chiefest good and his only happiness, *optimum maximum* [the best and the greatest]. They are every day crying out, "O wretched men that we are! who shall deliver us from this body of death?" They are still sensible of sin, and still conflicting with sin, and still sorrowing for sin, and still loathing themselves for sin.

Repentance is no transient act, but a continued act of the soul. And tell me, O tempted soul, whether it be such an easy thing as Satan would make you believe, to be every day turning more and more from sin, and turning nearer and nearer to God, your choicest blessedness. A true penitent can as easily content himself with one act of faith, or one act of love, as he can content himself with one act of repentance.

A Jewish rabbi, pressing the practice of repentance upon his disciples, exhorted them to be sure to repent the day before they died. One of them replied that the day of any man's death was very uncertain. "Repent therefore every day," said the rabbi, "and then you shall be sure to repent the day before you die." You are wise, and know how to apply it to your own advantage.

The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that if the work of repentance were such an easy work as Satan would make it to be, then certainly so many would not lie roaring and crying out of wrath and eternal ruin, under the horrors and terrors of conscience, for not repenting. Yea, doubtless, so many millions would not go to hell for not repenting, if it were such an easy thing to repent. Ah! Do not poor souls under horrors of conscience cry out and say, "Were all this world a lump of gold, and in our hand to

dispose of, we would give it for the least dram of true repentance"? And will you say it is an easy thing to repent, when a poor sinner whose conscience is awakened shall judge the exchange of all the world for the least dram of repentance to be the happiest exchange that ever sinner made?

Tell me, O soul, is it good going to hell? Is it good dwelling with the devouring fire, with everlasting burnings? Is it good to be forever separated from the blessed and glorious presence of God, angels, and saints, and to be forever shut out from those good things of eternal life, which are so many that they exceed number, so great that they exceed measure, so precious that they exceed all estimation? We know it is the greatest misery that can befall the sons of men. And would they not prevent this by repentance, if it were such an easy thing to repent as Satan would make it? Well then, do not run the hazard of losing God, Christ, heaven, and your soul forever, by hearkening to this device of Satan: that it is an easy thing to repent.

If it be so easy, why then do wicked men's hearts so rise against those that press the doctrine of repentance in the sweetest way, and by the strongest and the choicest arguments that the Scripture affords? And why do they kill two at once, the faithful laborer's name and their own souls, by their wicked words and actings, because they are put upon repenting, which Satan tells them is so easy a thing? Surely, were repentance so easy, wicked men would not be so much enraged when that doctrine is by evangelical considerations pressed upon them.

The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider that to repent of sin is as great a work of grace as not to sin. By our sinful falls the powers of the soul are weakened, the strength of grace is decayed, our evidences for heaven are blotted, fears and doubts in the soul are raised (will God once more pardon this scarlet sin, and show mercy to this wretched soul?), and corruptions in the heart are more advantaged and confirmed; and the conscience of a man after falls is the more enraged, or the more benumbed. Now for a soul, notwithstanding all this, to repent of his falls shows that it is as great a work of grace to repent of sin as it is not to sin. Repentance is the vomit of the soul; and of all physic, none is so difficult and hard as it is to vomit.

The same means that tends to preserve the soul from sin, the same means works the soul to rise by repentance when it is fallen into sin. We know the mercy and loving-kindness of God is one special means to keep the soul from sin, as David spoke: "Thy loving-kindness is always before mine eyes, and I have walked in thy truth. I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers. I have hated the congregation of evildoers, and will

not sit with the wicked" (Psalm 26:3-5). So by the same means the soul is raised by repentance out of sin, as you may see in Mary Magdalene, who loved much and wept much, because much was forgiven her (Luke 7:37-47).

So those in Hosea: "Come, let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight" (Hosea 6:1-2); or "before his face," as the Hebrew has it, that is, in his favor. Confidence in God's mercy and love, that he would heal them, and bind up their wounds, and revive their dejected spirits, and cause them to live in his favor, was that which worked their hearts to repent and return unto him.

I might further show you this truth in many other particulars, but this may suffice. Only remember this in general: that there is much of the power of God, and love of God, and faith in God, and fear of God, and care to please God, and zeal for the glory of God, requisite to work a man to repent of sin, as there is to keep a man from sin (2 Corinthians 7:11). By this you may easily judge that to repent of sin is as great a work as not to sin. And now tell me, O soul, is it an easy thing not to sin? Then we know certainly it is not an easy thing to repent of sin.

The sixth remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider that he that now tempts you to sin upon this account, that repentance is easy, will ere long, to work you to despair, [make your sins] say, "We are yours, and we must follow you." Now Satan will help to work the soul to look up, and see God angry; and to look inward, and see conscience accusing and condemning; and to look downwards, and see hell's mouth open to receive the impenitent soul; and all this to render the work of repentance impossible to the soul.

"What," says Satan, "do you think that is easy which the whole power of grace cannot conquer while we are in this world? Is it easy," says Satan, "to turn from some outward act of sin to which you have been addicted? Do you not remember that you have often complained against such and such particular sins, and resolved to leave them, and yet to this hour you have not, you cannot? What will it then be to turn from every sin? Yea, to mortify and cut off those sins, those darling lusts, that are as joints and members, that are as right hands and right eyes? Have you not loved your sins above your Savior? Have you not preferred earth before heaven? Have you not all along neglected the means of grace, and despised the offers of grace, and vexed the Spirit of grace? There would be no end if I should set before you the infinite evils that you have committed, and the innumerable good services that you have omitted, and the frequent checks of your own conscience that you have

contemned. And therefore you may well conclude that you can never repent, that you shall never repent."

"Now," says Satan, "do but a little consider your numberless sins, and the greatness of your sins, the foulness of your sins, the heinousness of your sins, the circumstances of your sins, and you shall easily see that those sins that you thought to be but motes are indeed mountains. And is it not now in vain to repent of them? Surely," says Satan, "if you should seek repentance and grace with tears, as Esau did, you shall not find it. Your glass is out; your sun is set; the door of mercy is shut; the golden scepter is taken in; and now you that have despised mercy shall be forever destroyed by justice. For such a wretch as you are to attempt repentance is to attempt a thing impossible. It is impossible that you, that in all your life could never conquer one sin, should master such a numberless number of sins, which are so near, so dear, so necessary, and so profitable to you, that have so long bedded and boarded with you, that have been old acquaintance and companions with you. Have you not often purposed, promised, vowed, and resolved to enter upon the practice of repentance, but to this day could never attain it? Surely it is in vain to strive against the stream, where it is so impossible to overcome. You are lost, and cast forever to hell. You must to hell; you shall."

Ah, souls! He that now tempts you to sin, by suggesting to you the easiness of repentance, will at last, to work you to despair, present repentance as the hardest work in all the world, and a work as far above man as heaven is above hell, as light is above darkness. Oh, that you were wise, to break off your sins by timely repentance!

Device 7: Making the soul bold to go near the occasions of sin

Now the seventh device that Satan has to draw the soul to sin is by making the soul bold to venture upon the occasions of sin. Says Satan, "You may walk by the harlot's door, though you will not go into the harlot's bed. You may sit and sip with the drunkard, though you will not be drunk with the drunkard. You may look upon Jezebel's beauty, and you may play and toy with Delilah, though you do not commit wickedness with the one or the other. You may with Achan handle the golden wedge, though you do not steal the golden wedge."

Now the remedies against this device are these that follow.

The first remedy is solemnly to dwell upon those Scriptures that expressly command us to avoid the occasions of sin, and the least appearance of evil. "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:22). Whatsoever is heterodox, unsound, and unsavory, shun it as you would do a serpent in your way, or poison in your meat. Theodosius tore the Arians' ar-

guments, presented to him in writing, because he found them repugnant to the Scriptures; and Augustine retracted even ironies, only because they had the appearance of lying. When God had commanded the Jews to abstain from swine's flesh, they would not so much as name it, but in their common talk would call a sow "another thing."

To abstain from all appearance of evil is to do nothing wherein sin appears, or which has a shadow of sin. Bernard glosses finely: whatever is of an ill show, or of ill report, that he may neither wound conscience nor credit. We must shun, and be shy of, the very show and shadow of sin, if either we tender our credit abroad or our comfort at home. It was good counsel that Livia gave her husband Augustus: "It behooves you not only not to do wrong, but not to seem to do so."

So Jude 23: "And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh." It is a phrase taken from legal uncleanness, which was contracted by touching the houses, the vessels, and the garments of unclean persons. Under the law, men might not touch a menstruous cloth, nor God would not accept a spotted peace offering. So we must not only hate and avoid gross sins, but everything that may carry a savor or suspicion of sin. We must abhor the very signs and tokens of sin.

So in Proverbs 5:8: "Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house." He that would not be burned must dread the fire; he that would not hear the bell must not meddle with the rope. To venture upon the occasion of sin, and then to pray, "Lead us not into temptation," is all one as to thrust your finger into the fire, and then to pray that it might not be burned.

So in Proverbs 4:14-15 you have another command: "Enter not in the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, and pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away." This triple gradation of Solomon shows with great emphasis how necessary it is for men to flee from all appearance of sin, as the seaman shuns sands and shelves, and as men shun those that have the plague sores running upon them. As weeds endanger the corn, as bad humors endanger the blood, or as an infected house endangers the neighborhood, so does the company of the bad endanger those that are good. Entireness with wicked consorts is one of the strongest chains of hell, and binds us to a participation both of sin and punishment.

The second remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that ordinarily there is no conquest over sin without the soul turns from the occasion of sin. It is impossible for that man to get the conquest of sin that plays and sports with the occasions of sin. God will not remove the temptation except we turn from the occasion. It is a just and right-

eous thing with God that he should fall into the pit that will adventure to dance upon the brink of the pit; and that he should be a slave to sin that will not flee from the occasions of sin.

As long as there is fuel in our hearts for a temptation, we cannot be secure. He that has gunpowder about him had need keep far enough off from sparks. To rush upon the occasions of sin is both to tempt ourselves and to tempt Satan to tempt our souls. It is very rare that any soul plays with occasions of sin but that soul is ensnared by sin. It is seldom that God keeps that soul from the acts of sin that will not keep off from the occasions of sin. He that adventures upon the occasions of sin is as he that would quench the fire with oil, which is a fuel to maintain and increase it.

Ah, souls! Often remember how frequently you have been overcome by sin when you have boldly gone upon the occasions of sin. Look back, souls, to the days of your vanity, wherein you have been as easily conquered as tempted, vanquished as assaulted, when you have played with the occasions of sin. And therefore, as you would for the future be kept from the acting of sin, and be made victorious over sin, oh, flee from the occasions of sin!

The third remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider that other precious saints, that were once glorious on earth and are now triumphing in heaven, have turned from the occasions of sin as hell itself. As you may see in Joseph: "And it came to pass, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her" (Genesis 39:10). Joseph was famous for all the four cardinal virtues, if ever any were. In this one temptation you may see his fortitude, justice, temperance, and prudence, in that he shuns the occasion; for he would not so much as be with her. And that a man is indeed which he is in a temptation, which is but a tap to give vent to corruption.

The Nazarite might not only not drink wine, but not taste a grape, or the husk of a grape. The leper was to shave his hair and pare his nails. The devil counts a fit occasion half a conquest; for he knows that corrupt nature has a seed-plot of all sin, which, being drawn forth and watered by some sinful occasion, is soon set a-work to the producing of death and destruction. God will not remove the temptation till we remove the occasion. A bird aloft is safe, but she comes not near the snare without danger.

The shunning of the occasions of sin renders a man most like the best of men. A soul eminently gracious dares not come near the train, though he be far off the blow. So Job 31:1: "I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?" I set a watch at the entrance of my senses, that my soul might not by them be infected and endangered. The eye is the window of the soul; and if that should be always open, the soul might smart for it.

A man may not look intently upon that which he may not love entirely. The disciples were set agog by beholding the beauty of the temple. It is best and safest to have the eye always fixed upon the highest and noblest objects; as the mariners' eye is fixed on the star when their hand is on the stern.

So David, when he was himself, shuns the occasion of sin: "I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers. I have hated the congregation of evildoers; and will not sit with the wicked" (Psalm 26:4-5).

Stories speak of some that could not sleep when they thought of the trophies of other worthies that went before them. The highest and choicest examples are to some, and should be to all, very quickening and provoking. And oh, that the examples of those worthy saints, David, Joseph, and Job, might prevail with all your souls to shun and avoid the occasions of sin! Every one should strive to be like them in grace that they desire to be equal with in glory. He that shoots at the sun, though he come far short, will shoot higher than he that aims at a shrub. It is best (and it speaks out much of Christ within) to eye the highest and the worthiest examples.

The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that the avoiding of the occasions of sin is an evidence of grace, and that which lifts up a man above most other men in the world. That a man is indeed which he is in temptation; and when sinful occasions present themselves before the soul, this speaks out both the truth and the strength of grace: when, with Lot, a man can be chaste in Sodom; and, with Timothy, can live temperately in Asia, among the luxurious Ephesians; and, with Job, can walk uprightly in the land of Uz, where the people were profane in their lives and superstitious in their worship; and, with Daniel, be holy in Babylon; and, with Abraham, righteous in Chaldea; and, with Nehemiah, zealous in Damascus.

Many a wicked man is big and full of sinful corruption, but shows it not for want of occasion. But that man is surely good who in his course will not be bad, though tempted by occasions. A Christless soul is so far from refusing occasions when they come in his way that he looks and longs after them; and rather than he will go without them, he will buy them not only with love or money, but also with the loss of his soul. Nothing but grace can fence a man against the occasions of sin when he is strongly tempted thereunto. Therefore, as you would cherish a precious evidence in your own bosoms of the truth and strength of your graces, shun all sinful occasions.

Device 8: Showing the outward mercies of those who walk in sin

The eighth device that Satan has to draw the soul to sin is by presenting to the soul the outward mercies that vain men enjoy, and the outward miseries that they are freed from, while they have walked in the ways of sin. Says Satan, "Do you not see, O soul, the many mercies that such and such enjoy, that walk in those very ways that your soul startles to think of; and the many crosses that they are delivered from, even such as make other men (that say they dare not walk in such ways) spend their days in sighing, weeping, groaning, and mourning? And therefore," says Satan, "if ever you would be freed from the dark night of adversity, and enjoy the sunshine of prosperity, you must walk in their ways."

By this stratagem the devil took those in Jeremiah 44:16-18: "As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee. But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth of our mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil. But since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine."

This is just the language of a world of ignorant, profane, and superstitious souls in London and England, that would have made them a captain to return to bondage; yea, to that bondage that was worse than that the Israelites groaned under. "Oh," say they, "since such and such persons have been put down, and left off, we have had nothing but plundering and taxing and butchering of men; and therefore we will do as we and our kings and nobles and fathers have formerly done; for then had we plenty at home, and peace abroad, and there was none to make us afraid."

Now the remedies against this device of Satan are these that follow.

The first remedy is solemnly to consider that no man knows how the heart of God stands by his hand. His hand of mercy may be towards a man when his heart may be set against that man, as you may see in Saul and others. And the hand of God may be set against a man when the heart of God is dearly set upon a man, as you may see in Job and Ephraim. The hand of God was sorely set against them, and yet the heart and bowels of God were strongly working towards them. No man knows either love or hatred by outward mercy or misery; for all things come alike to all, to the righteous and to the unrighteous, to the good and to the bad, to the clean and to the unclean (Ecclesiastes 9:1-2).

The sun of prosperity shines as well upon the brambles of the wilderness as the fruit trees of the orchard. The snow and hail of adversity light upon the best gardens as well as the stinking dunghills or the wild waste. Ahab's and Josiah's ends concur in the very circumstances. Saul and Jonathan, though different in their natures, deserts, and deportments, yet in their deaths they were not divided. Health, wealth, and honors, crosses, sicknesses, and losses, are cast upon good men and bad men promiscuously. The whole Turkish empire is nothing else but a crust cast by heaven's great housekeeper to his dogs. Moses dies in the wilderness as well as those that murmured. Nabal is rich as well as Abraham; Ahithophel wise as well as Solomon; and Doeg honored by Saul as well as Joseph was by Pharaoh. Usually the worst of men have most of these outward things, and the best of men have least of earth, though most of heaven.

The second remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider that there is nothing in the world that so provokes God to be wroth and angry as men's taking encouragement from God's goodness and mercy to do wickedly. This you may see by that wrath that fell upon the old world, and by God's raining hell out of heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah. This is clear in Jeremiah 44, from the twentieth verse to the twenty-eighth. The words are worthy of your best meditation. Oh, that they were engraved in all your hearts, and constant in all your thoughts! Though they are too large for me to transcribe, yet they are not too large for you to remember.

To argue from mercy to sinful liberty is the devil's logic; and such logicians ever walk as upon a mine of gunpowder, ready to be blown up. No such souls can ever avert or avoid the wrath of God. This is wickedness at the height, for a man to be very bad because God is very good. A worse spirit than this is not in hell. Ah, Lord! Does not wrath, yea, the greatest wrath, lie at this man's door? Are not the strongest chains of darkness prepared for such a soul? To sin against mercy is to sin against humanity; it is bestial, nay, it is worse. To render good for evil is divine; to render good for good is human; to render evil for evil is brutish; but to render evil for good is devilish. And from this evil deliver my soul, O God!

The third remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that there is no greater misery in this life than not to be in misery; no greater affliction than not to be afflicted. Woe, woe to that soul that God will not spend a rod upon! This is the saddest stroke of all, when God refuses to strike at all. "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone" (Hosea 4:17). "Why should you be smitten any more? you will revolt more and more" (Isaiah 1:5). When the physician gives over the patient, you say, "Ring out his knell; the man is dead." So when God gives over a soul to sin without control, you may truly say, "This soul is lost." You may ring out his knell, for he is twice dead, and plucked up by the roots.

Freedom from punishment is the mother of security, the stepmother of virtue, the poison of religion, the moth of holiness, and the introducer of wickedness. "Nothing," said one, "seems more unhappy to me than he to whom no adversity has happened." Outward mercies ofttimes prove a snare to our souls. "I will lay a stumbling block" (Ezekiel 3:20). Vatablus's note there is: "I will prosper him in all things, and not by affliction restrain him from sin." Prosperity has been a stumbling block at which millions have stumbled, and fallen, and broken the neck of their souls forever.

The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider that the wants of wicked men, under all their outward mercy and freedom from adversity, is far greater than all their outward enjoyments. They have many mercies, yet they want more than they enjoy. The mercies which they enjoy are nothing to the mercies they want. It is true, they have honors, and riches, and pleasures, and friends, and are mighty in power. Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes; their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them. "They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in wealth. Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart can wish. And they have no bands in their death: but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men," as David and Job speak (Job 21:8-13; Psalm 73:4-7).

Yet all this is nothing to what they want. They want interest in God, Christ, the Spirit, the promises, the covenant of grace, and everlasting glory. They want acceptation and reconciliation with God. They want righteousness, justification, sanctification, adoption, and redemption. They want the pardon of sin, and power against sin, and freedom from the dominion of sin. They want that favor that is better than life, and that joy that is unspeakable and full of glory, and that peace that passes understanding, and that grace the least spark of which is more worth than heaven and earth. They want a house that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. They want those riches that perish not, that glory that fades not, that kingdom that shakes not.

Wicked men are the most needy men in the world. Yea, they want those two things that should render their mercies sweet, that is, the blessing of God and contentment with their condition; without which their heaven is but hell on this side hell. When their hearts are lifted up, and grown big upon the thoughts of their abundance, if conscience does but put in a word and say, "It is true, here is this and that outward mercy; oh, but where is an interest in Christ? Where is the favor of God? Where are the comforts of the Holy Ghost? Where are your evidences for heaven?" this word from conscience makes the man's countenance

change, his thoughts be troubled, his heart be amazed, and all his mercies on the right hand and left to be as dead and withered.

Ah! Were but the eyes of wicked men open to see their wants under their abundance, they would cry out and say, as Absalom did, "What are all these to me, so long as I cannot see the king's face? What is honor, and riches, and the favor of creatures, so long as I want the favor of God, the pardon of my sins, an interest in Christ, and the hopes of glory? O God, give me these, or I die; give me these, or else I shall eternally die!"

The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that outward things are not as they seem and are esteemed. They have indeed a glorious outside; but if you view their insides, you will easily find that they fill the head full of cares and the heart full of fears. "What if the fire should consume one part of my estate, and the sea should be a grave to swallow up another part of my estate? What if my servants should be unfaithful abroad, and my children deceitful at home?" Ah, the secret fretting, vexing, and gnawing that daily, yea, hourly, attend those men's souls whose hands are full of worldly goods!

It was a good speech of an emperor: "You gaze," said he, "on my purple robe and golden crown; but did you know what cares are under it, you would not take it up from the ground to have it." It was a true saying of Augustine on the twenty-sixth psalm: "Many are miserable by loving hurtful things, but they are more miserable by having them." It is not what men enjoy, but the principle from whence it comes, that makes men happy. Much of these outward things usually causes great distraction, great vexation, and great condemnation at last to the possessors of them. If God gives them in his wrath, and does not sanctify them in his love, they will at last be witnesses against a man, and racks to torture and torment a man, and millstones forever to sink a man, in that day when God shall call men to an account, not for the use, but for the abuse of mercy.

The sixth remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider the end and the design of God in heaping up mercy upon the heads of the wicked, and in giving them a *quietus est* [a full discharge], rest and quiet from those sorrows and sufferings that others sigh under. David, in Psalm 73:17-20, shows the end and design of God in this. Says he, "When I went into the sanctuary of God, then I understood their end. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image." So in Psalm 92:7: "When the wicked spring as grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be destroyed for ever."

God's setting them up is but in order to his casting them down; his raising them high is but in order to his bringing them low. Exodus 9:16: "And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth." I have constituted and set you up as a butt mark, that I may let fly at you, and follow you close with plague upon plague, till I have beaten the very breath out of your body, and gotten myself a name in setting my feet upon the neck of all your pride, power, pomp, and glory.

Ah, souls! What man in his wits would be lifted up that he might be cast down? Would be set higher than others, when it is but in order to his being brought down lower than others? There is not a wicked man in the world that is set up with Lucifer as high as heaven but shall with Lucifer be brought down as low as hell. Can you think seriously of this, O soul, and not say: "O Lord, I humbly crave that you will let me be little in this world, that I may be great in another world; and low here, that I may be high forever hereafter. Let me be low, and feed low, and live low, so I may live with you forever. Let me now be clothed with rags, so you will clothe me at last with your robes. Let me now be set upon a dunghill, so I may at last be advanced to sit with you upon your throne. Lord, make me rather gracious than great; inwardly holy, than outwardly happy; and rather turn me into my first nothing, yea, make me worse than nothing, than set me up for a time, that you may bring me low forever"?

The seventh remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that God often most plagues and punishes those whom others think he most spares and loves. That is, God plagues and punishes them most with spiritual judgments (which are the greatest, the sorest, and the heaviest) whom he least punishes with temporal punishments. There are no men on earth so internally plagued as those that meet with the fewest external plagues. Oh, the blindness of mind, the hardness of heart, the searedness of conscience, that those souls are given up to, who in the eye of the world are reputed the most happy men, because they are not outwardly afflicted and plagued as other men!

Ah, souls! It were better that all the temporal plagues that ever befell the children of men since the fall of Adam should at once meet upon your souls than that you should be given up to the least spiritual plague, to the least measure of spiritual blindness, or spiritual hardness of heart. Nothing will better that man, nor move that man, that is given up to spiritual judgments. Let God smile or frown, stroke or strike, cut or kill, he minds it not, he regards it not. Let life or death, heaven or hell, be set before him, it stirs him not. He is made up in his sin, and God is fully set to do justice upon his soul. This man's preservation is but a reservation unto a greater condemnation. This man can set no bounds to himself; he is become a

brat of fathomless perdition. He has guilt in his bosom and vengeance at his back wherever he goes. Neither ministry nor misery, neither miracle nor mercy, can mollify his heart. And if this soul be not in hell on this side hell, who is? Who is?

The eighth remedy against this device of Satan is to dwell more upon that strict account that vain men must make for all the good that they enjoy than upon the outward good they enjoy. Ah! Did men dwell more upon that account that they must ere long give for all the mercies that they have enjoyed, and for all the favors that they have abused, and for all the sins they have committed, it would make their hearts tremble, and their lips quiver, and rottenness enter into their bones. It would cause their souls to cry out and say, "Oh, that our mercies had been fewer and lesser, that our account might have been easier, and our torment and misery (for our abuse of so great mercy) not greater than we are able to bear! O cursed be the day wherein the crown of honor was set upon our heads, and the treasures of this world were cast into our laps! O cursed be the day wherein the sun of prosperity shined so strong upon us, and this flattering world smiled so much upon us, as to occasion us to forget God, to slight Jesus Christ, to neglect our souls, and to put far from us the day of our account!"

Philip the Third of Spain, whose life was free from gross evils, professed that he would rather lose all his kingdom than offend God willingly. Yet being in the agony of death, and considering more thoroughly the account he was to give to God, fear struck into him, and these words broke from him: "Oh, would to God I had never reigned! Oh, that those years I have spent in my kingdom I had lived a life in the wilderness! Oh, that I had lived a solitary life with God! How much more securely should I now have died! How much more confidently should I have gone to the throne of God! What does all my glory profit me, but that I have so much the more torment in my death?"

God keeps an exact account of every penny that is laid out upon him and his, and that is laid out against him and his; and this in the day of account men shall know and feel, though now they wink, and will not understand. The sleeping of vengeance causes the overflowing of sin, and the overflowing of sin causes the awaking of vengeance. Abused mercy will certainly turn into fury. God's forbearance is no acquittance. The day is at hand when he will pay wicked men for the abuse of new and old mercies. If he seems to be slow, yet he is sure. He has leaden heels, but iron hands. The farther he fetches his blow, or draws his arrow, the deeper he will wound in the day of vengeance. Men's actions are all in print in heaven, and God will, in the day of account, read them aloud in the ears of all the world, that they may all say Amen to that righteous sentence that he shall pass upon all the despisers and abusers of mercy.

Device 9: Showing the sufferings of those who walk in holiness

The ninth device that Satan has to draw the soul to sin is by presenting to the soul the crosses, losses, reproaches, sorrows, and sufferings that daily attend those that walk in the ways of holiness. Says Satan, "Do you not see that there are none in the world that are so vexed, afflicted, and tossed as those that walk more circumspectly and holily than their neighbors? They are a byword at home and a reproach abroad. Their miseries come in upon them like Job's messengers, one upon the neck of another, and there is no end of their sorrows and troubles. Therefore," says Satan, "you were better walk in ways that are less troublesome and less afflicted, though they be more sinful. For who but a madman would spend his days in sorrow, vexation, and affliction, when it may be prevented by walking in the ways that I set before him?"

Now the remedies against this device of Satan are these that follow.

The first remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that all the afflictions that attend the people of God are such as shall turn to the profit and glorious advantage of the people of God. They shall discover that filthiness and vileness in sin that the soul has never yet seen. It was a speech of a German divine in his sickness: "In this disease I have learned how great God is, and what the evil of sin is. I never knew to purpose what God was before, nor what sin meant, till now." Afflictions are a crystal glass wherein the soul has the clearest sight of the ugly face of sin. In this glass the soul comes to see sin to be but a bittersweet; yea, in this glass the soul comes to see sin not only to be an evil, but to be the greatest evil in the world, to be an evil far worse than hell.

Again, they shall contribute to the mortifying and purging away of their sins (Isaiah 1:25; 27:8-9). Afflictions are God's furnace, by which he cleanses his people from their dross. Affliction is a fire to purge out our dross and to make virtue shine. It is a potion to carry away ill humors, better than all the *Benedicta Medicamenta* [blessed medicines], as physicians call them. Aloes kills worms; colds and frosts destroy vermin; so do afflictions the corruptions that are in our hearts. The Jews, under all the prophets' thundering, retained their idols; but after their Babylonish captivity, it is observed, there have been no idols found among them.

Again, afflictions are sweet preservatives to keep the saints from sin, which is a greater evil than hell itself. As Job spoke: "Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more. That which I see not, teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more" (Job 34:31-32). "Once have I spoken foolishly, yea, twice; but I will do so no more," says Job (Job 40:5). The burnt child dreads the fire. "Ah!" says the soul under

the rod, "sin is but a bittersweet, and for the future I intend, by the strength of Christ, that I will not buy repentance at so dear a rate." The rabbis, to scare their scholars from sin, used to tell them that sin made God's head ache; and saints under the rod have found by woeful experience that sin makes not only their heads but their hearts ache also. Augustine, by wandering out of his way, escaped one that lay in wait to mischief him. If afflictions did not put us out of our way, we should many times meet with some sin or other that would mischief our precious souls.

Again, they will work the saints to be more fruitful in holiness: "But he afflicts us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness" (Hebrews 12:10-11). The flowers smell sweetest after a shower; vines bear the better for bleeding; the walnut tree is most fruitful when most beaten. Saints spring and thrive most internally when they are most externally afflicted. Afflictions are called by some the mother of virtue. Manasseh's chain was more profitable to him than his crown. Luther could not understand some Scriptures till he was in affliction. The Christ-cross is no letter, and yet that taught him more than all the letters in the row. God's house of correction is his school of instruction. All the stones that came about Stephen's ears did but knock him closer to Christ the cornerstone. The waves did but lift Noah's ark nearer to heaven, and the higher the waters grew, the nearer the ark was lifted up to heaven.

Afflictions lift up the soul to more rich, clear, and full enjoyments of God. "Behold, I will allure her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably to her" (Hosea 2:14), or rather, as the Hebrew has it, "I will earnestly, or vehemently, speak to her heart." God makes afflictions to be but inlets to the soul's more sweet and full enjoyment of his blessed self. When was it that Stephen saw the heavens open, and Christ standing at the right hand of God, but when the stones were about his ears, and there was but a short step betwixt him and eternity? And when did God appear in his glory to Jacob, but in the day of his troubles, when the stones were his pillows, and the ground his bed, and the hedges his curtains, and the heavens his canopy? Then he saw the angels of God ascending and descending in their glistering robes.

The plant in Nazianzen grows with cutting. Being cut, it flourishes; it contends with the axe; it lives by dying, and by cutting it grows. So do saints by the afflictions that befall them. They gain more experience of the power of God supporting them, of the wisdom of God directing them, of the grace of God refreshing and cheering them, and of the goodness of God quieting and quickening them, to a greater love to holiness, and to a greater delight in holiness, and to a more vehement pursuing after holiness. I have read of a fountain that at noonday is cold, and at midnight grows warm. So many a precious saint is cold Godward,

and heavenward, and holinessward in the day of prosperity, that grows warm Godward, and heavenward, and holinessward in the midnight of adversity.

Again, afflictions serve to keep the hearts of the saints humble and tender: "Remembering my affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall. My soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me" (Lamentations 3:19-20), or "bowed down in me," as the original has it. So David, when he was under the rod, could say, "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it" (Psalm 39:9). I have read of one who, when anything fell out prosperously, would read over the Lamentations of Jeremiah, and that kept his heart tender, humble, and low. Prosperity does not contribute more to the puffing up of the soul than adversity does to the bowing down of the soul. This the saints find by experience, and therefore they can kiss and embrace the cross, as others do the world's crown.

Again, they serve to bring the saints nearer to God, and to make them more importunate and earnest in prayer with God. "Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word. It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes" (Psalm 119:67, 71). "I will be to Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: I, even I, will tear and go away; I will take away, and none shall rescue him. I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offense, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early" (Hosea 5:14-15). And so they did: "Come," say they, "and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight" (Hosea 6:1-2). So when God had hedged up their way with thorns, then they say, "I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it with me better than now" (Hosea 2:6-7). Ah, the joy, the peace, the comfort, the delight, and the content that attended us when we kept close communion with God bespeak our return to God: "We will return to our first husband, for then was it with us better than now."

When Tiribazus, a noble Persian, was arrested, he drew out his sword and defended himself; but when they told him that they came to carry him to the king, he willingly yielded. So, though a saint may at first stand out a little, yet when he remembers that afflictions are to carry him nearer to God, he yields and kisses the rod. Afflictions are like the prick at the nightingale's breast, that wakes her and puts her upon her sweet and delightful singing.

Again, afflictions serve to revive and recover decayed graces. They inflame that love that is cold, and they quicken that faith that is decaying, and they put life into those hopes that are withering, and spirits into those joys and comforts that are languishing. Musk (says one), when it has lost its sweetness, if it be put into the sink among filth, recovers it. So do afflic-

tions recover and revive decayed graces. The more saints are beaten with the hammer of afflictions, the more they are made the trumpets of God's praises, and the more are their graces revived and quickened. Adversity abases the loveliness of the world, that might entice us; it abates the lustiness of the flesh within, that might incite us to folly and vanity; and it abets the spirit in his quarrel against the two former; which tends much to the reviving and recovering of decayed graces. Now suppose afflictions and troubles do attend the ways of holiness; yet seeing that they all work for the great profit and singular advantage of the saints, let no soul be so mad as to leave an afflicted way of holiness to walk in a smooth path of wickedness.

The second remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that all the afflictions that befall the saints only reach their worse part. They reach not, they hurt not, their noble part, their best part. All the arrows stick in the target; they reach not the conscience. "And who shall harm you, if you be followers of that which is good?" says the apostle (1 Peter 3:13); that is, none shall harm you. They may thus and thus afflict you, but they shall never harm you.

It was the speech of a heathen, when by the tyrant he was commanded to be put into a mortar and beaten to pieces with an iron pestle. He cries out to his persecutors, "You do but beat the vessel, the case, the husk of Anaxarchus; you do not beat me." His body was to him but as a case, a husk; he counted his soul himself, which they could not reach. You are wise, and know how to apply it. Socrates said of his enemies, "They may kill me, but they cannot hurt me." So afflictions may kill us, but they cannot hurt us. They may take away my life, but they cannot take away my God, my Christ, my crown.

The third remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider that the afflictions that attend the saints in the ways of holiness are but short and momentary. "Sorrow may abide for a night, but joy comes in the morning" (Psalm 30:5). This short storm will end in an everlasting calm; this short night will end in a glorious day that shall never have an end. It is but a very short time between grace and glory, between our title to the crown and our wearing the crown, between our right to the heavenly inheritance and our possessing of the heavenly inheritance. A thousand years to the Lord is but as one day. What is our life but a shadow, a bubble, a flower, a post, a span, a dream? Yea, so short a while does the hand of the Lord rest upon us that Luther cannot get diminutives enough to extenuate it; for he calls it "a very little little cross that we bear."

The prophet in Isaiah 26:20 says the indignation does not *transire*, pass, but *pertransire*, overpass. The sharpness, shortness, and suddenness of it is set forth by the travail of a woman

(John 16:21). And that is a sweet Scripture: "For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Hebrews 10:36-37). *Tantillum, tantillum adhuc pusillum* [a little, little, little while yet]: a little, little, little while. When Athanasius's friends came to bewail him because of his misery and banishment, he said, "It is but a little cloud, and will quickly be gone." It will be but as a day before God will give his afflicted ones "beauty for ashes, the oil of gladness for the spirit of heaviness" (Isaiah 61:3); before he will turn all your sighing into singing, all your lamentations into consolations, your sackcloth into silks, your ashes into ointments, and your fasts into everlasting feasts.

The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider that the afflictions that befall the saints are such as proceed from God's dearest love. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent" (Revelation 3:19). "Saints," says God, "think not that I hate you because I thus chide you." He that escapes reprehension may suspect his adoption. God had one Son without corruption, but no son without correction. A gracious soul may look through the darkest cloud and see a God smiling on him. We must look through the anger of his correction to the sweetness of his countenance, as by a rainbow we see the beautiful image of the sun's light in the midst of a dark and waterish cloud.

When Munster lay sick, and his friends asked him how he did and how he felt himself, he pointed to his sores and ulcers (whereof he was full) and said, "These are God's gems and jewels, wherewith he decks his best friends; and to me they are more precious than all the gold and silver in the world." A soul at first conversion is but rough-cast, but God by afflictions squares and fits and fashions it for that glory above; which speaks them out to flow from precious love. Therefore the afflictions that attend the people of God should be no bar to holiness, nor any motive to draw the soul to ways of wickedness.

The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that it is our duty and glory not to measure afflictions by the smart, but by the end. When Israel was dismissed out of Egypt, it was with gold and earrings (Exodus 11). So the Jews were dismissed out of Babylon with gifts, jewels, and all necessary utensils (Ezra 1). Look more at the latter end of a Christian than at the beginning of his affliction. Consider the patience of Job, and what end the Lord made with him. Look not upon Lazarus lying at Dives's door, but lying in Abraham's bosom. Look not to the beginning of Joseph, who was so far from his dream, that the sun and moon should reverence him, that for two years he was cast where he could see neither sun, moon, nor stars; but behold him at the last made ruler over Egypt. Look not upon David as there was but a step between him and death, nor as he was envied by some, and slighted and despised by others; but behold him seated in his royal throne, and dying

in his bed of honor, with his son Solomon and all his glistering nobles about him. Afflictions are but as a dark entry into your Father's house; they are but as a dirty lane to a royal palace. Now tell me, souls, whether it be not very great madness to shun the ways of holiness, and to walk in the ways of wickedness, because of those afflictions that attend the ways of holiness.

The sixth remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider that the design of God in all the afflictions that befall his people is only to try them. It is not to wrong them, nor to ruin them, as ignorant souls are apt to think. "He knoweth the way that I take, and when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold," says patient Job (Job 23:10). So in Deuteronomy 8:2: "And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee, these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thy heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments or no." God afflicted them thus that he might make known to themselves and others what was in their hearts.

When fire is put to green wood, there comes out abundance of watery stuff that before appeared not. When the pond is empty, the mud, filth, and toads come to light. The snow covers many a dunghill; so does prosperity many a rotten heart. It is easy to wade in a warm bath, and every bird can sing on a sunshiny day. Hard weather tries what health we have; afflictions try what sap we have, what grace we have. Withered leaves soon fall off in windy weather; rotten boughs quickly break with heavy weights. You are wise, and know how to apply it.

Afflictions are like pinching frosts that will search us. Where we are most unsound, we shall soonest complain; and where most corruptions lie, we shall most shrink. We try metal by knocking; if it sound well, then we like it. So God tries his by knocking; and if under knocks they yield a pleasant sound, God will turn their night into day, and their bitter into sweet, and their cross into a crown; and they shall hear that voice, "Arise and shine, for the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee, and the favors of the Lord are flowing in on thee" (Isaiah 60:1).

The seventh and last remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that the afflictions, wrath, and misery that attend the ways of wickedness are far greater and heavier than those that attend the ways of holiness. Oh, the galling, girding, lashing, and gnawings of conscience that attend souls in a way of wickedness! "The wicked," says Isaiah, "are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace to the wicked, saith my God" (Isaiah 57:20-21). There are snares in all their mercies, and curses and crosses attend all their comforts, both at home and abroad. What is a fine suit of

clothes with the plague in it? And what is a golden cup when there is poison at the bottom? Or what is a silken stocking with a broken leg in it? The curse of God, the wrath of God, the hatred of God, and the fierce indignation of God always attend sinners walking in a way of wickedness.

Turn to the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, and read from the fifteenth verse to the end of that chapter; and turn to the twenty-sixth chapter of Leviticus, and read from the fourteenth verse to the end of that chapter; and then you shall see how the curse of God haunts the wicked (as it were a fury) in all his ways. In the city it attends him; in the country it hovers over him. Coming in, it accompanies him; going forth, it follows him; and in travel it is his comrade. It fills his store with strife, and mingles the wrath of God with his sweetest morsel. It is a moth in his wardrobe, murrain among his cattle, mildew in his field, rot among his sheep; and it ofttimes makes the fruit of his loins his greatest vexation and confusion. There is no solid joy, nor lasting peace, nor pure comfort that attends sinners in their sinful ways. There is a sword of vengeance that every moment hangs over their heads by a small thread; and what joy and content can attend such souls, if the eye of conscience be but so far open as to see the sword? Ah, the horrors and terrors, the tremblings and shakings, that attend their souls!

Device 10: Comparing ourselves with those who are worse

The tenth device that Satan has to draw the souls of men to sin is by working them to be frequent in comparing themselves and their ways with those that are reputed or reported to be worse than themselves. By this device the devil drew the proud Pharisee to bless himself in a cursed condition: "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican" (Luke 18:11).

"Why," says Satan, "you swear but petty oaths, as 'by your faith' and 'troth'; but such and such swear by wounds and blood. You are now and then a little wanton; but such and such daily defile and pollute themselves by actual uncleanness and filthiness. You deceive and overreach your neighbors in things that are but as toys and trifles; but such and such deceive and overreach others in things of greatest concernment, even to their ruin and undoing. You do but sit and chat and sip with the drunkard; but such and such sit and drink drunk with the drunkard. You are only a little proud in heart and habit, in looks and words."

Now the remedies against this device of Satan are these that follow.

The first remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider this: that there is not a greater nor a clearer argument to prove a man a hypocrite than to be quick-sighted abroad and blind at home; than "to see a mote in another man's eye, and not a beam in his own eye" (Matthew 7:3); than to use spectacles to behold other men's sins, rather than looking glasses to behold his own; than to be always holding his finger upon other men's sores; than to be amplifying and aggravating other men's sins, and mitigating his own.

The second remedy against this device of Satan is to spend more time in comparing your internal and external actions with the rule, with that word by which you must be judged at last, than in comparing yourselves with those that are worse than yourselves. That man that, comparing himself with others that are worse than himself, may seem (to himself and others) to be an angel, may yet, comparing himself with the word, see himself to be like the devil, yea, a very devil. "Have not I chosen twelve, and one of you is a devil?" (John 6:70). Such men are as like him as if they were spit out of his mouth. Satan is called the god of this world because, as God at first did but speak the word and it was done, so, if the devil does but hold up his finger and give the least hint, they will do his will, though they undo their souls forever. Ah! What monsters would these men appear to be, did they but compare themselves with a righteous rule, and not with the most unrighteous men! They would appear to be as black as hell itself.

The third remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider that though your sins be not as great as others', yet without sound repentance on your side, and pardoning mercy on God's, you will be as certainly damned as others, though not equally tormented with others. What though hell shall not be so hot to you as to others? Yet you must as certainly to hell as others, unless the glorious grace of God shines forth upon you in the face of Christ. God will suit men's punishments to their sins: the greatest sins shall be attended with the greatest punishments, and lesser sins with lesser punishments.

Alas! What a poor comfort will this be to you, when you come to die, to consider that you shall not be equally tormented with others, and yet must be forever shut out from the glorious presence of God, Christ, angels, and saints, and from those good things of eternal life that are so many that they exceed number, so great that they exceed measure, so precious that they exceed estimation! Sure it is that the tears of hell are not sufficient to bewail the loss of heaven. The worm of grief gnaws as painful as the fire burns. If those souls in Acts 20 wept because they should see Paul's face no more (Acts 20:38), how deplorable is the eternal deprivation of the beatific vision!

But this is not all. You shall not only be shut out of heaven, but shut up in hell forever; not only shut out from the presence of God and angels, but shut up with devils and damned spirits forever; not only shut out from those sweet, surpassing, inexpressible, and everlasting pleasures that are at God's right hand, but shut up forever under those torments that are easeless, remediless, and endless. Ah, souls! Were it not ten thousand times better for you to break off your sins by repentance than to go on in your sins till you feel the truth of what you now hear? The God of Israel is very merciful. Ah, that you would repent and return, that your souls might live forever!

Remember this: grievous is the torment of the damned for the bitterness of the punishments, but most grievous for the eternity of the punishments. For to be tormented without end, this is that which goes beyond all the bounds of desperation. Ah! How do the thoughts of this make the damned to roar, and cry out for disquietness of heart, and tear their hair, and gnash their teeth, and rage for madness, that they must dwell in everlasting burnings forever!

Device 11: Polluting the judgment with dangerous errors

The eleventh device that Satan has to draw the soul to sin is by polluting and defiling the souls and judgments of men with such dangerous errors that do in their proper tendency tend to carry the souls of men to all looseness and wickedness, as woeful experience does abundantly evidence. Ah! How many are there filled with these and suchlike Christ-dishonoring and soul-undoing opinions, that is:

That ordinances are poor, low, carnal things, and not only to be lived above, but without also.

That the Scriptures are full of fallacies and uncertainties, and no further to be heeded than they agree with that spirit that is in them.

That it is a poor low thing, if not idolatry too, to worship God in a Mediator.

That the resurrection is already past.

That there was never any such man or person as Jesus Christ, but that all is an allegory, and it signifies nothing but light and love, and such good frames born in men.

That there is no God, nor devil, heaven, nor hell, but what is within us.

That there is no sin in the saints; they are under no law but that of the spirit, which is all freedom.

That sin and grace are equally of God, and agrees to his will.

With a hundred other horrid opinions, which has caused wickedness to break in as a flood among us.

Now the general remedies against this device of Satan are these that follow.

The first remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that an erroneous vain mind is as odious to God as a vicious life. He that had the leprosy in his head was to be pronounced utterly unclean (Leviticus 13:44). Gross errors make the heart foolish, and render the life loose, and the soul light in the eye of God. Error spreads and frets like a gangrene, and renders the soul a leper in the sight of God. It was God's heavy and dreadful plague upon the Gentiles to be given up to a mind void of judgment (Romans 1:28): an injudicious mind, or a mind rejected, disallowed, abhorred of God, or a mind that none have cause to glory in, but rather to be ashamed of. I think that in these days God does punish many men's former wickednesses by giving them up to soul-ruining errors. Ah, Lord! This mercy I humbly beg, that you would rather take me into your own hand, and do anything with me, than give me up to those sad errors to which thousands have married their souls, and are in a way of perishing forever.

The second remedy against this device of Satan is to receive the truth affectionately, and to let it dwell in your souls plenteously. When men stand out against the truth, when truth would enter and men bar the door of their souls against truth, God in justice gives up such souls to be deluded and deceived by error, to their eternal undoing: "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. God shall send them strong delusions" (or, as the Greek has it, "the efficacy of error"), "that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12). Ah, sirs! As you love your souls, do not tempt God, do not provoke God, by your withstanding truth and outfacing truth, to give you up to believe a lie, that you may be damned.

There are no men on earth so fenced against error as those are that receive the truth in the love of it. Such souls are not easily "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (Ephesians 4:14). It is not he that receives most of the truth into his head, but he that receives most of the truth affectionately into his heart, that shall enjoy the happiness of having his judgment sound and clear, when others shall be deluded and deceived by them who make it their business to infect the judgments and to undo the souls of men.

Ah, souls! As you would not have your judgments polluted and defiled with error, let the word of the Lord, that is more precious than gold, yea, than fine gold, dwell plenteously in you. It is not the hearing of truth, nor the knowing of truth, nor the commending of truth, nor the talking of truth, but the indwelling of truth in your souls, that will keep your judgments chaste and sound in the midst of all those glistering errors that betray many souls into his hands that can easily "transform himself into an angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:14), that he may draw others to lie in chains of darkness with him forever.

Oh, let not the word be a stranger, but make it your choicest familiar. Then will you be able to stand in the day wherein many shall fall on your right hand and on your left by the subtlety of those that shall say, "Lo, here is Christ," and "Lo, there is Christ" (Matthew 24:23). There was more wit than grace in his speech that counseled his friend not to come too nigh unto truth, lest his teeth should be beaten out with its heels. Ah, souls! If truth dwells plenteously in you, you are happy; if not, you are unhappy under all your greatest felicity. It is with truth, says Melanchthon, as it is with holy water: everyone praised it, and thought it had some rare virtue in it; but offer to sprinkle them with it, and they will shut their eyes and turn away their faces from it.

The third remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that error makes the owner to suffer loss. All the pains and labor that men take to defend and maintain their errors, to spread abroad and infect the world with their errors, shall bring no profit nor any comfort to them in that day wherein every man's "work shall be made manifest, and the fire shall try it, of what sort it is," as the apostle shows in that remarkable Scripture (1 Corinthians 3:11-15). Ah, that all those that rise early and go to bed late, that spend their time, their strength, their spirits, their all, to advance and spread abroad God-dishonoring and soul-undoing opinions, would seriously consider this: that they shall lose all the pains, cost, and charge that they have been or shall be at for the propagating of error; and if they are ever saved, it shall be by fire, as the apostle there shows.

Ah, sirs! Is it nothing to lay out your money for that which is not bread, and your strength for that which will not, which cannot, profit you in the day that you must make up your accounts, and all your works must be tried by fire (Isaiah 55:2)? Ah, that such souls would now at last buy the truth and sell it not (Proverbs 23:23)! Remember, you can never overbuy it, whatsoever you give for it; you can never sufficiently sell it, if you should have all the world in exchange for it. It is said of Caesar that he had greater care of his books than of his royal robes; for, swimming through the waters to escape his enemies, he carried his books in his hand above the waters, but lost his robes. Ah! What are Caesar's books to God's books? Well, remember this: that one day, yea, one hour, spent in the study of truth, or spreading

abroad of truth, will yield the soul more comfort and profit than many thousand years spent in the study and spreading abroad of corrupt and vain opinions, that have their rise from hell and not from heaven, from the god of this world and not from that God that shall at last judge this world and all the corrupt opinions of men.

The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is to hate, reject, and abominate all those doctrines and opinions that are contrary to godliness, and that open a door to profaneness; and all such doctrines and opinions that require men to hold forth a strictness above what the Scripture requires; and all such doctrines and opinions that do advance and lift up corrupted nature to the doing of supernatural things, which none can do but by that supernatural power that raised Christ from the grave; and all such opinions that do lift up our own righteousness in the room of Christ's righteousness, that place good works in the throne of Christ, and make them co-partners with Christ; and all those opinions and doctrines that do so set up and cry up Christ and his righteousness as to cry down all duties of holiness and righteousness; and all those doctrines and opinions that do make the glorious and blessed privileges of believers in the days of the gospel to be lesser, fewer, and weaker than they were in the time of the law. Ah! Did your souls arise with a holy hatred and a strong indignation against such doctrines and opinions, you would stand when others fall, and you would shine as the sun in her glory, when many that were once as shining stars may go forth as stinking snuffs.

The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is to hold fast the truth. As men take no hold on the arm of flesh till they have let go their hold on the arm of God (Jeremiah 17:5), so men take no hold on error till they have let go their hold of truth. Therefore hold fast the truth. Truth is your crown; hold fast your crown, and let no man take your crown from you. Has not God made truth sweet to your soul, yea, "sweeter than the honey, or the honeycomb" (Psalm 19:10)? And will you not go on to heaven feeding upon truth, that heavenly honeycomb, as Samson did of his honeycomb?

Ah, souls! Have you not found truth sweetening your spirits, and cheering your spirits, and warming your spirits, and raising your spirits, and corroborating your spirits? Have you not found truth a guide to lead you, a staff to uphold you, a cordial to strengthen you, and a plaster to heal you? And will you not hold fast the truth? Has not truth been your best friend in your worst days? Has not truth stood by you when friends have forsaken you? Has not truth done more for you than all the world could do against you? And will you not hold fast the truth? Is not truth your right eye, without which you cannot see for Christ? And your right hand, without which you cannot do for Christ? And your right foot, without which you cannot walk with Christ? And will you not hold fast truth? Oh, hold fast the truth in your

judgments and understandings, in your wills and affections, in your profession and conversation!

Truth is more precious than gold or rubies, and all the things you can desire are not to be compared to her (Proverbs 3:15). Truth is that heavenly glass wherein we may see the luster and glory of divine wisdom, power, greatness, love, and mercifulness. In this glass you may see the face of Christ, the favor of Christ, the riches of Christ, and the heart of Christ beating and working sweetly towards your souls. Oh, let your souls cleave to truth, as Ruth did to Naomi, and say, "I will not leave truth, nor return from following after truth; but where truth goes, I will go, and where truth lodges, I will lodge; and nothing but death shall part truth and my soul" (Ruth 1:16-17).

What John said to the church of Philadelphia, I may say to you: "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Revelation 3:11). The crown is the top of royalties; such a thing is truth. Let no man take your crown. "Hold fast the faithful word," as Titus speaks (Titus 1:9). You were better let go anything than truth. You were better let go your honors and riches, your friends and pleasures, and the world's favors; yea, your nearest and dearest relations, ay, your very lives, than let go truth. Oh, keep the truth, and truth will keep you safe and happy forever! Blessed are those souls that are kept by truth.

The sixth remedy against this device of Satan is to keep humble. Humility will keep the soul free from many darts of Satan's casting, and erroneous snares of his spreading. As low trees and shrubs are free from many violent gusts and blasts of wind which shake and rend the taller trees, so humble souls are free from those gusts and blasts of error that rend and tear proud, lofty souls. Satan and the world has least power to fasten errors upon humble souls. The God of light and truth delights to dwell with the humble; and the more light and truth dwells in the soul, the further off darkness and error will stand from the soul. The God of grace pours in grace into humble souls, as men pour liquor into empty vessels; and the more grace is poured into the soul, the less error shall be able to overpower the soul or to infect the soul.

That is a sweet word in Psalm 25:9: "The meek" (or the humble) "will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way." And certainly souls guided by God and taught by God are not easily drawn aside into ways of error. Oh, take heed of spiritual pride! Pride fills our fancies, and weakens our graces, and makes room in our hearts for error. There are no men on earth so soon entangled and so easily conquered by error as proud souls. Oh, it is dangerous to love to be wise above what is written; to be curious and unsober in your desire of knowledge; to trust to your own capacities and abilities; to undertake to pry into all secrets;

and to be puffed up with a carnal mind. Souls that are thus soaring up above the bounds and limits of humility usually fall into the very worst of errors, as experience does daily evidence.

The seventh remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider the great evils that errors have produced. Error is a fruitful mother, and has brought forth such monstrous children as has set towns, cities, and nations on fire. Error is that whorish woman that has cast down many, wounded many, yea, slain many strong men, and many great men, and many learned men, and many professing men, in former times and in our own time, as is too evident to all that are not much left of God, destitute of the truth, and blinded by Satan. Oh, the graces that error has weakened, and the sweet joys and comforts that error has clouded, if not buried! Oh, the hands that error has weakened; the eyes that error has blinded; the judgments of men that error has perverted; the minds that error has darkened; the hearts that error has hardened; the affections that error has cooled; the consciences that error has seared; and the lives of men that error has polluted! Ah, souls! Can you solemnly consider this, and not tremble more at error than at hell itself?

Device 12: Drawing the soul into wicked company

The twelfth device that Satan has to draw the soul to sin is to affect wicked company, to keep wicked society. And oh, the horrid impieties and wickednesses that Satan has drawn men to sin by working them to sit and associate themselves with vain persons!

Now the remedies against this device of Satan are these that follow.

The first remedy against this device of Satan is to dwell (till your hearts be affected) upon those commands of God that expressly require us to shun the society of the wicked. "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Ephesians 5:11). "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away" (Proverbs 4:14-15). Turn to 1 Corinthians 5:9-11, 2 Thessalonians 3:6, and Proverbs 1:10-15, and let your souls dwell upon these Scriptures till a holy indignation be raised in your souls against fellowship with vain men. "God will not take the wicked by the hand," as Job speaks (Job 8:20); why then should you? God's commands are not like those that are easily reversed, but they are like those of the Medes, that cannot be changed. If these commands be not now observed by you, they will at last be witnesses against you, and millstones to sink you, in that day that Christ shall judge you.

The second remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider that their company is very infectious and dangerous, as is clear from the Scriptures above mentioned (Proverbs 13:20). Ah! How many have lost their names, and lost their estates, and strength, and God, and heaven, and souls, by society with wicked men? As you shun a stinking carcass; as the seaman shuns sands, and rocks, and shelves; as you shun those that have the plague sore running upon them; so should you shun the society of wicked men. As weeds endanger the corn, as bad humors endanger the blood, or as an infected house the neighborhood, so does wicked company the soul.

Bias, a heathen man, being at sea in a great storm, and perceiving many wicked men with him in the ship calling upon the gods, "Oh," says he, "forbear prayer, hold your tongues. I would not have the gods take notice that you are here; they will sure drown us all if they should." Ah, sirs! Could a heathen see so much danger in the society of wicked men, and can you see none?

The third remedy against this device of Satan is to look always upon wicked men under those names and notions that the Scripture sets them out under. The Scripture calls them lions for their fierceness, and bears for their cruelty, and dragons for their hideousness, and dogs for their filthiness, and wolves for their subtleness. The Scripture styles them scorpions, vipers, thorns, briars, thistles, brambles, stubble, dirt, chaff, dust, dross, smoke, scum, as you may see in the margin. It is not safe to look upon wicked men under those names and notions that they set out themselves by, or that flatterers set them out by; this may delude the soul. But the looking upon them under those names and notions that the Scripture sets them out by may preserve the soul from frequenting their company and delighting in their society. Do not tell me what this man calls them, or how such and such count them; but tell me, how does the Scripture call them? How does the Scripture count them? As Nabal's name was, so was his nature; and as wicked men's names are, so are their natures. You may know well enough what is within them by the apt names that the Holy Ghost has given them.

The fourth and last remedy against this device of Satan is to consider that the society and company of wicked men have been a great grief and burden to those precious souls that were once glorious on earth and are now triumphing in heaven. "Woe is me, that I dwell in Mesech, that I sojourn in the tents of Kedar! My soul hath long dwelt with him that hates peace" (Psalm 120:5-6). So Jeremiah: "Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them! for they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men" (Jeremiah 9:2). So they vexed Lot's righteous soul by their filthy conversation (2 Peter 2:7-8; *vide Bezam* [see Beza]). They made his life a burden; they

made death more desirable to him than life; yea, they made his life a lingering death. Guilt or grief is all the good souls get by conversing with wicked men.

PART 2

Devices to Keep Souls from Holy Duties

The second thing to be showed is the several devices that Satan has (as to draw souls to sin, so) to keep souls from holy duties, to hinder souls in holy services, and to keep them off from religious performances.

"And he showed me Joshua the high priest, standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him" (Zechariah 3:1).

The truth of this I shall show you in the following particulars.

Device 1: Presenting the world in its finest dress

The first device that Satan has to draw souls from holy duties, and to keep them off from religious services, is by presenting the world in such a dress and in such a garb to the soul as to ensnare the soul and to win upon the affections of the soul. He represents the world to them in its beauty and bravery, which proves a bewitching sight to a world of men. It is true, this took not Christ, because Satan could find no matter in him for his temptation to work upon. But Satan finds matter in us for this temptation to work upon, so that he can no sooner cast out his golden bait but we are ready to play with it and to nibble at it. He can no sooner throw out his golden ball but men are apt to run after it, though they lose God and their souls in the pursuit.

Ah! How many professors in these days have for a time followed hard after God, Christ, and ordinances, till the devil has set before them the world in all its beauty and bravery, which has so bewitched their souls that they have grown to have low thoughts of holy things, and then to be cold in their affections to holy things, and then to slight them, and at last, with the young man in the gospel, to turn their backs upon them. Ah, the time, the thoughts, the spirits, the hearts, the souls, the duties, the services, that the inordinate love of this wicked world does eat up and destroy, and has eaten up and destroyed! Where one thousand is destroyed by the world's frowns, ten thousand are destroyed by the world's smiles. The world, siren-like, it sings us and sinks us. It kisses us and betrays us, like Judas; it kisses us and smites us under the fifth rib, like Joab. The honors, splendor, and all the glory of this world are but sweet poisons, that will much endanger us, if they do not eternally destroy us. Ah, the multitude of souls that have surfeited on these sweet baits, and died forever!

Now the remedies against this device of Satan are these that follow.

The first remedy against this device of Satan is to dwell upon the impotency and weakness of all these things below. They are not able to secure you from the least evil; they are not able to procure you the least desirable good. The crown of gold cannot cure the headache, nor the velvet slipper ease the gout, nor the jewel about the neck cannot take away the pain of the teeth. The frogs of Egypt entered into the rich men's houses of Egypt as well as the poor. Our daily experience does evidence this, that all the honors and riches that men enjoy cannot free them from the colic, the fever, or lesser diseases. Nay, that which may seem most strange is that a great deal of wealth cannot keep men from falling into extreme poverty. In Judges 1:6-7 you shall find seventy kings with their fingers and toes cut off, glad like whelps to lick up crumbs under another king's table; and shortly after, the same king that brought them to this penury is reduced to the same poverty and misery. Why then should that be a bar to keep you out of heaven that cannot give you the least ease on earth?

The second remedy against this device of Satan is to dwell upon the vanity of them, as well as upon the impotence of all worldly good. This is the sum of Solomon's sermon: "Vanity of vanity, and all is vanity" (Ecclesiastes 1:2). This our first parents found, and therefore named their second Abel, or vanity. Solomon, that had tried these things and could best tell the vanity of them, he preaches this sermon over again and again: "Vanity of vanity, and all is vanity." It is sad to think how many thousands there are that can say with the preacher, "Vanity of vanity, all is vanity," nay, swear it, and yet follow after these things as if there were no other glory nor felicity but what is to be found in those things they call vanity. Such men will sell Christ, heaven, and their souls for a trifle, that call these things vanity, but do not cordially believe them to be vanity, but set their hearts upon them as if they were their crown, the top of all their royalty and glory. Oh, let your souls dwell upon the vanity of all things here below, till your hearts be so thoroughly convinced and persuaded of the vanity of them as to trample upon them, and make them a footstool for Christ to get up and ride in a holy triumph in your hearts!

Chrysostom said once that if he were the fittest in the world to preach a sermon to the whole world gathered together in one congregation, and had some high mountain for his pulpit, from whence he might have a prospect of all the world in his view, and were furnished with a voice of brass, a voice as loud as the trumpet of the archangel, that all the world might hear him, he would choose to preach upon no other text than that in the Psalms: "O mortal men, how long will ye love vanity, and follow after leasing?" (Psalm 4:2). Tell me, you that say all things under the sun are vanity, if you do really believe what you say, why do you spend more thought and time on the world than you do on Christ, heaven,

and your immortal souls? Why do you then neglect your duty towards God to get the world? Why do you then so eagerly pursue after the world, and are so cold in your pursuing after God, Christ, and holiness? Why then are your hearts so exceedingly raised when the world comes in and smiles upon you, and so much dejected and cast down when the world frowns upon you, and with Jonah's gourd withers before you?

The third remedy against this device of Satan is to dwell much upon the uncertainty, the mutability, and the inconstancy of all things under the sun. Man himself is but the dream of a dream, but the generation of a fancy, but an empty vanity, but the curious picture of nothing, a poor, feeble, dying flash. All temporals are as transitory as a hasty, headlong torrent, a shadow, a ship, a bird, an arrow, a post that passes by. "Why shouldest thou set thine eyes upon that which is not?" says Solomon (Proverbs 23:5). And says the apostle, "The fashion of this world passeth away" (1 Corinthians 7:31). Heaven only has a foundation; earth has none, but is hanged upon nothing, as Job speaks (Job 26:7). The apostle willed Timothy to charge rich men "that they be not high-minded, nor put their trust in uncertain riches" (1 Timothy 6:17). They are like bad servants, whose shoes are made of running leather, and will never tarry long with one master. As a bird hops from tree to tree, so do the honors and riches of this world from man to man. Let Job and Nebuchadnezzar testify this truth, who fell from great wealth to great want.

No man can promise himself to be wealthy till night. One storm at sea, one coal of fire, one false friend, one unadvised word, one false witness may make you a beggar and a prisoner all at once. All the riches and glory of this world is but as smoke and chaff that vanishes; "as a dream, and vision in the night, that tarrieth not" (Job 20:8); as if a hungry man dreams, and thinks that he eats, and when he awakes his soul is empty; and like a thirsty man, who thinks he drinks, and behold, when he is awaked his soul is faint, as the prophet Isaiah says (Isaiah 29:8). Where is the glory of Solomon, the sumptuous buildings of Nebuchadnezzar, the nine hundred chariots of Sisera, the power of Alexander, the authority of Augustus, that commanded the whole world to be taxed?

Those that have been the most glorious in what men generally account glorious and excellent have had inglorious ends: as Samson for strength, Absalom for beauty, Ahithophel for policy, Haman for favor, Asahel for swiftness, Alexander for great conquest, and yet after twelve years poisoned. The same you may see in the mighty four kingdoms, the Chaldean, Persian, Grecian, and Roman: how soon were they gone and forgotten! Now rich, now poor; now full, now empty; now in favor, anon out of favor; now honorable, now despised; now health, now sickness; now strength, now weakness. Oh, let not these uncertain things keep you from those holy services and heavenly employments that may make you happy for-

ever, and render your soul eternally blessed and at ease, when all these transitory things shall bid your soul an everlasting farewell!

The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is to consider that the great things of this world are very hurtful and dangerous to the outward and inward man, through the corruptions that are in the hearts of men. Oh, the rest, the peace, the comfort, the content that the things of this world strip many men of! Oh, the fears, the cares, the envy, the malice, the dangers, the mischiefs that they subject men to! They oftentimes make men carnally confident. "The rich man's riches are a strong tower in his imagination" (Proverbs 18:11). "I said in my prosperity, I should never be moved" (Psalm 30:6). They often swell the heart with pride, and make men forget God, and neglect God, and despise the rock of their salvation. "When Jeshurun waxed fat, and was grown thick, and covered with fatness, then he forgot God, and forsook God that made him, and lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation," as Moses spoke (Deuteronomy 32:15).

Ah, the time, the thoughts, the spirits, that the things of the world consumes and spends! Oh, how do they hinder the actings of faith upon God! How do they interrupt our sweet communion with God! How do they abate our love to the people of God, and cool our love to the things of God, and work us to act like those that are most unlike to God! Oh, the deadness, the dullness, the barrenness, that does attend men under great outward mercies! Oh, the riches of the world chokes the word (Matthew 13:22), that men live under the most soul-searching and soul-enriching means with lean souls. Though they have full purses, though their chests are full of silver, yet their hearts are empty of grace. In Genesis 13:2 it is said that "Abraham was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold." According to the Hebrew, it is, "Abraham was very heavy," to show that riches are a heavy burden, and a hindrance many times to heaven and happiness.

King Henry the Fourth asked the Duke of Alva if he had observed the great eclipse of the sun which had lately happened. "No," said the duke, "I have so much to do on earth that I have no leisure to look up to heaven." Ah, that this were not true of most professors in these days! It is very sad to think how their hearts and time are so much taken up with earthly things that they have scarce any leisure to look up to heaven, or to look after Christ, and the things that belong to their everlasting peace.

Riches, though well got, yet are but like to manna: those that gathered less had no want, and those that gathered more, it was but a trouble and annoyance to them (Exodus 16:18). The world is troublesome, and yet it is loved; what would it be if it were peaceable? You embrace it, though it be filthy; what would you do if it were beautiful? You cannot keep your

hands from the thorns; how earnest would you be then in gathering the flowers? The world may be fitly likened to the serpent Scytale, whereof it is reported that when she cannot overtake the flying passengers, she does with her beautiful colors so astonish and amaze them that they have no power to pass away till she have stung them. Ah! How many thousands are there now on earth that have found this true by experience; that have spun a fair thread to strangle themselves, both temporally and eternally, by being bewitched by the beauty and bravery of this enticing world!

The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is to consider that all the felicity of this world is mixed. Our light is mixed with darkness, our joy with sorrow, our pleasures with pain, our honor with dishonor, our riches with wants. If our sight be spiritual, clear, and quick, we may see in the felicity of this world our wine mixed with water, our honey with gall, our sugar with wormwood, and our roses with prickles. Sorrow attends worldly joy, danger attends worldly safety, loss attends worldly labors, tears attend worldly purposes. As to these things, men's hopes are vain, their sorrow certain, and joy feigned. The apostle calls this world a sea of glass (Revelation 4:6): a sea for the troubles of it, and glass for the brittleness and bitterness of it. The honors, profits, pleasures, and delights of this world are true gardens of Adonis, where we can gather nothing but trivial flowers surrounded with many briars.

The sixth remedy against this device of Satan is to get better acquaintance and better assurance of more blessed and glorious things. That which raised up their spirits in the tenth and eleventh of Hebrews to trample upon all the beauty, bravery, and glory of the world was their acquaintance with and assurance of better and more durable things. "They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better and a more durable substance" (Hebrews 10:34). "They looked for a house that had foundations, whose builder and maker was God; and they looked for another country, even a heavenly. They saw him that was invisible, and had an eye to the recompense of reward" (Hebrews 11:10, 16, 26-27). And this made them count all the glory and bravery of this world to be poor and contemptible for them to set their hearts upon.

The main reason why men dote upon the world, and damn their souls to get the world, is because they are not acquainted with a greater glory. Men ate acorns till they were acquainted with the use of wheat. Ah! Were men more acquainted with what union and communion with God means; what it is to have "a new name" and a "new stone, that none knows but he that hath it" (Revelation 2:17); did they but taste more of heaven, and live more in heaven, and had more glorious hopes of going to heaven; ah, how easily would they have the moon under their feet (Revelation 12:1)! It was an excellent saying of Lewis of

Bavaria, emperor of Germany: "Such goods are worth getting and owning as will not sink or wash away if a shipwreck happen, but will wade and swim out with us." It is recorded of Lazarus that after his resurrection from the dead he was never seen to laugh; his thoughts and affections were so fixed in heaven, though his body was on earth. And therefore he could not but slight temporal things, his heart being so bent and set upon eternals.

There are goods of the throne of grace, as God, Christ, the Spirit, adoption, justification, remission of sin, peace with God, and peace with conscience; and there are goods of the footstool, as honors, riches, the favor of creatures, and other comforts and accommodations of this life. Now he that has acquaintance with, and assurance of, the goods of the throne will easily trample upon the goods of the footstool. Ah, that you would make it your business, your work, to mind more, and make sure more to your own souls, the great things of eternity, that will yield you joy in life, and peace in death, and a crown of righteousness in the day of Christ's appearing; and that will lift up your souls above all the beauty and bravery of this bewitching world; that will raise your feet above other men's heads! When a man comes to be assured of a crown, a scepter, the royal robes, he then begins to have low, mean, and contemptible thoughts of those things that before he highly prized. So will assurance of more great and glorious things breed in the soul a holy scorn and contempt of all these poor, mean things, which the soul before did value above God, Christ, and heaven.

The seventh remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that true happiness and satisfaction is not to be had in the enjoyment of any worldly good. True happiness is too big and too glorious a thing to be found in anything below that God who is a Christian's *summum bonum*, chiefest good. The blessed angels, those glistering courtiers, have all felicities and blessednesses; and yet they have neither gold, nor silver, nor jewels, nor none of the beauty and bravery of this world. Certainly, if happiness was to be found in these things, the Lord Jesus, who is the right and royal heir of all things, would have exchanged his cradle for a crown, his birth chamber (a stable) for a royal palace, his poverty for plenty, his despised followers for shining courtiers, and his mean provisions for the choicest delicacies.

Certainly happiness lies not in those things that a man may enjoy and yet be miserable forever. Now a man may be great and graceless with Pharaoh, honorable and damnable with Saul, rich and miserable with Dives; therefore happiness lies not in these things. Certainly happiness lies not in those things that cannot comfort a man upon a dying bed. Is it honors, riches, or friends that can comfort you when you come to die? Or is it not rather faith in the blood of Christ, the witness of the Spirit of Christ, the sense and feeling of the love and favor of Christ, and the hopes of eternal reigning with Christ? Can happiness lie in those

things that cannot give us health, or strength, or ease, or a good night's rest, or an hour's sleep, or a good stomach? Why, all the honors, riches, and delights of this world cannot give these poor things to us; therefore certainly happiness lies not in the enjoyment of them.

And surely happiness is not to be found in those things that cannot satisfy the souls of men; now none of these things can satisfy the soul of man. "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver, nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity," says the wise man (Ecclesiastes 5:10). The barren womb, the horseleech's daughter, the grave, and hell will as soon be satisfied as the soul of man will by the enjoyment of any worldly good (Proverbs 30:15-16). Some one thing or other will be forever wanting to that soul that has none but outward good to live upon. You may as soon fill a bag with wisdom, a chest with virtue, or a circle with a triangle, as the heart of man with anything here below. A man may have enough of the world to sink him, but he can never have enough to satisfy him.

The eighth remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider the dignity of the soul. Oh, the soul of man is more worth than a thousand worlds! It is the greatest abasing of it that can be, to let it dote upon a little shining earth, upon a little painted beauty and fading glory, when it is capable of union with Christ, of communion with God, and of enjoying the eternal vision of God. Seneca could say, "I am too great, and born to greater things, than that I should be a slave to my body." Oh, do you say, "My soul is too great, and born to greater things, than that I should confine it to a heap of white and yellow clay."

I have been the longer upon the remedies that may help us against this dangerous device of Satan because he does usually more hurt to the souls of men by this device than he does by all other devices. For a close, I wish, as once Chrysostom did, that that sentence, "Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 2:11), were engraved on the doorposts into which you enter; on the tables where you sit; on the dishes out of which you eat; on the cups out of which you drink; on the bedsteads where you lie; on the walls of the houses where you dwell; on the garments which you wear; on the heads of the horses on which you ride; and on the foreheads of all them whom you meet; that your souls may not by the beauty and bravery of the world be kept off from those holy and heavenly services that may render you blessed while you live, and happy when you die; that you may breathe out your last into his bosom who lives forever, and who will make them happy forever that prefers Christ's spirituals and eternals above all temporal, transitory things.

Device 2: Presenting the dangers and losses that come with holy duties

The second device that Satan has to draw souls from holy duties, and to keep them off from religious services, is by presenting to them the danger, the losses, and the sufferings that do attend the performance of such and such religious services. By this device Satan kept close those that believed on Christ from confessing of Christ: "Nevertheless, among the chief rulers also, many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees, they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue" (John 12:42). "I would walk in all the ways of God, I would give up myself to the strictest ways of holiness; but I am afraid dangers will attend me on the one hand, and losses, and haply such and such sufferings, on the other hand," says many a man. Oh, how should we help ourselves against this temptation and device of Satan?

Now the remedies against this device of Satan are these that follow.

The first remedy against this device of Satan is to consider that all the troubles and afflictions that you meet with in a way of righteousness shall never hurt you; they shall never harm you. "And who is he that shall harm you, if you be followers of that which is good?" says the apostle (1 Peter 3:13); that is, none shall harm you. Natural conscience cannot but do homage to the image of God stamped upon the natures, words, works, and lives of the godly, as we may see in the carriage of Nebuchadnezzar and Darius towards Daniel. All the afflictions and troubles that do attend men in a way of righteousness can never rob them of their treasure, of their jewels. They may rob them of some light, slight things, as the sword that is by their side, or the stick that is in their hand, or of the flowers or ribbons that are in their hats. The treasures of a saint is the presence of God, the favor of God, union and communion with God, the pardon of sin, the joy of the Spirit, the peace of conscience; which are jewels that none can give but Christ, nor none can take away but Christ.

Now, why should a gracious soul keep off from a way of holiness because of afflictions, when no afflictions can strip a man of his heavenly jewels, which are his ornaments and his safety here, and will be his happiness and glory hereafter? Why should that man be afraid or troubled for storms at sea, whose treasures are sure in a friend's hand upon land? Why, a believer's treasure is always safe in the hands of Christ. His life is safe, his soul is safe, his grace is safe, his comfort is safe, and his crown is safe in the hand of Christ. "I know him in whom I have believed, and that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him until that day," says the apostle (2 Timothy 1:12). The child's most precious things are most secure in his father's hands; so are our souls, our graces, and our comforts in the hand of Christ.

The second remedy against this device of Satan is to consider that other precious saints, that were shining lights on earth and are now triumphing in heaven, have held on in religious services notwithstanding all the troubles and dangers that have surrounded them. Nehemiah and Ezra were surrounded with dangers on the left hand and on the right, and yet in the face of all they hold on building the temple and the wall of Jerusalem. So Daniel; and those precious worthies in Psalm 44, under want of outward encouragements, and in the face of a world of very great discouragements, their souls clave to God and his ways: "Though they were sore broken in the place of dragons, and covered with the shadow of death; yea, though they were all the day long counted as sheep for the slaughter; yet their hearts were not turned back, neither did their steps decline from his ways" (Psalm 44:18-19, 22). Though bonds and imprisonment did attend Paul and the rest of the apostles in every place, yet they held on in the work and service of the Lord. And why then should you degenerate from their worthy examples, which is your duty and your glory to follow?

The third remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that all the troubles and dangers that do attend the performance of holy duties and heavenly services are but temporal and momentary; but the neglect of them may lay you open to all temporal, spiritual, and eternal dangers. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" (Hebrews 2:3). He says not, if we reject or renounce so great salvation, but if we neglect, or shift off (as the word is), so great salvation. He does not say, how shall we escape if we oppose or persecute so great salvation? No, but if we let slip or neglect so great salvation, how shall we escape? That is, we cannot by any way, or means, or device in the world escape; divine justice will be above us, in spite of our very souls.

The doing of such and such heavenly services may lay you open to the frowns of men; but the neglect of them will lay you open to the frowns of God. The doing of them may render you contemptible in the eyes of men; but the neglect of them may render you contemptible in the eyes of God. The doing of them may be the loss of your estate; but the neglect of them may be the loss of God, Christ, heaven, and your soul forever. The doing of them may shut you out from some outward, temporal contents; the neglect of them may shut you out from that excellent, matchless glory that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive" (1 Corinthians 2:9). Remember this: there is no man that breathes but shall suffer more by neglecting those holy and heavenly services that God commands, commends, and rewards than possibly he can suffer by doing of them.

The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is to consider this, that God knows how to deliver from troubles by troubles, from afflictions by afflictions, from dangers by dangers. God by lesser troubles and afflictions does oftentimes deliver his people from greater, so

that they shall say, "We had perished if we had not perished; we had been undone if we had not been undone; we had been in danger if we had not been in danger." God will so order all the afflictions that befall you in the way of righteousness that your souls shall say, "We would not for all the world but that we had met with such and such troubles and afflictions; for surely, had not these befallen us, it would have been worse and worse with us. Oh, the carnal security, pride, formality, dead-heartedness, lukewarmness, censoriousness, and earthliness that God has cured us of by the troubles and dangers that we have met with in the ways and services of the Lord!"

I remember a story of a godly man that, as he was going to take shipping for France, he broke his leg; and it pleased providence so to order it that the ship that he should have gone in, at that very time, was cast away, and not a man saved. So by breaking a bone his life was saved. So the Lord many times breaks our bones, but it is in order to the saving of our lives and our souls forever. He gives us a potion that makes us heartsick, but it is in order to the making us perfectly well, and to the purging of us from those ill humors that have made our heads ache, and God's heart ache, and our souls sick and heavy to the death. Oh, therefore, let no danger or misery hinder you from your duty.

The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that you shall gain more in the service of God, and by walking in righteous and holy ways, though troubles and afflictions should attend you, than you can possibly suffer or lose by your being found in the service of God. "Godliness is great gain" (1 Timothy 6:6). Oh, the joy, the peace, the comfort, the rest, that saints meet with in the ways and service of God! They find that religious services are not empty things, but things in which God is pleased to discover his beauty and glory to their souls. "My soul thirsts for God," says David, "that I might see thy beauty and thy glory, as I have seen thee in thy sanctuary" (Psalm 63:1-2).

Oh, the sweet looks, the sweet words, the sweet hints, the sweet joggings, the sweet influences, the sweet love letters, that gracious souls have from heaven when they wait upon God in holy and heavenly services; the least of which will darken and outweigh all the bravery and glory of this world, and richly recompense the soul for all the troubles, afflictions, and dangers that have attended it in the service of God! Oh, the saints can say under all their troubles and afflictions that they have meat to eat and drink to drink that the world knows not of; that they have such incomes, such refreshments, such warmings, that they would not exchange for all the honors, riches, and dainties of this world.

Ah! Let but a Christian compare his external losses with his spiritual, internal, and eternal gain, and he shall find that for every penny that he loses in the service of God he gains a

pound; and for every pound that he loses, he gains a hundred; for every hundred lost, he gains a thousand. We lose pins in his service, and find pearls. We lose the favor of the creature, and peace with the creature, and haply the comforts and contents of the creature; and we gain the favor of God, peace with conscience, and the comforts and contents of a better life. Ah! Did the men of this world know the sweet that saints enjoy in afflictions, they would rather choose Manasseh's iron chain than his golden crown; they would rather be Paul a prisoner than Paul rapt up in the third heaven. For light afflictions, they shall have a weight of glory; for a few afflictions, they shall have those joys, pleasures, and contents that are as the stars of heaven, or as the sands of the sea, that cannot be numbered; for momentary afflictions, they shall have an eternal crown of glory. "It is but winking, and thou shalt be in heaven presently," said the martyr. Oh, therefore, let no afflictions nor troubles work you to shun the ways of God, or to quit that service that should be dearer to you than a world, yea, than your very life.

Device 3: Presenting the difficulty of holy duties

The third device that Satan has to hinder souls from holy and heavenly services, from gracious and religious performances, is by presenting to the soul the difficulty of performing them. Says Satan, "It is so hard and difficult a thing to pray as you should, and to wait on God as you should, and to walk with God as you should, and to be lively, warm, and active in the communion of saints as you should, that you were better ten thousand times to neglect them than to meddle with them." And doubtless by this device Satan has and does keep off thousands from waiting on God, and from giving to him that service that is due to his name.

Now the remedies against this device are these that follow.

The first remedy against this device of Satan is to dwell more upon the necessity of the service and duty than on the difficulty that does attend the duty. You should reason thus with your souls: "Oh, our souls, though such and such duties and services be hard and difficult, yet are they not exceeding necessary for the honor of God, and the keeping up of his name in the world; and the keeping under of sin, and the keeping up of weak graces; and for the reviving of languishing comforts; and for the keeping clear and bright your blessed evidences; and for the scattering of your fears, and for the raising of your hopes; and for the gladdening the hearts of the righteous, and stopping the mouths of unrighteous souls, who are ready to take all advantages to blaspheme the name of God, and throw dirt and contempt upon his people and ways?" Oh, never leave thinking on the necessity of this and that duty, till your souls be lifted up far above all the difficulties that do attend religious duties.

The second remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that the Lord Jesus will make his services easy to you by the sweet discovery of himself to your souls while you are in his service. "Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways," as the prophet Isaiah says (Isaiah 64:5). If meeting with God, who is goodness itself, sweetness itself, beauty itself, strength itself, glory itself, will not sweeten his service to your soul, nothing in heaven or earth will. Jacob's meeting with Rachel, and enjoying of Rachel, made his hard service to be easy and delightful to him; and will not the soul's enjoying of God and meeting with God render his service to be much more easy and delightful? Doubtless it will.

The Lord will give that sweet assistance by his Spirit and grace as shall make his service joyous and not grievous, a delight and not a burden, a heaven and not a hell, to believing souls. The confidence of this divine assistance raised up Nehemiah's spirit far above all those difficulties and discouragements that did attend him in the work and service of the Lord, as you may see in Nehemiah 2:19-20: "But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian heard it, they laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What is this thing that ye do? will ye rebel against the king? Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but you have no right, nor portion, nor memorial, in Jerusalem." Ah, souls! While you are in the very service of the Lord, you shall find by experience that the God of heaven will prosper you, and support you, and encourage and strengthen you, and carry you through the hardest service with the greatest sweetness and cheerfulness that can be. Remember this, that God will suit your strength to your work, and in the hardest service you shall have the choicest assistance.

The third remedy against this device of Satan is to dwell upon the hard and difficult things that the Lord Jesus Christ has passed through for your temporal, spiritual, and eternal good. Ah! What a sea of blood, a sea of wrath, of sin, of sorrow, and misery, did the Lord Jesus wade through for your internal and eternal good! Christ did not plead, "This cross is too heavy for me to bear; this wrath is too great for me to lie under; this cup (which has in it all the ingredients of divine displeasure) is too bitter for me to sip of, how much more to drink the very dregs of it." No, Christ stands not upon this. He pleads not the difficulty of the service, but resolutely and bravely wades through all, as the prophet Isaiah shows: "The Lord God hath opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting" (Isaiah 50:5-6).

Christ makes nothing of his Father's wrath, the burden of your sins, the malice of Satan, and the rage of the world, but sweetly and triumphantly passes through all. Ah, souls! If this consideration will not raise up your spirits above all the discouragements that you meet with, to own Christ and his service, and to stick and cleave to Christ and his service, I am afraid nothing will. A soul not stirred by this, not raised and lifted up by this to be resolute and brave in the service of God, notwithstanding all dangers and difficulties, is a soul left of God to much blindness and hardness.

The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is to consider that religious duties, holy and heavenly exercises, are only difficult to the worse, to the ignoble, part of a saint. They are not to the noble and better part of a saint. To the noble part, the soul and the renewed affections of a saint, holy exercises are a heavenly pleasure and recreation, as the apostle speaks: "I delight in the law of God after the inward man. With my mind I serve the law of God, though with my flesh the law of sin" (Romans 7:22, 25). To the noble part of a saint, Christ's "yoke is easy, and his burden is light" (Matthew 11:30). All the commands and ways of Christ (even those that tend to the pulling out of right eyes and cutting off of right hands) are joyous and not grievous to the noble part of a saint. All the ways and services of Christ are pleasantness (in the abstract) to the better part of a saint (Proverbs 3:17).

A saint, so far as he is renewed, is always best when he sees most of God, when he tastes most of God, when he is highest in his enjoyments of God, and most warm and lively in the service of God. "Oh," says the noble part of a saint, "that it might be always thus! Oh, that my strength were the strength of stones, and my flesh as brass (Job 6:12), that my worse part might be more serviceable to my noble part, that I might act by an untired power in that service that is a pleasure, a paradise, to me!"

The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that great reward and glorious recompense that does attend those that cleave to the service of the Lord in the face of all difficulties and discouragements. Though the work be hard, yet the wages is great. Heaven will make amends for all; ay, one hour's being in heaven will abundantly recompense you for cleaving to the Lord and his ways in the face of all difficulties. This carried the apostle through the greatest difficulties: he "had an eye to the recompense of reward"; he "looked for a house that had foundations, whose builder and maker was God," and for a heavenly country (Hebrews 11:10, 16, 26). Yea, this bore up the spirit of Christ in the face of all difficulties and discouragements: "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2).

Christians that would hold on in the service of the Lord must look more upon the crown than upon the cross; more upon their future glory than their present misery; more upon their encouragements than upon their discouragements. God's very service is wages. His ways are strewed with roses, and paved with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory, and with peace that passes understanding. Some degree of comfort follows every good action, as heat accompanies fire, as beams and influences issue from the sun. "Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward" (Psalm 19:11). Not only for keeping, but in keeping of them, there is great reward. The joy, the rest, the refreshing, the comforts, the contents, the smiles, the incomes that saints now enjoy in the ways of God are so precious and glorious in their eyes that they would not exchange them for ten thousand worlds.

Ah! If the vails [gratuities] be thus sweet and glorious before payday comes, what will be that glory that Christ will crown his saints with for cleaving to his service in the face of all difficulties, when he shall say to his Father, "Lo, here am I, and the children which thou hast given me" (Hebrews 2:13)? If there be so much to be had in a wilderness, what then shall be had in paradise?

Device 4: Drawing false conclusions from Christ's work

The fourth device that Satan has to keep souls off from holy exercises, from religious services, is by working them to make false inferences from those blessed and glorious things that Christ has done; as that Jesus Christ has done all for us, therefore there is nothing for us to do but to joy and rejoice. "He has perfectly justified us, and fulfilled the law, and satisfied divine justice, and pacified his Father's wrath, and is gone to heaven to prepare a place for us, and in the meantime to intercede for us; and therefore away with praying, and mourning, and hearing." Ah! What a world of professors has Satan drawn in these days from religious services, by working them to make such sad, wild, and strange inferences from the sweet and excellent things that the Lord Jesus has done for his beloved ones!

Now the remedies against this device of Satan are these that follow.

The first remedy against this device of Satan is to dwell as much on those Scriptures that show you the duties and services that Christ requires of you as upon those Scriptures that declare to you the precious and glorious things that Christ has done for you. It is a sad and a dangerous thing to have two eyes to behold our dignity and privileges, and not one eye to see our duties and services. I should look with one eye upon the choice and excellent things that Christ has done for me, to raise up my heart to love Christ with the purest love, and to

joy in Christ with the strongest joy, and to lift up Christ above all, who has made himself to be my all. And I should look with the other eye upon those services and duties that the Scriptures require of those for whom Christ has done such blessed things.

As upon that of the apostle: "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). And that: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58). And that: "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Galatians 6:9). And that of the apostle: "Rejoice always, and pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-17). And that in the Philippians: "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12). And that: "This do till I come" (1 Corinthians 11:26). And that: "Let us consider one another, to provoke one another to love, and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another, and so much the more, as you see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:24-25).

Now a soul that would not be drawn away by this device of Satan, he must not look with a squint eye upon these blessed Scriptures, and abundance more of like import; but he must dwell upon them. He must make these Scriptures to be his chiefest and his choicest companions; and this will be a happy means to keep him close to Christ and his service in these times, wherein many turn their backs upon Christ under pretense of being highly interested in the great and glorious things that have been acted by Christ.

The second remedy against this device of Satan is to consider that the great and glorious things that Jesus Christ has done, and is a-doing, for us should be so far from taking us off from religious services and pious performances that they should be the greatest motives and encouragements to the performance of them that may be, as the Scriptures do abundantly evidence. I will only instance in some, as that: "That we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our lives" (Luke 1:74-75). Christ has freed you from all your enemies, from the curse of the law, the predominant damnatory power of sin, the wrath of God, the sting of death, and the torments of hell. But what is the end and design of Christ in doing these great and marvelous things for his people? It is not that they should throw off duties of righteousness and holiness, but that their hearts may be the more free and sweet in all holy duties and heavenly services.

So the apostle: "I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (mark what follows). "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 6:16, 18; 7:1). And again: "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:11-14). Ah, souls! I know no such arguments to work you to a lively and constant performance of all heavenly services like those that are drawn from the consideration of the great and glorious things that Christ has done for you. And if such arguments will not take you and win upon you, I do think the throwing of hellfire in your faces will never do it.

The third remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that those precious souls which Jesus Christ has done and suffered as much for as he has for you have been exceeding active and lively in all religious services and heavenly performances. He did as much and suffered as much for David as for you; and yet who more in praying and praising God than David? "Seven times a day will I praise the Lord" (Psalm 119:164). Who more in the studying and meditating on the word than David? "Thy law is my meditation day and night" (Psalm 119:97; 1:2). The same truth you may run and read in Jacob, Moses, Job, Daniel, and in the rest of the holy prophets and apostles, for whom Christ has done as much as for you. Ah! How have all those worthies abounded in works of righteousness and holiness, to the praise of free grace!

Certainly Satan has got the upper hand of those souls that do argue thus: "Christ has done such and such glorious things for us; therefore we need not make any care or conscience of doing such and such religious services as men say the word calls for." If this logic be not from hell, what is? Ah! Were the holy prophets and apostles alive to hear such logic come out of the mouths of such as profess themselves to be interested in the great and glorious things that Jesus Christ has done for his chosen ones, how would they blush to look upon such souls! And how would their hearts grieve and break within them to hear the language, and to observe the actings, of such souls!

The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider this, that those that do not walk in ways of righteousness and holiness (that do not wait upon God in the several duties and services that are commanded by him) cannot have that evidence to their own souls of their righteousness before God, of their fellowship and communion with God, of

their blessedness here and their happiness hereafter, as those souls have that love and delight in the ways of the Lord, that are always best when they are most in the works and service of the Lord.

"Little children," says the apostle, "let no man deceive you: he that doth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous" (1 John 3:7). "In this," says the same apostle, "the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother" (1 John 3:10). "If ye know that he is righteous," says the same apostle, "ye know that every one that doth righteousness is born of him" (1 John 2:29). "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whosoever keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk, even as he walked" (1 John 2:4-6). "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin," says the same apostle (1 John 1:6-7). So James in his second chapter: "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have no works? can faith save him?" (James 2:14). That is, it cannot; for as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead (James 2:26).

To look after holy and heavenly works is the best way to preserve the soul from being deceived and deluded by Satan's delusions, and by sudden flashes of joy and comfort; holy works being a more sensible and constant pledge of the precious Spirit, begetting and maintaining in the soul more solid, pure, clear, strong, and lasting joy. Ah, souls! As you would have in yourselves a constant and blessed evidence of your fellowship with the Father and the Son, and of the truth of grace, and of your future happiness, look that you cleave close to holy services, and that you turn not your backs upon religious duties.

The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that there are other choice and glorious ends for the saints' performance of religious duties than for the justifying of their persons before God, or for their satisfying of the law or justice of God, or for the purchasing of the pardon of sin. That is: to testify their justification ("A good tree cannot but bring forth good fruit," Matthew 7:18); to testify their love to God, and their sincere obedience to the commands of God; to testify their deliverance from spiritual bondage; to evidence the indwellings of the Spirit; to stop the mouths of the worst of men; and to glad those righteous souls that God would not have saddened. These, and abundance of other choice ends there are, why those that have an interest in the glorious doings of Christ should, notwithstanding that, keep close to the holy duties and religious services that are

commanded by Christ. And if these considerations will not prevail with you to wait upon God in holy and heavenly duties, I am afraid if one should rise from the dead his arguments would not win upon you; but you would hold on in your sins, and neglect his service, though you lost your souls forever.

Device 5: Pointing to the poverty and fewness of those who serve God

The fifth device that Satan has to draw souls off from religious services, and to keep souls off from holy duties and heavenly performances, is by presenting to them the paucity and poverty of those that walk in the ways of God, that hold on in religious practices. Says Satan, "Do you not see that those that walk in such and such religious ways are the poorest, the meanest, and the most despicable persons in the world?" This took with them in the seventh of John: "Then answered the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed" (John 7:47-49).

Now the remedies against this device of Satan are these that follow.

The first remedy against this device of Satan is to consider that though they are outwardly poor, yet they are inwardly rich; though they are poor in temporals, yet they are rich in spirituals. The worth and riches of the saints is inward: "The king's daughter is all glorious within" (Psalm 45:13). "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?" says James (James 2:5). "I know thy poverty, but thou art rich," says John to the church of Smyrna (Revelation 2:9). What though they have little in possession, yet they have a glorious kingdom in reversion. "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's pleasure to give you a kingdom" (Luke 12:32). Though saints have little in hand, yet they have much in hope. You count those happy in a worldly sense that have much in reversion, though they have but little in possession; and will you count the saints miserable because they have little in hand, little in possession, though they have a glorious kingdom in reversion? Of this I am sure: the poorest saint that breathes will not exchange (were it in his power) that which he has in hope and in reversion for the possession of as many worlds as there are stars in heaven or sands in the sea.

The second remedy against this device of Satan is to consider that in all ages God has had some that have been great, rich, wise, and honorable, that have chosen his ways and cleaved to his service in the face of all difficulties. Though not many wise men, yet some wise men have; and though not many mighty, yet some mighty have; and though not many

noble, yet some noble have (1 Corinthians 1:26). Witness Abraham, and Jacob, and Job, and several kings, and others that the Scriptures speak of. And ah! How many have we among ourselves whose souls have cleaved to the Lord, and who have swum to his service through the blood of the slain, and who have not counted their lives dear unto them, that they and others might enjoy the holy things of Christ according to the mind and heart of Christ!

The third remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that the spiritual riches of the poorest saints do infinitely transcend the temporal riches of all the wicked men in the world. Their spiritual riches do satisfy them; they can sit down satisfied with the riches of grace that are in Christ, without honors and without riches. "He that drinks of that water that I shall give him shall thirst no more" (John 4:14). The riches of poor saints are durable; they will bed and board with them; they will go to the prison, to a sickbed, to a grave, yea, to heaven with them. The spiritual riches of poor saints are as wine to cheer them, and as bread to strengthen them, and as clothes to warm them, and as armor to protect them. Now all you that know anything do know that the riches of this world cannot satisfy the souls of men, and they are as fading as a flower, or as the owners of them are.

The fourth remedy against this device is seriously to consider that though the saints, considered comparatively, are few; though they be "a little, little flock" (Luke 12:32), "a remnant," "a garden enclosed, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed" (Song of Solomon 4:12); though they are as the summer gleanings, though they are "one of a city, and two of a tribe" (Micah 7:1; Jeremiah 3:14); though they be but a handful to a houseful, a spark to a flame, a drop to the ocean; yet consider them simply in themselves, and so they are an innumerable number that cannot be numbered, as John speaks: "After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindred, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands" (Revelation 7:9). So Matthew speaks: "And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 8:11). So Paul: "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect" (Hebrews 12:22-23).

The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider that it will be but as a day before these poor despised saints shall shine brighter than the sun in her glory. It will not be long before you will wish, "Oh, that we were now among the poor, mean, despised ones, in the day that God comes to make up his jewels!" It will not be long before these poor few saints shall be lifted up upon their thrones to judge the multitude, the world, as the

apostle speaks: "Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?" (1 Corinthians 6:2). And in that day, oh, how will the great and the rich, the learned and the noble, wish that they had lived and spent their days with these few, poor, contemptible creatures in the service of the Lord! Oh, how will this wicked world curse the day that ever they had such base thoughts of the poor, mean saints, and that their poverty became a stumbling block to keep them off from the ways of sanctity!

I have read of Ingo, an ancient king of the Draves, who, making a stately feast, appointed his nobles, at that time pagans, to sit in the hall below, and commanded certain poor Christians to be brought up into his presence chamber, to sit with him at his table, to eat and drink of his kingly cheer. At which many wondering, he said he accounted Christians, though never so poor, a greater ornament at his table, and more worthy of his company, than the greatest peers unconverted to the Christian faith; for when these might be thrust down to hell, those might be his consorts and fellow princes in heaven. You know how to apply it. Although you see the stars sometimes by their reflections in a puddle, or in the bottom of a well, ay, in a stinking ditch, yet the stars have their situation in heaven. So, though you see a godly man in a poor, miserable, low, despised condition for the things of this world, yet he is fixed in heaven, in the region of heaven. "Who hath raised us up," says the apostle, "and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:6).

Oh, therefore, say to your own souls (when they begin to decline the ways of Zion because of the poverty and paucity of those that walk in them), "The day is at hand when these few, poor, despised saints shall shine in glory; when they shall judge this world; and when all the wicked of the world will wish that they were in their condition, and would give ten thousand worlds (were it in their power) that they might but have the honor and happiness to wait upon those whom for their poverty and paucity they have neglected and despised in this world."

The sixth and last remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that there will come a time, even in this life, in this world, when the reproach and contempt that is now cast upon the ways of God by reason of the poverty and paucity of those that walk in those ways shall be quite taken away, by his making them the head that have days without number been the tail, and by his raising them up to much outward riches, prosperity, and glory who have been as the outcast because of their poverty and paucity. John, speaking of the glory of the church, the new Jerusalem that came down from heaven, in the twenty-first of the Revelation, tells us "that the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory into it" (Revelation 21:24). So the prophet Isaiah: "They shall bring their sons from far, and their silver and their gold with

them" (Isaiah 60:9). "For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron" (Isaiah 60:17). And so the prophet Zechariah speaks: "And the wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance" (Zechariah 14:14).

The Lord has promised "that the meek shall inherit the earth" (Psalm 37:11); and heaven and earth shall pass away before one jot or tittle of his word shall pass unfulfilled (Matthew 5:18). Ah, poor saints! Now some thrust sore at you, others look asquint upon you, others shut the door against you, others turn their backs upon you; and most of men (except it be a few that live much in God, and are filled with the riches of Christ) do either neglect you or despise you because of your poverty. But the day is coming when you shall be lifted up above the dunghill; when you shall change poverty for riches, your rags for robes, your reproach for a crown of honor, your infamy for glory, even in this world.

And this is not all, but God will also mightily increase the number of his chosen ones; multitudes shall be converted to him. "Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth children" (Isaiah 66:8). "And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord" (Isaiah 66:20). Does not the Scripture say "that the kingdoms of this world must become the kingdoms of our Lord" (Revelation 11:15)? Has not God given to Christ "the heathen, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possessions" (Psalm 2:8)? Has not the Lord said "that in the last days the mountain of the Lord's house shall be lifted up above the hills, and shall be established in the top of the mountains, and all nations shall flow unto it" (Isaiah 2:2)? Pray read and meditate upon the sixtieth chapter of Isaiah, and the sixty-sixth chapter, and the first five verses of the second chapter of Isaiah (see also Isaiah 54:14; 61:9), and there you shall find the multitudes that shall be converted to Christ. And oh, that you would be mighty in believing, and in wrestling with God, that he would hasten the day of his glory, that the reproach that is now upon his people and ways may cease!

Device 6: Showing that most people make light of God's ways

The sixth device that Satan has to keep souls off from religious services is by presenting before them the examples of the greatest part of the world, that walk in the ways of their own hearts, and that make light and slight of the ways of the Lord. "Why," says Satan, "do you not see that the great and the rich, the noble and the honorable, the learned and the wise,

even the greatest number of men, never trouble themselves about such and such ways? And why then should you be singular and nice? You were far better do as the most do."

Now the remedies against this device of Satan are these that follow.

The first remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider those Scriptures that make directly against following the sinful examples of men; as that in Exodus: "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment" (Exodus 23:2). The multitude generally are ignorant, and know not the way of the Lord; therefore they speak evil of that they know not. They are envious and maliciously bent against the service and way of God, and therefore they cannot speak well of the ways of God. "This way is everywhere spoken against," said they (Acts 28:22). So in Numbers 16: "Separate from them, and come out from among them" (Numbers 16:21, 26; 2 Corinthians 6:17). So the apostle: "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness" (Ephesians 5:11). So Solomon: "Enter not into the way of the wicked. Forsake the foolish, and live" (Proverbs 4:14; 9:6). They that walk with the most shall perish with the most. They that do as the most shall ere long suffer with the most. They that live as the most must die with the most, and to hell with the most.

The second remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider that if you will sin with the multitude, all the angels in heaven and men on earth cannot keep you from suffering with the multitude. If you will be wicked with them, you must unavoidably be miserable with them. Say to your soul, "O my soul, if you will sin with the multitude, you must be shut out of heaven with the multitude; you must be cast down to hell with the multitude." "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Revelation 18:4). Come out in affection, in action, and in habitation; for else the infection of sin will bring upon you the infliction of punishment. So says the wise man: "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed" (Proverbs 13:20), or, as the Hebrew has it, shall be broken in pieces. Multitudes may help you into sin, yea, one may draw you into sin; but it is not multitudes that can help you to escape punishments, as you may see in Moses and Aaron, that were provoked to sin by the multitude, but were shut out of the pleasant land, and fell by a hand of justice as well as others.

The third remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider the worth and excellency of your immortal soul. Your soul is a jewel more worth than heaven and earth. The loss of your soul is incomparable, irreparable, and irrecoverable; if that be lost, all is lost, and you are undone forever. Is it madness and folly in a man to kill himself for company?

And is it not greater madness or folly to break the neck of your soul, and to damn it for company? Suspect that way wherein you see multitudes to walk, the multitude being a stream that you must row hard against, or you will be carried into that gulf out of which angels cannot deliver you. Is it not better to walk in a strait way alone than to wander into crooked ways with company? Sure it is better to go to heaven alone than to hell with company. I might add other things, but these may suffice for the present; and I am afraid if these arguments do not stir you, other arguments will work but little upon you.

Device 7: Casting in vain thoughts during holy duties

The seventh device that Satan has to keep souls from holy and heavenly services is by casting in a multitude of vain thoughts while the soul is in seeking of God, or in waiting on God; and by this device he has cooled some men's spirits in heavenly services, and taken off (at least for a time) many precious souls from religious performances. "I have no heart to hear, nor no heart to pray, nor no delight in reading, nor in the society of the saints. Satan does so dog and follow my soul, and is still a-casting in such a multitude of vain thoughts concerning God, the world, and my own soul, that I even tremble to think of waiting upon God in any religious service. Oh, the vain thoughts that Satan casts in do so distaste my soul, and so grieve, vex, perplex, and distract my soul, that they even make me weary of holy duties, yea, of my very life. Oh, I cannot be so raised and ravished, so heated and melted, so quickened and enlarged, so comforted and refreshed, as I should be, as I might be, and as I would be, in religious services, by reason of that multitude of vain thoughts that Satan is injecting or casting into my soul."

Now the remedies against this device of Satan are these that follow.

The first remedy against this device of Satan is to have your hearts strongly affected with the greatness, holiness, majesty, and glory of that God before whom you stand, and with whom your souls do converse in religious services. Oh, let your souls be greatly affected with the presence, purity, and majesty of that God before whom you stand! A man would be afraid of playing with a feather when he is speaking to a king. Ah! When men have poor, low, light, slight thoughts of God in their drawing near to God, they tempt the devil to bestir himself, and to cast in a multitude of vain thoughts to disturb and distract the soul in its waiting on God. There is nothing that will contribute so much to the keeping out of vain thoughts as to look upon God as an omniscient God, an omnipresent God, an omnipotent God, a God full of all glorious perfections, a God whose majesty, purity, and glory will not suffer him to behold the least iniquity. The reason why the blessed saints and glorious an-

gels in heaven have not so much as one vain thought is because they are greatly affected with the greatness, holiness, majesty, purity, and glory of God.

The second remedy against this device of Satan is to be peremptory in religious services, notwithstanding all those wandering thoughts the soul is troubled with. This will be a sweet help against them: for the soul to be resolute in waiting on God, whether it be troubled with vain thoughts or not; to say, "Well, I will pray still, and hear still, and meditate still, and keep fellowship with the saints still." Many precious souls can say from experience that when their souls have been peremptory in their waiting on God, Satan has left them, and has not been so busy in vexing their souls with vain thoughts. When Satan perceives that all those trifling, vain thoughts that he casts into the soul do but vex the soul into greater diligence, carefulness, watchfulness, and peremptoriness in holy and heavenly services, and that the soul loses nothing of his zeal, piety, and devotion, but doubles his care, diligence, and earnestness, he often ceases to interpose his trifles and vain thoughts, as he ceased to tempt Christ when Christ was peremptory in resisting his temptations.

The third remedy against this device of Satan is to consider this, that those vain and trifling thoughts that are cast into our souls when we are waiting upon God in this or that religious service, if they are not cherished and indulged, but abhorred, resisted, and disclaimed, are not sins upon our souls, though they may be troubles to our minds. They shall not be put upon our accounts, nor keep mercies and blessings from being enjoyed by us. When a soul in uprightness can look God in the face and say, "Lord, when I approach near unto you, there be a world of vain thoughts crowd in upon me, that do disturb my soul, and weaken my faith, and lessen my comfort and spiritual strength. Oh, these are my clog, my burden, my torment, my hell! Oh, do justice upon these! Free me from these, that I may serve you with more freeness, singleness, spirituality, and sweetness of spirit"; these thoughts may vex that soul, but they shall not harm that soul, nor keep a blessing from that soul. If vain thoughts, resisted and lamented, could stop the current of mercy and render a soul unhappy, there would be none on earth that should ever taste of mercy or be everlastingly happy.

The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that watching against sinful thoughts, resisting of sinful thoughts, lamenting and weeping over sinful thoughts, carries with it the sweetest and strongest evidence of the truth and power of grace, and of the sincerity of your hearts, and is the readiest and the surest way to be rid of them. Many low and carnal considerations may work men to watch their words, their lives, their actions; as hope of gain, or to please friends, or to get a name in the world, and many other suchlike considerations. Oh, but to watch our thoughts, to weep and lament over

them, this must needs be from some noble, spiritual, and internal principle, as love to God, a holy fear of God, a holy care and delight to please the Lord. The schools do well observe that outward sins are of greater infamy, but inward heart sins are of greater guilt, as we see in the devils. There is nothing that speaks out a man to be thoroughly and kindly wrought upon as his having his thoughts to be brought into obedience, as the apostle speaks (2 Corinthians 10:4-5). Grace is grown up to a very great height in that soul where it prevails to the subduing of those vain thoughts that walk up and down in the soul.

Well, though you cannot be rid of them, yet make resistance and opposition against the first risings of them. When sinful thoughts arise, then think thus: "The Lord takes notice of these thoughts. 'He knows them afar off,' as the psalmist speaks (Psalm 139:2). He knew Herod's bloody thoughts, and Judas's betraying thoughts, and the Pharisees' cruel and blasphemous thoughts, afar off." Oh, think thus: "All these sinful thoughts, they defile and pollute the soul; they deface and spoil much of the inward beauty and glory of the soul. If I commit this or that sin to which my thoughts incline me, then either I must repent or not repent. If I repent, it will cost me more grief, sorrow, shame, heartbreaking, and soul-bleeding, before my conscience will be quieted, divine justice pacified, my comfort and joy restored, my evidences cleared, and my pardon in the court of conscience sealed, than the imagined profit or seeming sensual pleasure can be worth. 'What fruit had you in those things whereof you are now ashamed?' (Romans 6:21). If I never repent, oh, then my sinful thoughts will be the scorpions that will eternally vex me, the rods that will eternally lash me, the thorns that will everlastingly prick me, the dagger that will be eternally a-stabbing me, the worm that will be forever a-gnawing me." Oh, therefore watch against them, be constant in resisting them, and in lamenting and weeping over them, and then they shall not hurt you, though they may for a time trouble you. And remember this: he that does this does more than the most glistering and blustering hypocrite in the world does.

The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is to labor more and more to be filled with the fullness of God, and to be enriched with all spiritual and heavenly things. What is the reason that the angels in heaven have not so much as an idle thought? It is because they are filled with the fullness of God. Take it for an experienced truth: the more the soul is filled with the fullness of God, and enriched with spiritual and heavenly things, the less room there is in that soul for vain thoughts. The fuller the vessel is of wine, the less room there is for water. Oh, lay up much of God, of Christ, of precious promises, and choice experiences in your hearts, and then you will be less troubled with vain thoughts. "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things" (Matthew 12:35).

The sixth remedy against this device of Satan is to keep up holy and spiritual affections; for such as your affections are, such will be your thoughts. "Oh, how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day" (Psalm 119:97). What we love most, we most muse upon. "When I awake, I am still with thee" (Psalm 139:18). That which we much like, we shall much mind. They that are frequent in their love to God and his law will be frequent in thinking of God and his law. A child will not forget his mother.

The seventh remedy against this device of Satan is to avoid multiplicity of worldly business. Oh, let not the world take up your hearts and thoughts at other times! Souls that are torn in pieces with the cares of the world will be always vexed and tormented with vain thoughts in all their approaches to God. Vain thoughts will be still crowding in upon him that lives in a crowd of business. The stars which have least circuit are nearest the pole; and men that are least perplexed with business are commonly nearest to God.

Device 8: Tempting believers to rest in their performances

The eighth device that Satan has to keep souls from religious services, from holy performances, is by working them to rest in their performances: to rest in prayer, and to rest in hearing, reading, and the communion of saints (Isaiah 58:1-3; Zechariah 7:4-6; Matthew 6:2). And when Satan has drawn the soul to rest upon the service done, then he will help the soul to reason thus: "Why, you were as good never pray as to pray and rest in prayer; as good never hear as to hear and rest in hearing; as good never be in the communion of saints as to rest in the communion of saints." And by this device he stops many souls in their heavenly race, and takes off poor souls from those services that should be their joy and crown.

Now the remedies against this device of Satan are these that follow.

The first remedy against this device of Satan is to dwell much upon the imperfections and weaknesses that do attend your choicest services. Oh, the spots, the blots, the blemishes that are to be seen upon the face of our fairest duties! When you have done all you can, you have need to close up all with this: "Oh, enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord" (Psalm 143:2), for the weaknesses that cleave to my best services. We may all say with the church, "All our righteousnesses are as a menstruous cloth" (Isaiah 64:6). If God should be strict to mark what is done amiss in our best actions, we were undone. Oh, the water that is mingled with our wine, the dross that cleaves unto our gold!

The second remedy against this device of Satan is to consider the impotency and inability of any of your best services divinely to comfort, refresh, and bear your souls up from fainting and sinking in the days of troubles, when darkness is round about you; when God shall

say to you, as he did once to the Israelites, "Go, and cry unto the gods that you have chosen; let them save you in the time of your tribulation" (Judges 10:14). So when God shall say in the day of your troubles, "Go to your prayers, to your hearing, and to your fasting, and see if they can help you, if they can support you, if they can deliver you": if God in that day does but withhold the influence of his grace from you, your former services will be but poor cordials to comfort you. And then you must and will cry out, "Oh, none but Christ, none but Christ! Oh, my prayers are not Christ, my hearing is not Christ, my fasting is not Christ!"

Oh, one smile of Christ, one glimpse of Christ, one good word from Christ, one nod of love from Christ in the day of trouble and darkness, will more revive and refresh the soul than all your former services, in which your souls rested as if they were the bosom of Christ, which should be the only center of our souls. Christ is the crown of crowns, the glory of glories, and the heaven of heaven.

The third remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that good things rested upon will as certainly undo us and everlastingly destroy us as the greatest enormities that can be committed by us. Those souls that, after they have done all, do not look up so high as a Christ, and rest and center alone in Christ, laying down their services at the footstool of Christ, must lie down in sorrow; their bed is prepared for them in hell. "Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, and compass yourselves with the sparks, and walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled, this ye shall have at mine hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow" (Isaiah 50:11). Is it good dwelling with everlasting burnings, with a devouring fire (Isaiah 33:14)? If it be, why then rest in your duties still; if otherwise, then see that you center only in the bosom of Christ.

The fourth and last remedy against this device of Satan is to dwell much upon the necessity and excellency of that resting place that God has provided for you above all other resting places. Himself is your resting place; his free mercy and love is your resting place; the pure, glorious, matchless, and spotless righteousness of Christ is your resting place. Ah! It is sad to think that most men have forgotten their resting place, as the Lord complains: "My people have been as lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray, and have turned them away to the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, and forgotten their resting place" (Jeremiah 50:6). So poor souls that see not the excellency of that resting place that God has appointed for their souls to lie down in, they wander from mountain to hill, from one duty to another; and here they will rest, and there they will rest. But souls that see the excellency of that resting place that God has provided for them, they will say, "Farewell prayer, farewell hearing, farewell fasting. I will rest no more in you, but now will rest only in the bosom of Christ, the love of Christ, the righteousness of Christ."

PART 3

Devices to Keep Believers Sad and Doubting

The third thing to be showed is the several devices that Satan has to keep souls in a sad, doubting, questioning, and uncomfortable condition.

Though he can never rob a believer of his crown, yet such is his malice and envy that he will leave no stone unturned, no means unattempted, to rob them of their comfort and peace; to make their life a burden and a hell unto them; to cause them to spend their days in sorrow and mourning, in sighing and complaining, in doubting and questioning: "Surely we have no interest in Christ; our graces are not true; our hopes are the hopes of hypocrites; our confidence is but presumption; our enjoyments are but delusions."

I shall show you this in some particulars.

Device 1: Making them remember their sins more than their Savior

The first device that Satan has to keep souls in a sad, doubting, and questioning condition, and so making their life a hell, is by causing them to be still poring and musing upon sin; to mind their sins more than their Savior; yea, so to mind their sins as to forget, yea, to neglect their Savior; that, as the psalmist speaks, "the Lord is not in all their thoughts" (Psalm 10:4). Their eyes are so fixed upon their disease that they cannot see the remedy, though it be near; and they do so muse upon their debts that they have neither mind nor heart to think of their surety.

Now the first remedy against this device of Satan is for weak believers to consider that though Jesus Christ has not freed them from the presence of sin, yet he has freed them from the damnatory power of sin. It is most true that sin and grace were never born together, neither shall sin and grace die together; yet while a believer breathes in this world, they must live together, they must keep house together. Christ in this life will not free any believer from the presence of any one sin, though he does free every believer from the damning power of every sin. "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit" (Romans 8:1). The law cannot condemn a believer, for Christ has fulfilled it for him. Divine justice cannot condemn him, for that Christ has satisfied. His sins cannot condemn him, for they in the blood of Christ are pardoned.

And his own conscience (upon righteous grounds) cannot condemn him, because Christ, that is greater than his conscience, has acquitted him.

The second remedy against this device of Satan is to consider that though Jesus Christ has not freed you from the molesting and vexing power of sin, yet he has freed you from the reign and dominion of sin. You say that sin does so molest and vex you that you cannot think of God, nor go to God, nor speak with God. Oh, but remember, it is one thing for sin to molest and vex you, and another thing for sin to reign and have dominion over you. "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Romans 6:14). Sin may rebel, but it shall never reign, in any saint. It fares with sin in the regenerate as with those beasts that Daniel speaks of, that "had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season, and a time" (Daniel 7:12).

Now sin reigns in the soul when the soul willingly and readily obeys it, and subjects to its commands, as subjects do actively obey and embrace the commands of their prince. The commands of a king are readily embraced and obeyed by his subjects; but the commands of a tyrant are embraced and obeyed unwillingly. All the service that is done to a tyrant is out of violence, and not out of obedience. A free and willing subjection to the commands of sin speaks out the soul to be under the reign and dominion of sin; but from this plague, this hell, Christ frees all believers. Sin cannot say of a believer, as the centurion said of his servant, "I bid one go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to another, Do this, and he doth it" (Matthew 8:9). No, the heart of a saint rises against the commands of sin; and when sin would carry his soul to the devil, he hales his sin before the Lord, and cries out for justice. "Lord," says the believing soul, "sin plays the tyrant, the devil, in me. It would have me to do that which makes against your holiness as well as against my happiness, against your honor and glory as my comfort and peace. Therefore do me justice, you righteous Judge of heaven and earth, and let this tyrant sin die for it."

The third remedy against this device of Satan is constantly to keep one eye upon the promises of remission of sin, as well as the other eye upon the inward operations of sin. This is most certain truth, that God will graciously pardon those sins to his people that he will not in this life fully subdue in his people. Paul prays thrice, that is, often, to be delivered from the thorn in the flesh; all he can get is, "My grace is sufficient for thee" (2 Corinthians 12:9). "I will graciously pardon that to thee that I will not conquer in thee," says God. "And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned against me, and whereby they have transgressed against me" (Jeremiah 33:8). "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins" (Isaiah 43:25). Ah, you lamenting

souls, that spend your days in sighing and groaning under the sense and burden of your sins, why do you deal so unkindly with God, and so injuriously with your own souls, as not to cast an eye upon those precious promises of remission of sin, which may bear up and refresh your spirits in the darkest night, and under the heaviest burden of sin?

The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is to look upon all your sins as charged upon the account of Christ, as debts which the Lord Jesus has fully satisfied. And indeed, were there but one farthing of that debt unpaid that Christ was engaged to satisfy, it would not have stood with the unspotted justice of God to have let him come into heaven and sit down at his own right hand. But all our debts by his death being discharged, we are freed, and he is exalted to sit down at the right hand of his Father, which is the top of his glory, and the greatest pledge of our felicity. "For he hath made him to be sin for us that knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," says the apostle (2 Corinthians 5:21). All our sins were made to meet upon Christ, as that evangelical prophet has it: "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:5-6); or, as the Hebrew has it, he has made the iniquity of us all to meet in him.

In law we know that all the debts of the wife are charged upon the husband. Says the wife to one and to another, "If I owe you anything, go to my husband." So may a believer say to the law and to the justice of God, "If I owe you anything, go to my Christ, who has undertaken for me. I must not sit down discouraged under the apprehensions of those debts that Christ to the utmost farthing has fully satisfied." Would it not argue much weakness, I had almost said much madness, for a debtor to sit down discouraged upon his looking over those debts that his surety has readily, freely, and fully satisfied? The sense of his great love should engage a man forever to love and honor his surety, and to bless that hand that has paid the debt and crossed the books; but to sit down discouraged when the debt is satisfied is a sin that bespeaks repentance.

Christ has cleared all reckonings betwixt God and us. You remember the scapegoat: upon his head "all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins," were confessed and put, "and the goat did bear upon him all their iniquities" (Leviticus 16:21-22). Why, the Lord Jesus is that blessed scapegoat upon whom all our sins were laid, and who alone has carried our sins away into the land of forgetfulness, where they shall never, never be remembered more. A believer under the guilt of his sin may look the Lord in the face, and sweetly plead thus with him: "It is true, Lord, I owed you much;

but your Son was my ransom, my redemption; his blood was the price; he was my surety, and undertook to answer for my sins. I know you must be satisfied, and Christ has satisfied you to the utmost farthing; not for himself (for what sins had he of his own?) but for me. They were my debts that he satisfied for. Be pleased to look over the book, and you shall find that it is crossed by your own hand, upon this very account, that Christ has suffered and satisfied for them."

The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider the reasons why the Lord is pleased to have his people exercised, troubled, and vexed with the operations of sinful corruptions; and they are these: partly to keep them humble and low in their own eyes; and partly to put them upon the use of all divine helps whereby sin may be subdued and mortified; and partly that they may live upon Christ for the perfecting the work of sanctification; and partly to wean them from things below, and to make them heartsick of their absence from Christ; and to maintain in them bowels of compassion towards others that are subject to the same infirmities with them; and that they may distinguish between a state of grace and a state of glory, and that heaven may be more sweet to them in the close. Now does the Lord upon these weighty reasons suffer his people to be exercised and molested with the operations of sinful corruptions? Oh, then let no believer speak, write, or conclude bitter things against his own soul and comforts because that sin troubles and vexes his righteous soul; but lay his hand upon his mouth, and be silent, because the Lord will have it so, upon such weighty grounds as the soul is not able to withstand.

The sixth remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that believers must repent for their being discouraged by their sins. Their being discouraged by their sins will cost them many a prayer, many a tear, and many a groan; and that because their discouragements under sin flows from ignorance and unbelief. It springs from their ignorance of the riches, freeness, fullness, and everlastingness of God's love; and from their ignorance of the power, glory, sufficiency, and efficacy of the death and sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ; and from their ignorance of the worth, glory, fullness, largeness, and completeness of the righteousness of Jesus Christ; and from their ignorance of that real, close, spiritual, glorious, and inseparable union that is betwixt Christ and their precious soul. Ah! Did precious souls know and believe the truth of these things as they should, they would not sit down dejected and overwhelmed under the sense and operations of sin.

Device 2: Making false definitions of grace

The second device that Satan has to keep souls in a sad, doubting, and questioning condition is by working them to make false definitions of their graces. Satan knows that as false

definitions of sin wrong the soul one way, so false definitions of grace wrong the soul another way.

I will instance only in faith. Oh, how does Satan labor might and main to work men to make false definitions of faith! Some he works to define faith too high: as that it is a full assurance of the love of God to a man's soul in particular, or a full persuasion of the pardon and remission of a man's own sins in particular. Says Satan, "What do you talk of faith? Faith is an assurance of the love of God, and of the pardon of sin; and this you have not. You know you are far off from this; therefore you have no faith." And by drawing men to make such a false definition of faith, he keeps them in a sad, doubting, and questioning condition, and makes them spend their days in sorrow and sighing, so that tears are their drink, and sorrow is their meat, and sighing is their work all the day long.

The philosophers say there are eight degrees of heat; we discern three. Now if a man should define heat only by the highest degree, then all other degrees will be cast out from being heat. So if men shall define faith only by the highest degrees, by assurance of the love of God, and of the pardon of his sins in particular, what will become of lesser degrees of faith?

If a man should define a man to be a living man only by the highest and strongest demonstrations of life, as laughing, leaping, running, working, walking, would not many thousands that groan under internal and external weaknesses, and that cannot laugh, nor leap, nor run, nor work, nor walk, be found dead men by such a definition, that yet we know to be alive? It is so here, and you know how to apply it.

Now the remedies against this device of Satan are these that follow.

The first remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that there may be true faith, yea, great measures of faith, where there is no assurance. The Canaanite woman in the gospel had strong faith, yet no assurance that we read of. "These things have I written unto you," says John, "that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God" (1 John 5:13). In these words you see that they did believe, and had eternal life: in respect of the purpose and promise of God; and in respect of the seeds and beginnings of it in their souls; and in respect of Christ their head, who sits in heaven as a public person, representing all his chosen ones: "who hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:6). And yet they did not know that they had eternal life. It is one thing to have a right to heaven, and another thing to know it. It is one thing to be beloved, and another thing for a man to know that he is beloved. It is one thing for God to write a man's name in the book of life, and another thing for God to tell a man that his name is writ-

ten in the book of life, and to say to him, "Rejoice, because thy name is written in heaven" (Luke 10:20).

So Paul: "In whom ye also trusted, after ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1:13).

So Micah: "Rejoice not against me, O my enemy: when I shall fall, I shall rise; when I shall sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned" (Micah 7:8-9), or "the sad countenance of God," as the Hebrew has it. This soul had no assurance, for he sits in darkness, and was under the sad countenance of God; and yet had strong faith, as appears in those words: "When I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness." And let this suffice for the first answer.

The second remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that God in the Scriptures does define faith otherwise. God defines faith to be a receiving of Christ: "As many as received him, to them he gave this privilege, to be the sons of God, to as many as believed on his name" (John 1:12); to be a cleaving of the soul unto God, though no joy but afflictions attend the soul (Acts 11:23). Yea, the Lord defines faith to be a coming to God in Christ, and often to a resting, and staying, or rolling of the soul upon Christ (Matthew 11:28; John 6:37; Hebrews 7:25-26). It is safest and sweetest to define as God defines, both vices and graces. This is the only way to settle the soul, and to secure it against all the wiles of men and devils, who labor by false definitions of grace to keep precious souls in a doubting, staggering, and languishing condition, and so make their lives a burden, a hell, unto them.

The third remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider this, that there may be true faith where there is much doubtings (Matthew 6:30; 14:31; 16:8; Luke 12:28). Witness those frequent sayings of Christ to his disciples: "Why are ye afraid, O ye of little faith?" Persons may be truly believing who nevertheless are sometimes doubting. In the same persons (that the forementioned Scriptures speak of) you may see their faith commended and their doubts condemned, which does necessarily suppose a presence of both.

The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that assurance is an effect of faith; therefore it cannot be faith. The cause cannot be the effect, nor the root the fruit. As the effect flows from the cause, the fruit from the root, the stream from the fountain, so does the assurance flow from faith. This truth I shall make good thus.

The assurance of our salvation and pardon of sin does primarily arise from the witness of the Spirit of God that we are the children of God (Ephesians 1:13; Galatians 4:6); and the Spirit never witnesses this till we are believers, "for we are sons by faith in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:26). Therefore assurance is not faith, but follows it, as the effect follows the cause.

Again, no man can be assured and persuaded of his salvation till he be united to Christ, till he be ingrafted into Christ; and a man cannot be ingrafted into Christ till he has faith. He must first be ingrafted into Christ by faith before he can have assurance of his salvation; which does clearly evidence that assurance is not faith, but an effect and fruit of faith.

Again, faith cannot be lost, but assurance may; therefore assurance is not faith. Though assurance be a precious flower in the garden of a saint, and is more infinitely sweet and delightful to the soul than all outward comforts and contents, yet it is but a flower that is subject to fade, and to lose its freshness and beauty, as saints by sad experience find (Psalm 51:12; 30:6-7; Song of Solomon 5:6; Isaiah 8:17).

Again, a man must first have faith before he can have assurance; therefore assurance is not faith. And that a man must first have faith before he can have assurance is clear by this: a man must first be saved before he can be assured of his salvation, for he cannot be assured of that which is not; and a man must first have a saving faith before he can be saved by faith, for he cannot be saved by that which he has not. Therefore a man must first have faith before he can have assurance; and so it roundly follows that assurance is not faith.

Device 3: Drawing false conclusions from hard providences

The third device that Satan has to keep the soul in a sad, doubting, and questioning condition is by working the soul to make false inferences from the cross actings of providence (Psalm 77:7-11; Psalm 88; Psalm 73:2, 23). Says Satan, "Do you not see how providence crosses your prayers, and crosses your desires, your tears, your hopes, your endeavors? Surely, if his love were toward you, if his soul did delight and take pleasure in you, he would not deal thus with you."

Now the remedies against this device of Satan are these that follow.

The first remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that many things may be cross to our desires that are not cross to our good. Abraham, Jacob, David, Job, Moses, Jeremiah, Jonah, Paul met with many things that were contrary to their desires and endeavors that were not contrary to their good, as all know that have wisely compared their desires and endeavors and God's actings together. Physic often works contrary to the patient's

desires when it does not work contrary to their good. I remember a story of a godly man who had a great desire to go to France; and as he was going to take shipping, he broke his leg; and it pleased providence so to order it that the ship that he should have gone in, at that very same time, was cast away, and not a man saved; and so by breaking a bone his life was saved. Though providence did work cross to his desires, yet it did not work cross to his good.

The second remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that the hand of God may be against a man when the love and heart of God is much set upon a man. No man can conclude how the heart of God stands by his hand. The hand of God was against Ephraim, and yet his love, his heart, was dearly set upon Ephraim: "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus; Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth. Ephraim is my dear son, he is a pleasant child: for since I spoke against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord" (Jeremiah 31:18-20).

God can look sourly, and chide bitterly, and strike heavily, even where and when he loves dearly. The hand of God was very much against Job, and yet his love, his heart, was very much set upon Job, as you may see by comparing the first two chapters of Job with the last two. The hand of God was sore against David and Jonah when his heart was much set upon them. He that shall conclude that the heart of God is against those that his hand is against will condemn the generation of the just, whom God unjustly would not have condemned.

The third remedy against this device of Satan is to consider that all the cross providences that befall the saints are but in order to some noble good that God does intend to confer upon them. Providence wrote cross to David's desire in taking away the child sinfully begotten, but yet not cross to a more noble good; for was it not far better for David to have such a legitimate heir as Solomon was, than that a bastard should wear the crown and sway the scepter?

Joseph, you know, was sold into a far country by the envy and malice of his brethren, and afterwards imprisoned because he would not be a prisoner to his mistress's lusts; yet all these cross providences did wonderfully conduce to his advancement, and the preservation of his father's family, which was then the visible church of Christ. It was so ordered by a noble hand of providence that what they sought to decline, they did promote. Joseph was

therefore sold by his brethren, that he might not be worshipped; and yet he was therefore worshipped, because he was sold.

David was designed to a kingdom; but oh, the straits, troubles, and deaths that he ran through before he feels the weight of the crown! And all this was but in order to the sweetening of his crown, and to the settling of it more firmly and gloriously upon his head. God did so contrive it that Jonah's offense, and those cross actings of his that did attend it, should advantage that end which they seemed most directly to oppose. Jonah, he flies to Tarshish, then cast into the sea, then saved by a miracle. Then the mariners, as is very probable, who cast Jonah into the sea, declared to the Ninevites what had happened; therefore he must be a man sent of God, and that his threatenings must be believed and hearkened to; and therefore they must repent and humble themselves, that the wrath threatened might not be executed.

The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider that all the strange, dark, deep, and changeable providences that believers meet with shall further them in their way to heaven, in their journey to happiness. Divine wisdom and love will so order all things here below that they shall work for the real, internal, and eternal good of them that love him (Romans 8:28). All the rugged providences that David met with did contribute to the bringing of him to the throne; and all the rugged providences that Daniel and the three children met with did contribute to their great advancement. So all the rugged providences that believers meet with, they shall all contribute to the lifting up of their souls above all things below God. As the waters lifted up Noah's ark nearer heaven, and as all the stones that were about Stephen's ears did but knock him the closer to Christ, the cornerstone, so all the strange, rugged providences that we meet with, they shall raise us nearer heaven, and knock us nearer to Christ, that precious cornerstone.

Device 4: Suggesting that their graces are not true graces

The fourth device that Satan has to keep the soul in a sad, doubting, and questioning condition is by suggesting to them that their graces are not true, but counterfeit. Says Satan, "All is not gold that glisters; all is not grace that you count grace, that you call grace. That which you call faith is but a fancy; and that which you call zeal is but unnatural heat and passion; and that light you have, it is but common; it is short to what many have attained to that are now in hell." Satan does not labor more mightily to persuade hypocrites that their graces are true when they are counterfeit than he does to persuade precious souls that their graces are counterfeit when indeed they are true, and such as will abide the touchstone of Christ.

Now the remedies against this device of Satan are these that follow.

The first remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider that grace is taken two ways.

First, it is taken for the gracious goodwill and favor of God, whereby he is pleased, of his own free love, to accept of some in Christ for his own. This some call the first grace, because it is the fountain of all other graces, and the spring from whence they flow; and it is therefore called grace because it makes a man gracious with God. But this is only in God.

Secondly, grace is taken for the gifts of grace, and they are of two sorts, common or special. Some are common to believers and hypocrites, as a gift of knowledge, a gift of prayer. Some are special graces, and they are proper and peculiar to the saints, as faith, humility, meekness, love, patience (Galatians 5:22-23).

The second remedy against this device of Satan is wisely to consider the differences betwixt renewing grace and restraining grace, betwixt sanctifying grace and temporary grace. And this I shall show you in these following particulars.

1. True grace makes all glorious within and without. "The king's daughter is all glorious within: her raiment is of wrought gold" (Psalm 45:13). True grace makes the understanding glorious, the will glorious, the affections glorious; it casts a general glory upon all the noble parts of the soul. "The king's daughter is all glorious within"; and as it makes the inside glorious, so it makes the outside glorious: "her clothing is of wrought gold." It makes men look gloriously, and speak gloriously, and walk and act gloriously; so that vain souls shall be forced to say that these are they that have seen Jesus (Acts 4:8-15). As grace is a fire to burn up and consume the dross and filth of the soul, so it is an ornament to beautify and adorn the soul. True grace makes all new, the inside new and the outside new: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" (2 Corinthians 5:17). But temporary grace does not this. True grace changes the very nature of a man; moral virtue does only restrain or chain up the outward man; it does not change the whole man. A lion in a grate is a lion still; he is restrained, but not changed, for he retains his lionlike nature still. So temporary graces restrain many men from this and that wickedness, but it does not change and turn their hearts from wickedness. But now true grace, that turns a lion into a lamb, as you may see in Paul (Acts 9), and a notorious strumpet into a blessed and glorious penitent, as you may see in Mary Magdalene (Luke 7).

2. The objects of true grace are supernatural. True grace is conversant about the choicest and the highest objects, about the most soul-ennobling and soul-greatening objects, as

God, Christ, precious promises that are more worth than a world, and a kingdom that shakes not, a crown of glory that withers not, and heavenly treasures that rust not. The objects of temporary grace are low and poor, and always within the compass of reason's reach.

3. True grace enables a Christian (when he is himself) to do spiritual actions with real pleasure and delight. To souls truly gracious, Christ's "yoke is easy, and his burden is light"; his "commandments are not grievous," but joyous (Matthew 11:30; 1 John 5:3). "I delight in the law of God after the inward man," says Paul (Romans 7:22). The blessed man is described by this, "that he delights in the law of the Lord" (Psalm 1:2). "It is joy to the just to do judgment," says Solomon (Proverbs 21:15). To a gracious soul "all the ways of the Lord are pleasantness, and his paths are peace" (Proverbs 3:17). But to souls that have but temporary grace, but moral virtues, religious services are a toil, not a pleasure; a burden, and not a delight. "Wherefore have we fasted," say they, "and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our souls, and thou takest no knowledge?" (Isaiah 58:3). "Ye have said," say those in Malachi, "It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinances, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts?" (Malachi 3:14). "When will the new moon be gone," say those in Amos, "that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit?" (Amos 8:5).

4. True grace makes a man most careful and most fearful of his own heart. It makes him most studious about his own heart, informing that, examining that, and watching over that. But temporary grace, moral virtues, make men more mindful and careful of others, to instruct them, and counsel them, and stir up them, and watch over them; which does with open mouth demonstrate that their graces are not saving and peculiar to saints, but that they are temporary, and no more than what Judas, Demas, and the Pharisees had.

5. Grace will work a man's heart to love and cleave to the strictest and holiest ways and things of God, for their purity and sanctity, in the face of all dangers and hardships. "Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it" (Psalm 119:140). Others love it, and like it, and follow it, for the credit, the honor, the advantage that they get by it; but I love it for the spiritual beauty and purity of it. So the psalmist: "All this is come upon us; yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant. Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way; though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadows of death" (Psalm 44:17-19). But temporary grace, that will not bear up the soul against all oppositions and

discouragements in the ways of God, as is clear by their apostasy in the sixth of John (John 6:66), and by the stony ground's falling away (Matthew 13:20-21).

6. True grace will enable a man to step over the world's crown to take up Christ's cross; to prefer the cross of Christ above the glory and bravery of this world. It enabled Abraham, and Moses, and Daniel, with those other worthies in the eleventh of the Hebrews, to do so (Hebrews 11).

Godfrey of Bouillon, first king of Jerusalem, refused to be crowned with a crown of gold, saying that it became not a Christian to wear a crown of gold where Christ had worn a crown of thorns. Oh, but temporary grace cannot work the soul to prefer Christ's cross above the world's crown; but when these two meet, a temporary Christian steps over Christ's cross to take up and keep up the world's crown. "Demas hath forsaken us, to embrace this present world" (2 Timothy 4:10). So the young man in the gospel had many good things in him; he bid fair for heaven, and came near to heaven; but when Christ set his cross before him, he steps over that to enjoy the world's crown. When Christ bid him "go and sell all that he had, and give to the poor," "he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions" (Matthew 19:21-22). If heaven be to be had upon no other terms, Christ may keep his heaven to himself; he'll have none.

Then in the seventh place, consider this, that sanctifying grace, renewing grace, puts the soul upon spiritual duties from spiritual and intrinsical motives: as from the sense of divine love, that does constrain the soul to wait on God and to act for God; and the sense of the excellency and sweetness of communion with God; and the choice and precious discoveries that the soul has formerly had of the beauty and glory of God while it has been in the service of God. The good looks, the good words, the blessed love letters, the glorious kisses, and the sweet embraces that gracious souls have had from Christ in his service do provoke and move them to wait upon him in holy duties. Ah, but restraining grace, temporal grace, that puts men upon religious duties only from external motives, as the ear of the creature, the eye of the creature, the rewards of the creature, and the keeping up of a name amongst the creatures, and a thousand suchlike considerations, as you may see in Saul, Jehu, Judas, Demas, and the scribes and Pharisees.

The abbot in Melanchthon lived strictly, and walked demurely, and looked humbly, so long as he was but a monk; but when by his seeming extraordinary sanctity he got to be abbot, he grew intolerable proud and insolent; and being asked the reason of it, confessed that his former lowly look was but to see if he could find the keys of the abbey. Such poor, low, vain motives work temporary souls to all the service they do perform.

8. Saving grace, renewing grace, will cause a man to follow the Lord fully, in the desertion of all sin, and in the observation of all God's precepts. Joshua and Caleb followed the Lord fully (Numbers 14:24). Zacharias and Elizabeth were "righteous before God, and walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless" (Luke 1:6). The saints in the Revelation are described by this, that they "follow the Lamb wheresoever he goes" (Revelation 14:4). But restraining grace, temporary grace, cannot enable a man to follow the Lord fully. All that temporary grace can enable a man to do is to follow the Lord partially, unevenly, and haltingly, as you may see in Jehu, Herod, Judas, and the scribes and Pharisees, who paid tithe of mint and anise and cummin, but omitted the weighty matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith (Matthew 23:23).

True grace works the heart to the hatred of all sin, and to the love of all truth. It works a man to the hatred of those sins that for his blood he cannot conquer, and to loathe those sins that he would give all the world to overcome; so that a soul truly gracious can say, "Though there be no one sin mortified and subdued in me as it should and as I would, yet every sin is hated and loathed by me." So a soul truly gracious can say, "Though I do not obey any one command as I should and as I would, yet every word is sweet, every command of God is precious. [I] dearly prize and greatly love those commands that I cannot obey. Though there be many commands that I cannot in a strict sense fulfill, yet there is no command I would not fulfill, that I do not exceedingly love." "I love thy commandments above gold, above fine gold" (Psalm 119:127). "My soul hath kept thy testimonies; and I love them exceedingly" (Psalm 119:167).

9. True grace leads the soul to rest in Christ as in his *summum bonum*, chiefest good. It works the soul to center in Christ as in his highest and ultimate end. "Whither should we go? thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6:68). "My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest of ten thousand" (Song of Solomon 5:10). "I found him whom my soul loved: I held him, and would not let him go" (Song of Solomon 3:4).

That wisdom a believer has from Christ, it leads him to center in the wisdom of Christ; and that love the soul has from Christ, it leads the soul to center in the love of Christ; and that righteousness the soul has from Christ, it leads the soul to rest and center in the righteousness of Christ (1 Corinthians 1:30; Philippians 3:9). True grace is a beam of Christ, and where it is, it will naturally lead the soul to rest in Christ. The stream does not more naturally lead to the fountain, nor the effect to the cause, than true grace leads the soul to Christ. But restraining grace, temporary grace, works the soul to center and rest in things below Christ. Sometimes it works the soul to center in the praises of the creature, sometimes to

rest in the rewards of the creature. "Verily they have their reward," says Christ (Matthew 6:1-2; Zechariah 7:5-6); and so in a hundred other things.

10. True grace will enable a soul to sit down satisfied and contented with the naked enjoyments of Christ. The enjoyment of Christ without honor will satisfy the soul; the enjoyment of Christ without riches, the enjoyments of Christ without pleasures, and without the smiles of creatures, will content and satisfy the soul. "It is enough; Joseph is alive" (Genesis 45:28). So says a gracious soul: "Though honor is not, and riches are not, and health is not, and friends are not, it is enough that Christ is, that he reigns, conquers, and triumphs." Christ is the pot of manna, the cruse of oil, a bottomless ocean of all comfort, content, and satisfaction. He that has him wants nothing; he that wants him enjoys nothing. "Having nothing," says Paul, "and yet possessing all things" (2 Corinthians 6:10).

Oh, but a man that has but temporary grace, that has but restraining grace, cannot sit down satisfied and contented under the want of outward comforts. "Christ is good with honors," says such a soul, "and Christ is good with riches, and Christ is good with pleasures, and he is good with such and such outward contents. I must have Christ and the world, or else, with the young man in the gospel, in spite of my soul, I shall forsake Christ to follow the world." Ah! How many shining professors are there in the world that cannot sit down satisfied and contented under the want of this or that outward comfort and content, but are like bedlams, fretting and vexing, raging and madding, as if there were no God, no heaven, no hell, nor no Christ to make up all such outward wants to souls!

Ay, but a soul truly gracious can say, "In having nothing, I have all things, because I have Christ. Having therefore all things in him, I seek no other reward, for he is the universal reward." Such a soul can say, "Nothing is sweet to me without the enjoyment of Christ in it. Honors, nor riches, nor the smiles of creatures are not sweet to me no further than I see Christ and taste Christ in them. The confluence of all outward good cannot make a heaven of glory in my soul if Christ, who is the top of my glory, be absent." As Absalom said, "What is all this to me, so long as I cannot see the king's face?" (2 Samuel 14:32), so says the soul: "What do you tell me of this and that outward comfort, when I cannot see his face whom my soul loves? Why, my honor is not my Christ, nor riches is not Christ, nor the favor of the creature is not Christ. Let me have him, and let the men of this world take the world and divide it amongst themselves. I prize my Christ above all; I would enjoy my Christ before all other things in the world. His presence will make up the absence of all other comforts, and his absence will darken and embitter all my comforts; so that my comforts will neither

taste like comforts, nor look like comforts, nor warm like comforts, when he that should comfort my soul stands afar off" (Lamentations 1:16).

Christ is all, and in all, to souls truly gracious. We have all things in Christ, and Christ is all things to a Christian. If we be sick, he is a physician; if we thirst, he is a fountain; if our sins trouble us, he is righteousness; if we stand in need of help, he is mighty to save; if we fear death, he is life; if we be in darkness, he is light; if we be weak, he is strength; if we be in poverty, he is plenty; if we desire heaven, he is the way. The soul cannot say, "This I would have, and that I would have"; but says Christ, "It is in me, it is in me, eminently, perfectly, eternally."

Device 5: Suggesting that their inner conflict is no more than a hypocrite's

The fifth device that Satan has to keep souls in a sad, doubting, and questioning condition is by suggesting to them that that conflict that is in them is not a conflict that is only in saints, but such a conflict that is to be found in hypocrites and profane souls; when the truth is, there is as much difference betwixt the conflict that is in them and that which is in wicked men as there is betwixt light and darkness, betwixt heaven and hell. And the truth of this I shall evidence to you in the following particulars.

1. The whole frame of a believer's soul is against sin: understanding, will, and affections, all the powers and faculties of the soul, are in arms against sin. A covetous man may condemn covetousness, and yet the frame and bent of his heart may be to it. A proud person may condemn pride, and yet the frame of his spirit may be to it. And the drunkard may condemn drunkenness, and yet the frame of his spirit may be to it. A man may condemn stealing and lying, and yet the frame of his heart may be to it. "Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonorest thou God?" (Romans 2:21-23). But a saint's will is against it: "The evil that I would not do, I do"; and his affections are against it: "What I hate, I do" (Romans 7:19, 15).
2. A saint conflicts against sin universally: the least as well as the greatest; the most profitable and the most pleasing sin, as well as against those that are less pleasing and profitable. He will combat with all, though he cannot conquer one as he should and as he would. He knows that all sin strikes at God's holiness as well as his own happiness, at God's glory as well as at his soul's comfort and peace.

He knows that all sin is hateful to God, and that all sins are traitors to the crown and dignity of the Lord Jesus. He looks upon one sin, and sees that that threw down Noah, the most righteous man in the world; and he looks upon another sin, and sees that that cast down Abraham, the greatest believer in the world; and he looks upon another sin, and sees that that threw down David, the best king in the world; and he looks upon another sin, and sees that that cast down Paul, the greatest apostle in the world. He sees that one sin threw down Samson, the strongest man in the world; another cast down Solomon, the wisest man in the world; and another Moses, the meekest man in the world; and another sin cast down Job, the patientest man in the world. And this raises a holy indignation in his soul against all, so that nothing can satisfy and content his soul but a destruction of all those lusts and vermin that vex and rack his righteous heart. It will not satisfy a gracious soul to see justice done upon one sin, but he cries out for justice upon all. He would not have some crucified and others spared, but cries out, "Lord, crucify them all, crucify them all!"

Oh, but now the conflict that is in wicked men is partial. They frown upon one sin and smile upon another; they strike at some sins, but stroke others; they thrust some out of doors, but keep others close in their bosoms, as you may see in Jehu, Herod, Judas, Simon Magus, and Demas. Wicked men strike at gross sins, such as are not only against the law of God, but against the laws of nature and nations; but make nothing of less sins, as vain thoughts, idle words, sinful motions, petty oaths (John 3:20). They fight against those sins that fight against their honor, profits, pleasures; but make truce with those that are as right hands and as right eyes to them.

3. The conflict that is in a saint against sin is maintained by spiritual arguments: by arguments drawn from the love of God, the honor of God, the sweetness of communion with God, and from the spiritual and heavenly blessings and privileges that are conferred upon them by God; and from arguments drawn from the blood of Christ, the glory of Christ, the eye of Christ, the kisses of Christ, and the intercession of Christ; and from arguments drawn from the earnest of the Spirit, the seal of the Spirit, the witness of the Spirit, the comforts of the Spirit. Oh, but the conflict that is in wicked men is from low, carnal, and legal arguments, drawn from the eye, ear, or hand of the creature, or drawn from shame, hell, curses of the law.

4. The conflict that is in saints is a constant conflict. Though sin and grace were not born in the heart of a saint together, and though they shall not die together, yet while a believer lives they must conflict together. Paul had been about fourteen years converted when he cried out, "I have a law in my members rebelling against the law of my mind, and leading me captive to the law of sin" (Romans 7:23).

Pietro Candiano, one of the dukes of Venice, died fighting against the Narentines with the weapons in his hands. So a saint lives fighting and dies fighting; he stands fighting and falls fighting, with his spiritual weapons in his hands. But the conflict that is in wicked men is inconstant. Now they fall out with sin, and anon they fall in with sin; now it is bitter, anon it is sweet. Now the sinner turns from his sin, and anon he turns to the wallowing in sin, as the swine does to the wallowing in the mire (2 Peter 2:19-22). One hour you shall have him praying against sin as if he feared it more than hell, and the next hour you shall have him pursuing after sin as if there were no God to punish him, no justice to damn him, no hell to torment him.

5. The conflict that is in the saints is in the same faculties: there is the judgment against the judgment, the mind against the mind, the will against the will, the affections against the affections; that is, the regenerate part against the unregenerate part, in all the parts of the soul. But now in wicked men the conflict is not in the same faculties, but between the conscience and the will. The will of a sinner is bent strongly to such and such sins; but conscience puts in, and tells the sinner, "God has made me his deputy; he has given me a power to hang and draw, to examine, scourge, judge, and condemn; and if you do such and such wickedness, I shall be your jailer and your tormentor. I do not bear the rod nor the sword in vain," says conscience. "If you sin, I shall do my office, and then your life will be a hell." And this raises a tumult in the soul.

6. The conflict that is in the saints is a more blessed, successful, and prevailing conflict. A saint by his conflict with sin gains ground upon his sin. "They that are Christ's," says the apostle, "have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Galatians 5:24). Christ puts to his hand, and helps them to lead captivity captive, and to set their feet upon the necks of those lusts that have formerly trampled upon their souls and their comforts. As the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker, and the house of David grew stronger and stronger, so the Lord, by the discoveries of his love and by the influences of his Spirit, he causes grace, the noble part of a saint, to grow stronger and stronger, and corruption, like the house of Saul, to grow weaker and weaker. But sin in a wicked heart gets ground, and grows stronger and stronger. Notwithstanding all his conflicts, his heart is more encouraged, emboldened, and hardened in a way of sin, as you may see in the Israelites, Pharaoh, Jehu, and Judas, who doubtless found many strange conflicts, tumults, and mutinies in their souls when God spoke such bitter things against them, and did such justice upon them.

But remember this by way of caution: though Christ has given sin its death's wound (by his power, Spirit, death, and resurrection), yet it will die but a lingering death. As a man that is

mortally wounded dies by little and little, so does sin in the heart of a saint. The death of Christ on the cross was a lingering death; so the death of sin in the soul is a lingering death. Now it dies a little, and anon it dies a little; as the psalmist speaks, "Slay them not, lest my people forget: scatter them by thy power; and bring them down, O Lord our shield" (Psalm 59:11). He would not have them utterly destroyed, but some relics preserved as a memorial. So God deals in respect of sin. It is wounded and brought down, but not wholly slain; something is still left as a monument of the divine grace, and to keep us humble, wakeful, and watchful, and that our armor may be still kept on, and our weapons always in our hands.

The best men's souls in this life hangs between the flesh and the spirit, as it were, like Mahomet's tomb at Aleppo between two loadstones; like Erasmus, as the papists paint him, betwixt heaven and hell; like the tribe of Manasseh, half on this side Jordan in the land of the Amorites, and half on that side in the Holy Land. Yet in the issue they shall overcome the flesh, and trample upon the necks of their spiritual enemies.

Device 6: Suggesting that lost joy means a bad state

The sixth device that Satan has to keep a poor soul in a sad, doubting, and questioning condition is by suggesting to the soul that surely his estate is not good, because he cannot joy and rejoice in Christ as once he could, because he has lost that comfort and joy that once was in his spirit. Says Satan, "You know the time was when your heart was much carried out to joying and rejoicing in Christ. You do not forget the time when your heart used to be full of joy and comfort; but now how are you fallen in your joys and comforts! Therefore your estate is not good; you do but deceive yourself to think that ever it was good; for surely if it had, your joy and comfort would have continued." And hereupon the soul is apt to take part with Satan, and say, "It is even so; I see all is naught, and I have but deceived my own soul."

Now the remedies against this device of Satan are these that follow.

The first remedy against this device of Satan is to consider that the loss of comfort is a separable adjunct from grace. The soul may be full of holy affections when it is empty of divine consolations. There may be, and often is, true grace, yea, much grace, where there is not a drop of comfort nor a dram of joy (Psalm 63:1-2, 8; Isaiah 50:7, 10; Micah 7:8-9; Psalm 42:5). Comfort is not of the being, but of the well-being, of a Christian. God has not so linked these two choice lovers together but that they may be put asunder. That wisdom that is from above will never work a man to reason thus: "I have no comfort, therefore I have no grace; I have lost that joy that once I had, therefore my condition is not good, was never good." But

it will enable a man to reason thus: "Though my comfort is gone, yet the God of my comfort abides; though my joy is lost, yet the seeds of grace remain." The best men's joys are as glass, bright and brittle, and evermore in danger of breaking.

The second remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that the precious things that you still enjoy are far better than the joys and comforts that you have lost. Your union with Christ, your communion with Christ, your sonship, your saintship, your heirship, you still enjoy by Christ, is far better than the comforts you have lost by sin. What though your comforts be gone? Yet your union and communion with Christ remains. Though your comforts be gone, yet you are a son, though a comfortless son (Jeremiah 31:18-20); an heir, though a comfortless heir; a saint, though a comfortless saint. Though the bag of silver (your comforts) be lost, yet the box of jewels (your union with Christ, your communion with Christ, your sonship, your saintship, your heirship), which you still enjoy, is far better than the bag of silver you have lost. Yea, the least of those precious jewels is more worth than all the comforts in the world. Well, let this be a cordial to comfort you, a star to lead you, and a staff to support you, that your box of jewels are safe, though your bag of silver be lost.

The third remedy against this device of Satan is to consider that your condition is no other than what has been the condition of those precious souls whose names were written upon the heart of Christ, and who are now at rest in the bosom of Christ (Psalm 51:12; 30:6-7; Job 23:8-9; 30:31; Lamentations 1:16; Matthew 27:46). One day you shall have them praising and rejoicing, the next day a-mourning and weeping. One day you shall have them a-singing, "The Lord is our portion"; the next day a-sighing and expostulating with themselves, "Why are ye cast down, O our souls?" (Psalm 42:5). "Why is our harp turned to mourning, and our organ into the voice of them that weep?" (Lamentations 5:15; Job 30:31).

The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that the causes of joy and comfort are not always the same. Haply your former joy and comfort did spring from the witness of the Spirit, he bearing witness to your soul that your nature was changed, your sins pardoned, your soul reconciled. Now the Spirit may, upon some special occasion, bear witness to the soul that the heart of God is dearly set upon him, that he loves him with an everlasting love, and yet the soul may never enjoy such a testimony all the days of his life again. Though the Spirit be a witnessing Spirit, it is not his office every day to witness to believers their interest in God, Christ, heaven.

Or haply your former joy and comfort did spring from the newness and suddenness of the change of your condition. For a man in one hour to have his night turned into day, his dark-

ness turned into light, his bitter into sweet, God's frowns into smiles, his hatred into love, his hell into a heaven, must greatly joy and comfort him. It cannot but make his heart to leap and dance in him, who in one hour shall see Satan accusing him, his own heart condemning him, the eternal God frowning upon him, the gates of heaven barred against him, all the creation standing armed at the least beck of God to execute vengeance on him, and the mouth of the infernal pit open to receive him. Now in this hour, for Christ to come to the amazed soul and say to it, "I have trod the winepress of my Father's wrath for you; I have laid down my life a ransom for you; by my blood I have satisfied my Father's justice, and pacified his anger, and procured his love for you; by my blood I have purchased the pardon of your sins, your freedom from hell, and your right to heaven": oh, how wonderfully will this cause the soul to leap for joy!

The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is to consider that God will restore and make up the comforts of his people. Though your candle be put out, yet God will light it again, and make it burn more light than ever. Though your sun for the present be clouded, yet he that rides upon the clouds shall scatter those clouds, and cause the sun to shine and warm your heart as in former days. As the psalmist speaks, "Thou which hast showed me great and sore troubles shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth. Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side" (Psalm 71:20-21). God takes away a little comfort that he may make room in the soul for a greater degree of comfort. This the prophet Isaiah sweetly shows: "I have seen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners" (Isaiah 57:18). Bear up sweetly, O precious soul! Your storm shall end in a calm, and your dark night in a sunshine day. Your mourning shall be turned into rejoicing, and the waters of consolation shall be sweeter and higher in your soul than ever. The mercy is surely yours, but the time of giving it is the Lord's. Wait but a little, and you shall find the Lord comforting you on every side.

Device 7: Reminding them of their relapses into the same sin

The seventh device that Satan has to keep souls in a doubting and questioning condition is by suggesting to the soul his often relapses into the same sin, which formerly he has pursued with particular sorrow, grief, shame, and tears, and prayed, complained, and resolved against. Says Satan, "Your heart is not right with God; surely your estate is not good. You do but flatter yourself to think that ever God will eternally own and embrace such a one as you are, who complain against sin, and yet relapse into the same sin; who with tears and groans confess your sin, and yet ever and anon are fallen into the same sin."

I confess this is a very sad condition for a soul, after he has obtained mercy and pity from the Lord, after God has spoken peace and pardon to him, and wiped the tears from his eyes, and set him upon his legs, to return to folly. Ah! How do relapses lay men open to the greatest afflictions and worst temptations! How do they make the wound to bleed afresh! How do they darken and cloud former assurances and evidences for heaven! How do they put a sword into the hand of conscience to cut and slash the soul! They raise such fears, terrors, horrors, and doubts in the soul that the soul cannot be so frequent in duty as formerly, nor so fervent in duty as formerly, nor so confident in duty as formerly, nor so bold, familiar, and delightful with God in duty as formerly, nor so constant in duty as formerly. They give Satan an advantage to triumph over Christ; they make the work of repentance more difficult; they make a man's life a burden; and they render death to be very terrible unto the soul.

Now the remedies against this device of Satan are these that follow.

The first remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that there are many Scriptures that do clearly evidence a possibility of the saints' falling into the same sins whereof they have formerly repented. "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from them," says the Lord by the prophet Hosea (Hosea 14:4). So the prophet Jeremiah speaks: "Go and proclaim these words towards the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever. Turn, O backsliding Israel, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion" (Jeremiah 3:12, 14). So the psalmist: "They turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers: they were turned aside like a deceitful bow" (Psalm 78:57).

And no wonder; for though their repentance be never so sincere and sound, yet their graces are but weak, and their mortification imperfect, in this life. Though by grace they are freed from the dominion of sin, and from the damnatory power of every sin, and from the love of all sin, yet grace does not free them from the seed of any one sin; and therefore it is possible for a soul to fall again and again into the same sin. If the fire be not wholly put out, who would think it impossible that it should catch and burn again and again?

The second remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider that God has nowhere engaged himself by any particular promise that souls converted and united to Christ shall not fall again and again into the same sins after conversion. I cannot find in the whole book of God where he has promised any such strength or power against this or that

particular sin as that the soul shall be forever (in this life) put out of a possibility of falling again and again into the same sins; and where God has not a mouth to speak, I must not have a heart to believe. God will graciously pardon those sins to his people that he will not in this life effectually subdue in his people. I would go far to speak with that soul that can show a promise that when our sorrow and grief has been so great or so much for this or that sin, that then God will preserve us from ever falling into the same sin. The sight of such a promise would be as life from the dead to many a precious soul, who desires nothing more than to keep close to Christ, and fears nothing more than backsliding from Christ.

The third remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider that the most renowned and now crowned saints have, in the days of their being on earth, relapsed into one and the same sin. Lot was twice overcome with wine; John twice worshipped the angel; Abraham did often dissemble, and lay his wife open to adultery to save his own life, which some heathens would not have done. "And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said unto her, This is thy kindness which thou shalt show unto me; at every place whither we shall come, say of me, He is my brother" (Genesis 20:13; 12:13). David in his wrath was resolved, if ever man was, that he would be the death of Nabal and all his innocent family; and after this he fell into the foul murder of Uriah.

Though Christ told his disciples that his kingdom was not of this world, yet again, and again, and again, three several times, they would needs be on horseback; they would fain be high, great, and glorious in this world. Their pride and ambitious humor put them (that were but as so many beggars) upon striving for preeminence and greatness in the world, when their Lord and Master told them three several times of his sufferings in the world, and of his going out of the world. Jehoshaphat, though a godly man, yet "joins affinity with wicked Ahab"; and though he was saved by a miracle, yet soon after he falls into the same sin, and joins himself with "Ahaziah, king of Israel," who did very wickedly (2 Chronicles 18:1; 19:2; 20:35-37). Samson is by the Spirit of the Lord numbered among the faithful worthies (Hebrews 11:32), and yet he fell often into one gross sin, as is evident in the book of Judges. Peter, you know, relapsed often, and so did Jonah.

And this comes to pass that they may see their own inability to stand, to resist, or overcome any temptation or corruption; and that they may be taken off from all false confidences, and rest wholly upon God, and only upon God, and always upon God; and for the praise and honor of the power, wisdom, skill, mercy, and goodness of the physician of our souls, that can heal, help, and cure when the disease is most dangerous, when the soul is relapsed and grows worse and worse, and when others say there is no help for him in his God, and when his own heart and hopes are dying.

The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is to consider that there are relapses into enormities, and there are relapses into infirmities. Now it is not usual with God to leave his people frequently to relapse into enormities; for by his Spirit and grace, by his smiles and frowns, by his word and rod, he does usually preserve his people from a frequent relapsing into enormities. Yet he does leave his choicest ones frequently to relapse into infirmities (and of his grace he pardons them in course), as idle words, passion, vain thoughts. Though gracious souls strive against these, and complain of these, and weep over these, yet the Lord, to keep them humble, leaves them frequently to relapse into these; and these frequent relapses into infirmities shall never be their bane, because they are their burden.

The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is to consider that there are involuntary relapses, and there are voluntary relapses. Involuntary relapses are when the resolution and full bent of the heart is against sin; when the soul strives with all its might against sin, by sighs and groans, by prayers and tears, and yet out of weakness is forced to fall back into sin, because there is not spiritual strength enough to overcome. Now though involuntary relapses must humble us, yet they must never discourage nor deject us; for God will freely and readily pardon those in course. Voluntary relapses are when the soul longs and loves to return to the fleshpots of Egypt; when it is a pleasure and a pastime to a man to return to his old courses. Such voluntary relapses speak out the man blinded, hardened, and ripened for ruin.

The sixth remedy against this device of Satan is to consider that there is no such power or infinite virtue in the greatest horror or sorrow the soul can be under for sin, nor in the sweetest or choicest discoveries of God's grace and love to the soul, as forever to fence and secure the soul from relapsing into the same sin. Grace is but a created habit, that may be prevailed against by the secret, subtle, and strong workings of sin in our hearts; and those discoveries that God makes of his love, beauty, and glory to the soul do not always abide in their freshness and power upon the heart, but by degrees they fade and wear off, and then the soul may return again to folly.

As we see in Peter, who, after he had a glorious testimony from Christ's own mouth of his blessedness and happiness, labors to prevent Christ from going up to Jerusalem to suffer, out of base, slavish fears that he and his fellows could not be secure if his Master should be brought to suffer (Matthew 16:15-23). And again, after this, Christ had him up into the mount, and there showed him his beauty and glory, to strengthen him against the hour of temptation that was a-coming upon him (Matthew 17:1-3); and yet soon after he had the honor and happiness of seeing the glory of the Lord (which most of the disciples had not), he basely and most shamefully denies the Lord of glory, thinking by that means to provide

for his own safety (Matthew 26:69-75). And yet again, after Christ had broken his heart with a look of love for his most unlovely dealings, and bade them that were first acquainted with his resurrection to go and tell Peter that he was risen; I say, after all this, slavish fears prevail upon him, and he basely dissembles, and plays the Jew with the Jews and the Gentile with the Gentiles, to the seducing of Barnabas (Galatians 2:11-13).

Yet by way of caution, know it is very rare that God does leave his beloved ones frequently to relapse into one and the same gross sin; for the law of nature is in arms against gross sins, as well as the law of grace; so that a gracious soul cannot, dares not, will not, frequently return to gross folly. And God has made even his dearest ones dearly smart for their relapses, as may be seen by his dealings with Samson, Jehoshaphat, and Peter. Ah, Lord! What a hard heart has that man that can see you stripping and whipping your dearest ones for their relapses, and yet make nothing of returning to folly!

Device 8: Persuading them that their state and graces are not sound

The eighth device that Satan has to keep souls in a doubting and questioning condition is by persuading them that their estate is not good, their hearts are not upright, their graces are not sound, because they are so followed, vexed, and tormented with temptations. It is his method first to vex and weary the soul with temptations, and then to tempt the soul that surely it is not beloved, because it is so much tempted. And by this stratagem he keeps many precious souls in a sad, doubting, and mourning temper many years, as many of the precious sons of Zion have found by woeful experience.

Now the remedies against this device of Satan are these that follow.

The first remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that those that have been best and most beloved have been most tempted by Satan. Though Satan can never rob a Christian of his crown, yet such is his malice that he will therefore tempt, that he may spoil them of their comforts. Such is his enmity to the Father, that the nearer and dearer any child is to him, the more will Satan trouble him and vex him with temptations. Christ himself was most near and most dear, most innocent and most excellent, and yet none so much tempted as Christ. David was dearly beloved, and yet by Satan tempted to number the people. Job was highly praised by God himself, and yet much tempted; witness those sad things that fell from his mouth when he was wet to the skin. Peter was much prized by Christ (witness that choice testimony that Christ gave of his faith and happiness, and his showing him his glory in the mount, and that eye of pity that he cast upon him after his fearful fall), and yet tempted by Satan. “And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan

hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail thee not" (Luke 22:31-32).

Paul had the honor of being exalted as high as heaven, and of seeing that glory that could not be expressed; and yet he was no sooner stepped out of heaven but he is buffeted by Satan, "lest he should be exalted above measure" (2 Corinthians 12:2, 7). If these that were so really, so gloriously, so eminently beloved of God; if these that have lived in heaven, and set their feet upon the stars, have been tempted, let no saints judge themselves not to be beloved because they are tempted.

It is as natural for saints to be tempted that are dearly beloved as it is for the sun to shine or a bird to sing. The eagle complains not of her wings, nor the peacock of his train, nor the nightingale of her voice, because these are natural to them; no more should saints of their temptations, because they are natural to them. "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).

The second remedy against this device of Satan is to consider that all the temptations that befall the saints shall be sanctified to them by a hand of love. Ah, the choice experiences that the saints get of the power of God supporting them; of the wisdom of God directing them (so to handle their spiritual weapons, their graces, as not only to resist, but to overcome); of the mercy and goodness of the Lord pardoning and succoring of them! And therefore says Paul, "I received the messenger of Satan for to buffet me, lest I should be exalted, lest I should be exalted above measure." It is twice in that verse; he begins with it, and ends with it. If he had not been buffeted, who knows how his heart would have swelled? He might have been carried higher in conceit than before he was in his ecstasy.

The school of temptation is a choice school: a school wherein God gives his people the clearest and the sweetest discoveries of his love; a school wherein God teaches his people to be more frequent and fervent in duty (when Paul was buffeted, then he prayed thrice, that is, frequently and fervently); a school wherein God teaches his people to be more tender, meek, and compassionate to other poor tempted souls than ever; a school wherein God teaches his people to see a greater evil in sin than ever, and a greater emptiness in the creature than ever, and a greater need of Christ and free grace than ever; a school wherein God will teach his people that all temptations are but his goldsmiths, by which he will try and refine, and make his people more bright and glorious. The issue of all temptations shall be the good of the saints, as you may see by the temptations that Adam and Eve, and Christ, and David, and Job, and Peter, and Paul met with. Those hands of power and love that bring

light out of darkness, good out of evil, sweet out of bitter, life out of death, heaven out of hell, will bring much sweet and good to his people out of all the temptations that come upon them.

The third remedy against this device of Satan is wisely to consider that no temptations do hurt nor harm the saints so long as they are resisted by them, and prove the greatest affliction that can befall them. It is not Satan's tempting, but your assenting; not his enticing, but your yielding, that makes temptations hurtful to your souls. If the soul, when it is tempted, resists the temptation, and says with Christ, "Get thee behind me, Satan"; and with that young convert, "I am not the man that I was"; or as Luther counsels all men to answer all temptations with these words, *Christianus sum*, "I am a Christian"; if a man's temptations be his greatest affliction, then is the temptation no sin upon his soul, though it be a trouble upon his mind. When a soul can look the Lord in the face and say, "Ah, Lord! I have many outward troubles now upon me; I have lost such and such a near mercy, and such and such dear, desirable mercies; and yet you that know the heart, you know that all my crosses and losses do not make so many wounds in my soul, nor fetch so many sighs from my heart, nor tears from my eyes, as those temptations do that Satan follows my soul with"; when it is thus with the soul, then temptations are only the soul's trouble; they are not the soul's sin.

Satan is a malicious and envious enemy. As his names are, so is he; his names are all names of enmity: the accuser, the tempter, the destroyer, the devourer, the envious man. And this malice and envy of his he shows sometimes by tempting men to such sins as are quite contrary to the temperature of their bodies, as he did Vespasian and Julian, men of sweet and excellent natures, to be most bloody murderers. And sometimes he shows his malice by tempting men to such things as shall bring him no honor nor profit ("Fall down and worship me"): to blasphemy and atheism, the thoughts and first motions whereof cause the heart and the flesh to tremble. And sometimes he shows his malice by tempting them to those sins which they have not found their natures prone to, and which they abhor in others.

Now if the soul resists these, and complains of these, and groans and mourns under these, and looks up to the Lord Jesus to be delivered from these, then shall they not be put down to the soul's account, but to Satan's, who shall be so much the more tormented by how much the more the saints have been by him maliciously tempted.

Make present and peremptory resistance against Satan's temptations. Bid defiance to the temptation at first sight. It is safe to resist; it is dangerous to dispute. Eve lost herself and her posterity by falling into the lists of dispute, when she should have resisted, and stood

upon terms of defiance with Satan. He that would stand in the hour of temptation must plead with Christ, "It is written"; he that would triumph over temptations must plead still, "It is written." Satan is bold and impudent, and if you are not peremptory in your resistance, he will give you fresh onsets. It is your greatest honor and your highest wisdom peremptorily to withstand the beginnings of a temptation, for an after-remedy comes often too late.

Mistress Katherine Brettergh once, after a great conflict with Satan, said, "Reason not with me; I am but a weak woman. If thou hast anything to say, say it to my Christ. He is my advocate, my strength, and my redeemer, and he shall plead for me."

Men must not seek to resist Satan's craft with craft, *sed per apertum martem,* but by open defiance. He shoots with Satan in his own bow who thinks by disputing and reasoning to put him off. As soon as a temptation shows its face, say to the temptation, as Ephraim to his idols, "Get you hence; what have I any more to do with you?" (Hosea 14:8). Oh, say to the temptation, as David said to the sons of Zeruiah, "What have I to do with you?" (2 Samuel 16:10); you will be too hard for me. He that does thus resist temptations shall never be undone by temptation.

Make strong and constant resistance against Satan's temptations. Make resistance against temptations by arguments drawn from the honor of God, the love of God, your union and communion with God; and from the blood of Christ, the death of Christ, the kindness of Christ, the intercession of Christ, and the glory of Christ; and from the voice of the Spirit, the counsel of the Spirit, the comforts of the Spirit, the presence of the Spirit, the seal of the Spirit, the whisperings of the Spirit, the commands of the Spirit, the assistance of the Spirit, the witness of the Spirit; and from the glory of heaven, the excellency of grace, the beauty of holiness, the worth of the soul, and the vileness or bitterness, and evil of sin, the least sin being a greater evil than the greatest temptation in the world.

And look that you make constant resistance as well as strong resistance. Be constant in arms; Satan will come on with new temptations when old ones are too weak. In a calm, prepare for a storm. The tempter is restless, impudent, and subtle. He will suit his temptations to your constitutions and inclinations. Satan loves to sail with the wind. If your knowledge be weak, he will tempt you to error; if your consciences be tender, he will tempt you to scrupulosity and too much preciseness, as to do nothing but hear, pray, read; if your consciences be wide and large, he will tempt you to carnal security; if you are bold-spirited, he will tempt you to presumption; if timorous, to desperation; if flexible, to inconstancy; if proud and stiff, to gross folly. Therefore still fit for fresh assaults; make one victory a step to

another. When you have overcome a temptation, take heed of unbending your bow; and look well to it, that your bow be always bent, and that it remains in strength. When you have overcome one temptation, you must be ready to enter the lists with another. As distrust (in some sense) is the mother of safety, so security is the gate of danger. A man had need to fear this most of all, that he fears not all. If Satan be always a-roaring, we should be always a-watching and resisting of him. And certainly he that makes strong and constant resistance of Satan's temptations shall in the end get above his temptations, and for the present is secure enough from being ruined by his temptations.

For a close of this, remember that it is dangerous to yield to the least sin to be rid of the greatest temptation. To take this course were as if a man should think to wash himself clean in ink; or as if a man should exchange a light cross made of paper for an iron cross, which is heavy, toilsome, and bloody. The least sin set home upon the conscience will more wound, vex, and oppress the soul than all the temptations in the world can. Therefore never yield to the least sin to be rid of the greatest temptation. Sidonius Apollinaris relates how a certain man named Maximus, arriving at the top of honor by indirect means, was the first day very much wearied, and fetching a deep sigh, said, "O Damocles! How happy do I esteem thee, for having been a king but the space of a dinner! I have been one a whole day, and can bear it no longer." I will leave you to make the application.

PART 4

Devices Against All Sorts and Ranks of People

The fourth thing to be showed is the several ways and devices that Satan has to destroy and ensnare all sorts and ranks of men in the world.

I shall begin with the honorable and the great, and show you the devices that Satan has to destroy them. I will only instance in those that are most considerable.

Device 1: Against the great: making them seek greatness, riches, and security

His first device to destroy the great and honorable of the earth is by working them to make it their business to seek themselves: to seek how to greaten themselves, to raise themselves, to enrich themselves, to secure themselves; as you may see in Pharaoh, Ahab, Rehoboam, Jeroboam, Absalom, Joab, Haman. But were the Scripture silent, our own experiences do abundantly evidence this way and method of Satan to destroy the great and the honorable, to bury their names in the dust and their souls in hell, by drawing them wholly to mind themselves, and only to mind themselves, and in all things to mind themselves, and always to mind themselves. All, says the apostle, mind themselves (Philippians 2:21); all comparatively, in respect of the paucity of others that let fall their private interests, and drown all self-respects in the glory of God and the public good.

Now the remedies against this device of Satan are these that follow.

The first remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that self-seeking is a sin that will put men upon a world of sin; upon sins not only against the law of God and the rules of the gospel, but that are against the very laws of nature, that are so much darkened by the fall of man. It put the Pharisees upon opposing Christ, and Judas upon betraying Christ, and Pilate upon condemning Christ. It put Gehazi upon lying, and Balaam upon cursing, and Saul and Absalom upon plotting David's ruin. It put Pharaoh and Haman upon contriving ways to destroy those Jews that God did purpose to save by his mighty arm. It puts men upon using wicked balances and the bag of deceitful weights. It puts men upon ways of oppression, and selling "the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes" (Amos 2:6). I know not any sin in the world but this sin of self-seeking will put men upon it, though it be their eternal loss.

The second remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider that self-seeking does exceedingly abase a man. It strips him of all his royalty and glory. Of a lord, it makes a man become a servant to the creature, ay, often to the worst of creatures; yea, a slave to slaves, as you may see in Judas, Demas, Balaam, and the scribes and Pharisees. Self-seekers bow down to the creatures, as Gideon's many thousands bowed down to the waters (Judges 7:6). Self-seeking will make a man say anything, do anything, and be anything, to please the lusts of others, and to get advantages upon others. Self-seeking transforms a man into all shapes and forms. Now it makes a man appear as an angel of light, anon as an angel of darkness. Now self-seekers are seemingly for God, anon they are openly against God. Now you shall have them crying, "Hosanna in the highest," and anon, "Crucify him, crucify him." Now you shall have them build with the saints, and anon you shall have them plotting the overthrow of the saints, as those self-seekers did in Ezra's and Nehemiah's time. Self-seekers are the basest of all persons; there is no service so base, so poor, so low, but they will bow to it. They cannot look neither above nor beyond their own lusts and the enjoyment of the creature; these are the prime and ultimate objects of their intendments (Romans 1:25).

It is said of Tiberius that while Augustus ruled, he was no ways tainted in his reputation; and that while Drusus and Germanicus were alive, he feigned those virtues which he had not, to maintain a good opinion of himself in the hearts of the people; but after he had got himself out of the reach of contradiction and controlment, there was no fact in which he was not faulty, no crime to which he was not accessory. My prayer shall be that Tiberius's spirit may not be found in any of our rulers, lest it prove their ruin as it did his; and that wherever it is, it may be detected, loathed, and ejected, that so neither the state nor souls may be ruined by it.

The third remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to dwell upon those dreadful curses and woes that are from heaven denounced against self-seekers. "Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth!" (Isaiah 5:8). So Habakkuk: "Woe to him that increaseth that which is not his, and to him that ladeth himself with thick clay! Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil! Thou hast consulted shame to thy house by cutting off many people, and hast sinned against thy soul. For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it. Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood, and stablisheth a city by iniquity!" (Habakkuk 2:6, 9-12).

The materials of the house built up by oppression shall come as joint witnesses. The stones of the wall shall cry, "Lord, we were built up by blood and violence"; and the beam shall an-

swer, "True, Lord, even so it is." The stones shall cry, "Vengeance, Lord, upon these self-seekers"; and the beam shall answer, "Woe to him, because he built his house with blood."

So Isaiah: "Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed; to turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless!" (Isaiah 10:1-2). So Amos: "Woe unto them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, which are named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came! That put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near; that lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall; that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: but they are not grieved for the afflictions of Joseph" (Amos 6:1, 3-4, 6). So Micah: "Woe to them that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practice it, because it is in the power of their hand. And they covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away: so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage" (Micah 2:1-2).

By these Scriptures you see that self-seekers labor like a woman in travail, but their birth proves their death; their pleasure, their pain; their comfort, their torment; their glory, their shame; their exaltation, their desolation. Loss, disgrace, trouble, and shame, vexation and confusion, will be the certain portion of self-seekers. When the Tartarians had taken in battle the duke of Muscovy, they made a cup of his skull, with this inscription: "All covet, all lose."

The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that self-seekers are self-losers and self-destroyers. Absalom and Judas seek themselves, and hang themselves. Saul seeks himself, and kills himself. Ahab seeks himself, and loses himself, his crown and kingdom. Pharaoh seeks himself, and overthrows himself and his mighty army in the Red Sea. Cain sought himself, and slew two at once, his brother and his own soul. Gehazi sought change of raiment, but God changed his raiment into a leprous skin. Haman sought himself, and lost himself. The princes and the presidents sought themselves (in the ruin of Daniel), but ruined themselves, their wives and children. That which self-seekers think should be a staff to support them becomes (by the hand of justice) an iron rod to break them. That which they would have as springs to refresh them becomes a gulf utterly to consume them. The crosses of self-seekers shall always exceed their mercies; their pain, their pleasure; their torments, their comforts. Every self-seeker is a self-tormentor, a self-destroyer; he carries a hell, an executioner, in his own bosom.

The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is to dwell much upon the famous examples of those worthy saints that have denied themselves, and preferred the public good before their own particular advantage; as Moses: "And the Lord said unto Moses, Let me alone, that I may destroy them, and blot out their name from under heaven: and I will make of thee a nation mightier and greater than they" (Deuteronomy 9:14). Oh, but this offer would not take with Moses. He, being a man of a brave public spirit, is hot in his desires and prayers that the people might be spared and pardoned. Says he, "Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt until now. And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word" (Numbers 14:19-20).

Should God make such an offer to many that write themselves Moses, and are called by many Moses, I am afraid they would prefer their own advantage above the public good. They would not care what became of the people, so they and theirs might be made great and glorious in the world. They would not care, so they might have a Babel built for them, though it was upon the ashes and ruin of the people. Baser spirits than these are not in hell, no, not in hell; and I am sure there are no such spirits in heaven. Such men's hearts and principles must be changed, or they will be undone forever.

Nehemiah was a choice soul, a man of a brave public spirit, a man that spent his time, his strength, and his estate for the good and ease of his people. "Moreover," says he, "from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year even unto the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that is, twelve years, I and my brethren have not eaten the bread of the governor. Yea, also I continued in the work of this wall, neither bought we any land: and all my servants were gathered thither unto the work. Moreover there were at my table a hundred and fifty of the Jews and rulers, besides those that came unto us from among the heathen that are about us. Now that which was prepared for me daily was one ox and six choice sheep; also fowls were prepared for me, and once in ten days store of all sorts of wine: yet for all this required not I the bread of the governor, because the bondage was heavy upon the people. Think upon me, my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people" (Nehemiah 5:14, 16-19).

So Daniel was a man of a brave public spirit. "Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find no occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him. Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God" (Daniel 6:4-5).

Christ had a public spirit; he laid out himself, and laid down himself, for a public good. Oh, never leave looking and meditating upon these precious and sweet examples, till your souls are quickened and raised up to act for the public good more than for your own particular advantage. Many heathens have been excellent at this. Macrobius writes of Augustus Caesar (in whose time Christ was born) that he carried such an entire and fatherly affection to the commonwealth that he called it *filiam suam*, his own daughter; and therefore refused to be called *Dominus*, the lord or master of his country, and would only be called *pater patriae*, father of his country, because he governed it not by fear, *per timorem sed per amorem*, but by love; the senate and the people of Rome jointly saluting him by the name of *pater patriae*, father of his country. The people very much lamented his death, using that speech, "Would he had never been born, or never died!" So Marcus Regulus, to save his country from ruin, exposed himself to the greatest sufferings that the malice and rage of his enemies could inflict. So Titus and Aristides, and many others, have been famous for their preferring the public good above their own advantage.

My prayer is, and shall be, that all our rulers may be so spirited by God that they may be willing to be anything, to be nothing, to deny themselves, and to trample their sinful selves under feet, in order to the honor of God and a public good; that so neither saints nor heathens may be witnesses against them in that day wherein the hearts and practices of all the rulers in the world shall be open and bare before him that shall judge the world in righteousness and judgment.

The sixth remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider that self is a great let to divine things. Therefore the prophets and apostles were usually carried out of themselves when they had the clearest, choicest, highest, and most glorious visions. Self-seeking blinds the soul, that it cannot see a beauty in Christ nor an excellency in holiness. It distempers the palate, that a man cannot taste sweetness in the word of God, nor in the ways of God, nor in the society of the people of God. It shuts the hand against all the soul-enriching offers of Christ; it hardens the heart against all the knocks and entreaties of Christ; it makes the soul as an empty vine and as a barren wilderness. "Israel is an empty vine, he brings forth fruit to himself" (Hosea 10:1). There is nothing that speaks a man to be more empty and void of God, Christ, and grace than self-seeking. The Pharisees were great self-seekers, and great undervaluers of Christ, his word and Spirit.

There is not a greater hindrance to all the duties of piety than self-seeking. Oh, this is that that keeps many a soul from looking after God and the precious things of eternity! They cannot wait on God, nor act for God, nor abide in those ways wherein they might meet with God, by reason of self. Self-seeking is that which puts many a man upon neglecting and

slighting the things of his peace. Self-seekers will neither go into heaven themselves, nor suffer others to enter that are ready to take the kingdom by violence, as you may see in the scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 23:13).

Oh, but a gracious spirit is acted quite otherwise, as you may see in that sweet Scripture: "At our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved" (Song of Solomon 7:13). All the church has and is, is only for him. Let others bear fruit to themselves, and lay up for themselves; gracious spirits will hide for Christ, and lay up for Christ. All the divine endeavors and productions of saints fall into God's bosom, and empty themselves into his lap. As Christ lays up his merits for them, his graces for them, his comforts for them, his crown for them, so they lay up all their fruits, and all their loves, all their graces, and all their experience, and all their services, only for him who is the soul of their comforts, and the crown and top of all their royalty and glory.

Device 2: Against the great: setting them against the people of God

The second device that Satan has to ensnare and destroy the great and honorable of the earth is by engaging them against the people of the Most High, against those that are his jewels, his pleasant portion, the delight of his eye, and the joy of his heart. Thus he drew Pharaoh to engage against the children of Israel, and that was his overthrow (Exodus 14). So he engaged Haman against the Jews, and so brought him to hang upon that gallows that he had made for Mordecai. So he engaged those princes and presidents against Daniel, which was the utter ruin of them and their relations (Daniel 6). So in Revelation 20:7-9: "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison. And he shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: whose number is as the sand of the sea. And they went up upon the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and consumed them."

Now the remedies against this device of Satan are these that follow.

The first remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that none have engaged against the saints but have been ruined by the God of saints. Divine justice has been too hard for all that have opposed and engaged against the saints, as is evident in Saul, Pharaoh, Haman. "He reproved kings for their sakes; saying, Touch not mine anointed, nor do my prophets no harm" (Psalm 105:14-15). When men of Balaam's spirit and principles have been engaged against the saints, how has the angel of the Lord met them in the way, and jostled their bones against the wall! How has he broken their backs and necks, and by

his drawn sword cut them off in the prime of their days, and in the height of their sins! Ah! What a harvest has hell had in our days of those who have engaged against the Lamb, and those that are called, chosen, and faithful! Ah, how has divine justice poured out their blood as water upon the ground! How has he laid their honor and glory in the dust, who in the pride and madness of their hearts said, as Pharaoh, "We will pursue, we will overtake, we will divide the spoil; our lusts shall be satisfied upon them; we will draw our sword, our hand shall destroy them" (Exodus 15:9). In the things wherein they have spoken and done proudly, justice has been above them (Exodus 18:11). History abounds in nothing more than in instances of this kind.

The second remedy against this device of Satan is to dwell some time every morning upon these following Scriptures, wherein God has engaged himself to stand by his people and for his people, and to make them victorious over the greatest and wisest of their enemies. "Associate yourselves," says the Lord by the prophet, "O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces. Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God is with us" (Isaiah 8:9-10). "Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff. Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them: and thou shalt rejoice in the Lord, and shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel" (Isaiah 41:14-16). "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord" (Isaiah 54:17).

"Now also many nations are gathered together against thee, that say, Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion. But they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they his counsel: for he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor. Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion: for I will make thy horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass: and thou shalt beat in pieces many people: and I will consecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth" (Micah 4:11-13). "Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it" (Zechariah 12:2-3).

The third remedy against this device of Satan is to consider that you cannot engage against the saints but you must engage against God himself, by reason of that near and blessed union that is between God and them. You cannot be fighters against the saints, but you will be found, in the casting up of the account, to be fighters against God himself; and what greater madness than for weakness itself to engage against an almighty strength? The near union that is between the Lord and believers is set forth by that near union that is betwixt a husband and his wife: "They two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church." "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones," says the apostle (Ephesians 5:30-32). This near union is set forth by that union that is between the head and the members, which make up one body; and by that union that is betwixt the graft and the stock, which are made one by insition. The union between the Lord and a believer is so near that you cannot strike a believer but the Lord is sensible of it, and takes it as done to himself. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (Acts 9:4). "And in all their afflictions he was afflicted" (Isaiah 63:9). Ah, souls! Who ever engaged against God and prospered? Who ever took up the sword against him but perished by it? God can speak you to hell, and nod you to hell, at pleasure. It is your greatest concernment to lay down your weapons at his feet, and to "kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the midway" (Psalm 2:12).

The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that you are much engaged to the saints (as instruments) for the mercies that you do enjoy, and for the preventing and removing of many a judgment that otherwise might have been your ruin before this day. Were it not for the saints' sake, God would quickly make the heavens to be as brass, and the earth as iron. God would quickly strip you of your robes and glory, and set you upon the dunghill with Job. They are the props that bear the world from falling about your ears, and that keep the iron rod from breaking of your bones. "Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them" (Psalm 106:23).

Ah! Had not the saints many a time cast themselves into the breach betwixt God's wrath and you, you had been cut off from the land of the living, and have had your portion with those whose names are written in the dust. Many a nation, many a city, and many a family is surrounded with blessings for the Josephs' sakes that live therein, and are preserved from many calamities and miseries for the Moseses', the Daniels', the Noahs', and the Jobs' sakes that dwell amongst them. That is a sweet word, Proverbs 10:25: "As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more: but the righteous is an everlasting foundation," or, is the foundation of the world. The righteous is the foundation of the world, which but for their sakes

would soon shatter and fall to ruin. So the psalmist, Psalm 75:3: "The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved: I bear up the pillars of it. Selah."

The emperor Marcus Antoninus, being in Germany with his army, was enclosed in a dry country by his enemies, who so stopped all the passages that he and his army were like to perish for want of water. The emperor's lieutenant, seeing him so distressed, told him that he had heard that the Christians could obtain anything of their God by their prayers. Whereupon the emperor, having a legion of Christians in his army, desired them to pray to their God for his and the army's delivery out of that danger; which they presently did; and presently a great thunder fell amongst the enemies, and abundance of water upon the Romans, whereby their thirst was quenched, and the enemies overthrown without any fight. I shall close up this last remedy with those sweet words of the psalmist: "In Judah is God known: his name is great in Israel. In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion. There brake he the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle. Selah" (Psalm 76:1-3).

Device 3: Against the learned: making them proud of their gifts

Secondly, Satan has his devices to ensnare and destroy the learned and the wise; and that sometimes by working them to pride themselves in their parts and abilities (John 5:44); and sometimes by drawing them to rest upon their parts and abilities; and sometimes by causing them to make light and slight of those that want their parts and abilities, though they excel them in grace and holiness (1 Kings 22:22-25; 1 Corinthians 1:18-29); and sometimes by drawing them to engage their parts and abilities in those ways and things that make against the honor of Christ, the joy of the Spirit, the advancement of the gospel, and the liberty of the saints.

Now the remedies against this device of Satan are these that follow.

The first remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider that you have nothing but what you have received, Christ being as well the fountain of common gifts as of saving grace. "What hast thou," says the apostle, "that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received it, why dost thou glory, as though thou hadst not received it?" (1 Corinthians 4:7). There are those that would hammer out their own happiness, like the spider climbing up by the thread of her own weaving. Of all the parts and abilities that are in you, you may well say, as the young man did of his hatchet, "Alas, master! It was but borrowed" (2 Kings 6:5). "Alas, Lord! All I have is but borrowed from that fountain that fills all the vessels in heaven

and on earth, and it overflows. My gifts are not so much mine as yours." "Of thine own have we offered unto thee," said that princely prophet (1 Chronicles 29:14).

The second remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that men's leaning and trusting to their own wits, parts, and abilities have been their utter overthrow and ruin, as you may see in Ahithophel, and those presidents and princes that engaged against Daniel, and in the scribes and Pharisees. God loves to confute men in their confidences. He that stands upon his parts and abilities does but stand upon a quicksand that will certainly fail him. There is nothing in the world that provokes God more to withdraw from the soul than this; and how can the soul stand when his strength is departed from him? Everything that a man leans upon but God will be a dart that will certainly pierce his heart through and through. Ah! How many in these days have lost their estates, their friends, their lives, their souls, by leaning upon their admired parts and abilities! The saints are described by their leaning upon their beloved, the Lord Jesus (Song of Solomon 8:5). He that leans only upon the bosom of Christ lives the highest, choicest, safest, and sweetest life. Miseries always lie at that man's door that leans upon anything below the precious bosom of Christ. Such a man is most in danger, and this is none of his least plagues, that he thinks himself secure. It is the greatest wisdom in the world to take the wise man's counsel: "Trust in the Lord with all thy heart, and lean not to thine own understanding" (Proverbs 3:5).

The third remedy against this device of Satan is to consider that you do not transcend others more in parts and abilities than they do you in grace and holiness. There may be, and often is, great parts and abilities where there is but little grace, yea, no grace; and there may be, and often is, a great deal of grace where there is but weak parts and abilities. You may be higher than others in gifts of knowledge, utterance, learning; and those very souls may be higher than you in their communion with God, in their delighting in God, in their dependence upon God, in their affections to God, and in their humble, holy, and unblamable walking before God (Luke 11:1; Mark 8:31-33; Luke 24:19-28). Is it folly and madness in a man to make light and slight of another because he is not so rich in lead or iron as he, when he is a thousand thousand times richer in silver and in gold, in jewels and in pearls, than he? And is it not madness and folly with a witness in those that have greater parts and abilities than others to slight them upon that account, when that those very persons that they make light and slight of have a thousand times more grace than they?

And yet, ah, how does this evil spirit prevail in the world! It was the sad complaint of Augustine in his time: "The unlearned," said he, "rise up and take heaven by violence, and we with all our learning are thrust down to hell." It is sad to see how many of the rabbis of these times do make an idol of their parts and abilities; and with what an eye of pride,

scorn, and contempt do they look upon those that want their parts, and that do not worship the idol that they have set up in their own hearts! Paul, who was the great doctor of the Gentiles, did wonderfully transcend in all parts and abilities the doctors and rabbis of our times; and yet, ah, how humbly, how tenderly, how sweetly does he carry himself towards the meanest and the weakest! "To the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak; I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1 Corinthians 9:22). "Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?" (2 Corinthians 11:29). "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend" (1 Corinthians 8:13).

But ah, how little of this sweet spirit is to be found in the doctors of our age, who look sourly and speak bitterly against those that do not see as they see, nor cannot speak as they speak! Sirs, the Spirit of the Lord (even in despised saints) will be too hard for you; and his appearances in them in these latter days will be so full of spiritual beauty and glory as that they will darken that that you are too apt to count and call your glory (Isaiah 60:13-17). The Spirit of the Lord will not suffer his choicest jewel, grace, to be always buried under the straw and stubble of parts and gifts.

The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is to consider that there is no such way for men to have their gifts and parts blasted and withered as to pride themselves in them, as to rest upon them, as to make light and slight of those that want them, as to engage them against those persons, ways, and things that Jesus Christ has set his heart upon. Ah! How has God blasted and withered the parts and abilities of many among us that have once been famous shining lights! How is their sun darkened, and their glory clouded! How is "the sword of the Lord upon their arm, and upon their right eye"! How is "their arm clean dried up, and their right eye utterly darkened"! as the prophet speaks (Zechariah 11:17). This is matter of humiliation and lamentation. Many precious, discerning saints do see this, and in secret mourn for it. And oh, that they were kindly sensible of God's withdrawing from them, that they may repent, keep humble, and carry it sweetly towards God's jewels, and lean only upon the Lord, and not upon their parts and understanding; that so the Lord may delight to visit them with his grace at such a rate as that their faces may shine more gloriously than ever, and they may be more serviceable to the honor of Christ and the faith of the saints than formerly they have been!

Device 4: Against the saints: dividing them from one another

Thirdly, Satan has his devices to destroy the saints; and one great device that he has to destroy the saints is by working them first to be strange, and then to divide, and then to be bit-

ter and jealous, and then "to bite and devour one another" (Galatians 5:15). Our own woeful experience is too great a proof of this. The Israelites in Egypt did not more vex one another than Christians in these days have done, which occasioned a deadly consumption to fall upon some.

Now the remedies against this device of Satan are these that follow.

The first remedy against this device of Satan is to dwell more upon one another's graces than upon one another's weaknesses and infirmities. It is sad to consider that saints should have many eyes to behold one another's infirmities, and not one eye to see each other's graces; that they should use spectacles to behold one another's weaknesses, rather than looking glasses to behold one another's graces. Erasmus tells of one who collected all the lame and defective verses in Homer's works, but passed over all that were excellent. Ah, that this were not the practice of many that shall at last meet in heaven; that they were not careful and skillful to collect all the weaknesses of others, and to pass over all those things that are excellent in them! The Corinthians did eye more the incestuous person's sin than his sorrow, which was like to have drowned him in sorrow.

Tell me, saints, is it not a more sweet, comfortable, and delightful thing to look more upon one another's graces than upon one another's infirmities? Tell me, what pleasure, what delight, what comfort is there in looking upon the enemies, the wounds, the sores, the sicknesses, the diseases, the nakedness of our friends? Now sin, you know, is the soul's enemy, the soul's wound, the soul's sores, the soul's sickness, the soul's disease, the soul's nakedness; and ah, what a heart has that man that loves thus to look! Grace is the choicest flower in all a Christian's garden; it is the richest jewel in all his crown; it is his princely robes; it is the top of royalty; and therefore must needs be the most pleasing, sweet, and delightful object for a gracious eye to be fixed upon. Sin is darkness, grace is light; sin is hell, grace is heaven; and what madness is it to look more at darkness than at light, more at hell than at heaven!

Tell me, saints, does not God look more upon his people's graces than upon their weaknesses? Surely he does. He looks more at David's and Asa's uprightness than upon their infirmities, though they were great and many. He eyes more Job's patience than his passion: "Remember the patience of Job" (James 5:11); not a word of his impatience. He that drew Alexander, whilst he had a scar upon his face, drew him with his finger upon the scar. God puts his finger upon his people's scars, that no blemish may appear. Ah, saints! That you would make it the top of your glory in this, to be like your heavenly Father! By so doing

much sin would be prevented, the designs of wicked men frustrated, Satan outwitted, many wounds healed, many sad hearts cheered, and God more abundantly honored.

The second remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that love and unity makes most for your own safety and security. We shall be *insuperabiles,* if we be *inseparabiles*: invincible, if we be inseparable. The world may frown upon you and plot against you, but they cannot hurt you. Unity is the best bond of safety in every church and commonwealth. And this did that Scythian king in Plutarch represent lively to his eighty sons, when, being ready to die, he commanded a bundle of arrows fast bound together to be given to his sons to break. They all tried to break them, but being bound fast together, they could not. Then he caused the band to be cut, and then they broke them with ease. He applied it thus: "My sons, so long as you keep together, you will be invincible; but if the band of union be broken betwixt you, you will easily be broken in pieces." Pliny writes of a stone in the island of Scyrus that if it be whole, though a large and heavy one, it swims above water; but being broken, it sinks. So long as saints keep whole, nothing shall sink them; but if they break, they are in danger of sinking and drowning.

The third remedy against this device of Satan is to dwell upon those commands of God that require you to love one another. Oh, when your hearts begin to rise against each other, charge the commands of God upon your hearts, and say to your souls, "O our souls! Has not the eternal God commanded you to love them that love the Lord? And is it not life to obey, and death to rebel? Therefore look that you fulfill the commands of the Lord; for his commands are not like those that are easily reversed, but they are like those of the Medes, that cannot be changed." Oh, be much in pondering upon these commands of God: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved you; that ye also love one another" (John 13:34). It is called a new commandment because it is renewed in the gospel, and set home by Christ's example, and because it is rare, choice, special, and remarkable above all others.

"This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you" (John 15:12). "These things I command you, that ye love one another" (John 15:17). "Owe no man any thing, but love one another; for he that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law" (Romans 13:8). "Let brotherly love continue" (Hebrews 13:1). "Love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God" (1 John 4:7). "See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" (1 Peter 1:22). "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous" (1 Peter 3:8). "For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another" (1 John 3:11). "And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son

Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment" (1 John 3:23). "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought to love one another" (1 John 4:11).

Oh, dwell much upon these precious commands, that your love may be inflamed one to another! In the primitive times it was much taken notice of by the heathens that in the depth of misery, when fathers and mothers forsook their children, Christians (otherwise strangers) stuck one to another, whose love of religion proved firmer than that of nature. Ah, that there were more of that spirit among the saints in these days! The world was once destroyed with water for the heat of lusts, and it is thought it will be again destroyed with fire for the coldness of love.

The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is to dwell more upon those choice and sweet things wherein you agree than upon those things wherein you differ. Ah! Did you but thus, how would sinful heats be abated, and your love raised, and your spirits sweetened one to another! You agree in most; you differ but in a few. You agree in the greatest and weightiest, as concerning God, Christ, the Spirit, the Scripture; you differ only in those points that have been long disputable amongst men of greatest piety and parts. You agree to own the Scripture, to hold to Christ the head, and to walk according to the laws of the new creature. Shall Herod and Pilate agree? Shall Turks and pagans agree? Shall bears and lions, tigers and wolves, yea, shall a legion of devils, agree in one body? And shall not saints agree, who differ only in such things as have least of the heart of God in them, and that shall never hinder your meeting in heaven?

The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that God delights to be styled *Deus pacis*, "the God of peace"; and Christ to be styled *Princeps pacis*, "the Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6), and King of Salem, that is, King of peace (Hebrews 7:2); and the Spirit is a Spirit of peace: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace" (Galatians 5:22). Oh, why then should not the saints be children of peace? Certainly men of froward, unquiet, fiery spirits cannot have that sweet evidence of their interest in the God of peace, and in the Prince of Peace, and in the Spirit of peace, as those precious souls have that follow after the things that make for love and peace. The very name of peace is sweet and comfortable; the fruit and effect thereof pleasant and profitable, more to be desired than innumerable triumphs. It is a blessing that ushers in a multitude of other blessings. The ancients were wont to paint peace in the form of a woman, with a horn of plenty in her hand.

Ah! Peace and love among the saints is that which will secure them and their mercies at home. Yea, it will multiply their mercies; it will engage the God of mercy to crown them with the choicest mercies; and it is that will render them most terrible, invincible, and suc-

cessful abroad. Love and peace among the saints is that which puts the counsels of their enemies to a stand, and renders all their enterprises abortive. It is that which does most weaken their hands, wound their hopes, and kill their hearts.

The sixth remedy against this device of Satan is to make more care and conscience of keeping up your peace with God. Ah, Christians! I am afraid that your remissness herein is that which has occasioned much of that sourness, bitterness, and divisions that are among you. Ah! You have not, as you should, kept up your peace with God; and therefore it is that you do so dreadfully break the peace among yourselves. The Lord has promised that "when a man's ways please him, he will make his enemies to be at peace with him" (Proverbs 16:7). Ah, how much more then would God make the children of peace to keep the peace among themselves, if their ways did but please him! All creatures are at his beck and check. Laban followed Jacob with one troop, Esau met him with another, both with hostile intentions; but Jacob's ways pleasing the Lord, God by his mighty power so works that Laban leaves him with a kiss, and Esau meets him with a kiss. He has an oath of one, tears of the other, and peace with both. If we make it our business to keep up our league with God, God will make it his work and his glory to maintain our peace with men. But if men make light of keeping up their peace with God, it is just with God to leave them to a spirit of pride, envy, passion, contention, division, and confusion; to leave them "to bite and devour one another," till they "be consumed one of another" (Galatians 5:15).

The seventh remedy against this device of Satan is to dwell much upon that near relation and union that is between you. This consideration had a sweet influence upon Abraham's heart: "And Abraham said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen; for we be brethren" (Genesis 13:8). That is a sweet word in the psalmist: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to live together in unity!" (Psalm 133:1). It is not good and not pleasant, or pleasant and not good, but good and pleasant. There are some things that are *bona sed non jucunda*, good and not pleasant, as patience and discipline; and there are some things that are pleasant but not good, as carnal pleasures, voluptuousness; and there are some things that are neither good nor pleasant, as malice, envy, worldly sorrow; and there are some things that are both good and pleasant, as piety, charity, peace and union among brethren. And oh, that we could see more of this among those that shall one day meet (in their Father's kingdom) and never part!

And as they are brethren, so they are all fellow members. "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular" (1 Corinthians 12:27). And again, "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones" (Ephesians 5:30). Shall the members of the natural body be

serviceable and useful to one another, and shall the members of this spiritual body cut and destroy one another? Is it against the law of nature for the natural members to cut and slash one another? And is it not much more against the law of nature and of grace for the members of Christ's glorious body to do so? And as you are all fellow members, so you are all fellow soldiers under the same captain of salvation, the Lord Jesus, fighting against the world, the flesh, and the devil. And as you are all fellow soldiers, so are you all fellow sufferers under the same enemies, the devil and the world (John 15:19-20). And as you are all fellow sufferers, so are you fellow travelers towards the land of Canaan, the new Jerusalem that is above. "Here we have no abiding city, but we look for one to come" (Hebrews 13:14); the heirs of heaven are strangers on earth. And as you are all fellow travelers, so are you all fellow heirs of the same crown and inheritance (Romans 8:17).

The eighth remedy against this device of Satan is to dwell upon the miseries of discord. Dissolution is the daughter of dissension. Ah! How does the name of Christ and the way of Christ suffer by the discord of saints! How are many that are entering upon the ways of God hindered and saddened, and the mouths of the wicked opened, and their hearts hardened against God and his ways, by the discord of his people! Remember this: the disagreement of Christians is the devil's triumph; and what a sad thing is this, that Christians should give Satan cause to triumph! It was a notable saying of one, "Take away strife, and call back peace, lest thou lose a man thy friend, and the devil an enemy joy over you both."

The ninth remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that it is no disparagement to you to be first in seeking peace and reconcilement, but rather an honor to you that you have begun to seek peace. Abraham was the elder, and more worthy than Lot, both in respect of grace and nature also (for he was uncle unto Lot); and yet he first seeks peace of his inferior, which God has recorded as his honor. Ah! How does the God of peace by his Spirit and messengers pursue after peace with poor creatures! God first makes offers of peace to us. "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (2 Corinthians 5:20). God's grace first kneels to us; and who can turn their backs upon such blessed and bleeding embracements, but souls in whom Satan, "the god of this world" (2 Corinthians 4:4), kings it? God is the party wronged, and yet he sues for peace with us at first. "I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name" (Isaiah 65:1). Ah! How does the sweetness, the freeness, and the riches of his grace break forth and shine upon poor souls! When a man goes from the sun, yet the sunbeams follow him; so when we go from the Sun of righteousness, yet then the beams of his love and mercy follow us. Christ first sent to Peter that had denied him, and the rest that had forsaken him: "Go your ways, and tell his disciples and

Peter, that he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him, as he said unto you" (Mark 16:7).

Ah, souls! It is not a base, low thing, but a godlike thing, though we are wronged by others, yet to be the first in seeking after peace. Such actings will speak out much of God with a man's spirit.

Christians! It is not matter of liberty whether you will or you will not pursue after peace; but it is matter of duty that lies upon you. You are bound by express precepts to follow after peace; and though it may seem to fly from you, yet you must pursue after it. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14). Peace and holiness is to be pursued after with the greatest eagerness that can be imagined. So the psalmist: "Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it" (Psalm 34:14). The Hebrew word that is here rendered "seek" is in Piel, and it signifies to seek earnestly, vehemently, affectionately, studiously, industriously. "And pursue it": that Hebrew word signifies earnestly to pursue, being a metaphor taken from the eagerness of wild beasts or ravenous fowls, which will run or fly both fast and far rather than be disappointed of their prey. So the apostle presses the same duty upon the Romans: "Let us follow after the things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (Romans 14:19).

Ah, you froward, sour, dogged Christians, can you look upon these commands of God without tears and blushing? I have read a remarkable story of Aristippus, though but a heathen, who went of his own accord to Aeschines his enemy, and said, "Shall we never be reconciled till we become a table talk to all the country?" And when Aeschines answered he would most gladly be at peace with him, "Remember then," said Aristippus, "that though I were the elder and better man, yet I sought first unto thee." "Thou art indeed," said Aeschines, "a far better man than I; for I began the quarrel, but thou the reconcilement." My prayer shall be that this heathen may not rise in judgment against the flourishing professors of our times, "who whet their tongues like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words" (Psalm 64:3).

The tenth remedy against this device of Satan is for saints to join together, and walk together in the ways of grace and holiness so far as they do agree, making the word the only touchstone and judge of their actions. That is sweet advice that the apostle gives: "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect" (comparatively, or conceitedly so), "be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we

have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing" (Philippians 3:14-16).

Ah, Christians! God loses much, and you lose much, and Satan gains much, by this, that you do not, that you will not, walk lovingly together so far as your ways lie together. It is your sin and shame that you do not, that you will not, pray together, and hear together, and confer together, and mourn together, because that in some far lesser things you are not agreed together. What folly and madness is it in those whose way of a hundred miles lies fourscore and nineteen together, yet will not walk so far together, because that they cannot go the other mile together! Yet such is the folly and madness of many Christians in these days, who will not do many things they may do, because they cannot do everything they should do. I fear God will whip them into a better temper before he has done with them. He will break their bones and pierce their hearts, but he will cure them of this malady.

And be sure you make the word the only touchstone and judge of all persons and actions. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20). It is best and safest to make that to be the judge of all men and things now that all shall be judged by in the latter day. "The word," says Christ, "that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). Make not your dim light, your notions, your fancies, your opinions, the judge of men's actions; but still judge by rule, and plead, "It is written." When a vain, importunate soul cried out in contest with a holy man, "Hear me, hear me," the holy man answered, "Neither hear me, nor I thee, but let us both hear the apostle."

Constantine, in all the disputes before him with the Arians, would still call for the word of God as the only way, if not to convert, yet to stop their mouths.

The eleventh remedy against this device of Satan is to be much in self-judging. "Judge yourselves, and you shall not be judged of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 11:31). Ah! Were Christians' hearts more taken up in judging themselves and condemning themselves, they would not be so apt to judge and censure others, and to carry it sourly and bitterly towards others that differ from them. There are no souls in the world that are so fearful to judge others as those that do most judge themselves, nor so careful to make a righteous judgment of men or things as those that are most careful to judge themselves. There are none in the world that tremble to think evil of others, to speak evil of others, or to do evil to others, as those that make it their business to judge themselves. There are none that make such sweet constructions and charitable interpretations of men and things as those that are best and most in judging themselves. One request I have to you that are much in judging others and little in

judging yourselves, to you that are so apt and prone to judge rashly, falsely, and unrighteously; and that is, that you will every morning dwell a little upon these Scriptures:

"Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measures ye mete, it shall be measured to you again" (Matthew 7:1-2). "Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24). "Let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth, for God hath received him" (Romans 14:3). "Why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. Let us not judge one another any more, but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block, or an occasion to fall in his brother's way" (Romans 14:10, 13). "Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God" (1 Corinthians 4:5). "Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judgest the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?" (James 4:11-12). "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand" (Romans 14:4).

One Delphidius, accusing another before Julian about that which he could not prove, the party denying the fact, Delphidius answers, "If it be sufficient to deny what is laid to one's charge, who shall be found guilty?" Julian answers, "And if it be sufficient to be accused, who can be innocent?" You are wise, and know how to apply it.

The twelfth remedy against this device of Satan is this: above all, labor to be clothed with humility (1 Peter 5:5). Humility makes a man peaceable among brethren, fruitful in well doing, cheerful in suffering, and constant in holy walking. Humility fits for the highest services we owe to Christ, and yet will not neglect the lowest service to the meanest saint. Humility can feed upon the meanest dish, and yet it is maintained by the choicest delicacies, as God, Christ, and glory. Humility will make a man bless him that curses him, and pray for those that persecute him. A humble heart is a habitation for God, a scholar for Christ, a companion for angels, a preserver of grace, and a fitter for glory. Humility is the nurse of our graces, the preserver of our mercies, and the great promoter of holy duties.

Humility cannot find three things on this side heaven: it cannot find fullness in the creature, nor sweetness in sin, nor life in an ordinance without Christ. A humble soul always finds three things on this side heaven: the soul to be empty, Christ to be full, and every

mercy and duty to be sweet wherein God is enjoyed. Humility can weep over other men's weaknesses, and joy and rejoice over their graces. Humility will make a man quiet and contented in the meanest condition, and it will preserve a man from envying others' prosperous condition (1 Thessalonians 1:2-3). Humility honors those that are strong in grace, and puts two hands under those that are weak in grace (Ephesians 3:8). Humility makes a man richer than other men, and it makes a man judge himself the poorest among men. Humility will see much good abroad when it can see but little at home.

Ah, Christians! Though faith be the champion of grace, and love the nurse of grace, yet humility is the beautifier of grace; it casts a general glory upon all the graces in the soul. Ah! Did Christians more abound in humility, they would be less bitter, froward, and sour; and they would be more gentle, meek, and sweet in their spirits and practices. Humility will make a man have high thoughts of others, and low thoughts of a man's self. It will make a man see much glory and excellency in others, and much baseness and sinfulness in a man's self. It will make a man see others rich, and himself poor; others strong, and himself weak; others wise, and himself foolish. Humility will make a man excellent at covering others' infirmities, and at recording their gracious services, and at delighting in their graces. It makes a man joy in every light that outshines his own, and in every wind that blows others good. Humility is better at believing than it is at questioning other men's happiness. "I judge," says a humble soul, "it is well with these Christians now, but it will be far better with them hereafter. They are now upon the borders of the new Jerusalem, and it will be but as a day before they slide into Jerusalem." A humble soul is willinger to say, "Heaven is that man's, than mine; and Christ is that Christian's, than mine; and God is their God in covenant, than mine." Ah! Were Christians more humble, there would be less fire and more love among them than now is.

Device 5: Against the poor and ignorant: making them content with ignorance

Lastly, as Satan has his devices to destroy gracious souls, so he has his devices to destroy poor ignorant souls; and that sometimes by drawing them to affect ignorance, and to neglect, slight, and despise the means of knowledge (Hosea 4:6). Ignorance is the mother of mistake, the [cause] of trouble, error, and of terror. It is the highway to hell, and it makes a man both a prisoner and a slave to the devil at once (Matthew 22:29). Ignorance unmans a man; it makes a man a beast, yea, it makes him more miserable than the beast that perishes. There are none so easily nor so frequently taken in Satan's snare as ignorant souls. They are easily drawn to dance with the devil all day, and to dream of supping with Christ at night.

Now the remedies against this device of Satan are these that follow.

The first remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that an ignorant heart is an evil heart. "Without knowledge the mind is not good" (Proverbs 19:2).

As an ignorant heart is a naughty heart, it is a heart in the dark; and no good can come into a dark heart, but it must pass through the understanding; and if the eye be dark, all the body is dark (Matthew 6:23). A leprous head and a leprous heart are inseparable companions. Ignorant hearts are so evil that they let fly on all hands, and spare not to spit their venom in the very face of God, as Pharaoh did when thick darkness was upon him.

The second remedy against this device of Satan is to consider that ignorance is the deformity of the soul. As blindness is the deformity of the face, so is ignorance the deformity of the soul. As the want of fleshly eyes spoils the beauty of the face, so the want of spiritual eyes spoils the beauty of the soul. A man without knowledge is as a workman without his hands, as a painter without his eyes, as a traveler without his legs, or as a ship without sails, or a bird without wings, or like a body without a soul.

The third remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that ignorance makes men the objects of God's hatred and wrath. "It is a people that do err in their hearts, and have not known my ways: wherefore I swore in my wrath, they should never enter into my rest" (Hebrews 3:10-11; Psalm 95:10-11). "My people are a people of no understanding: therefore he that made them will have no mercy on them" (Isaiah 27:11). Christ has said "that he will come in flaming fire to render vengeance on them that know not God" (2 Thessalonians 1:8). Ignorance will end in vengeance. When you see a poor blind man here, you do not loathe him nor hate him, but you pity him. Oh, but soul blindness makes you abominable in the sight of God. God has sworn that ignorant persons shall never come into heaven; heaven itself would be a hell to ignorant souls. "My people are destroyed for want of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will reject thee" (Hosea 4:6).

Chilo, one of the seven sages, being asked what God had done, answered, "He exalted humble men, and suppressed proud, ignorant fools."

The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is to consider that ignorance is a sin that leads to all sins. All sins are seminally in ignorance. "You do err, not knowing the Scriptures" (Matthew 22:29). It puts men upon hating and persecuting the saints: "They shall hate you, and put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me" (John 16:2-3). Paul thanks his ignorance for

all his cruelties to Christians: “I was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly” (1 Timothy 1:13). It was ignorance that put the Jews upon crucifying Christ. “Father, forgive them,” says Christ of his murderers, “for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). “For if the princes of this world had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory” (1 Corinthians 2:8).

Sin at the first was the cause of ignorance, but now ignorance is the cause of all sin. Swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and whoring abound, says the prophet, because there is no knowledge of God in the land (Hosea 4:1-2). There are none so frequent and so impudent in the ways of sin as ignorant souls. They care not nor mind not what they do, nor what they say, against God, Christ, heaven, holiness, and their own souls. “Our tongues are our own: who shall control us?” (Psalm 12:4). “They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth” (Psalm 73:8-9). “Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon the Lord” (Psalm 14:4).

And now, to prevent objections, I shall lay down some propositions or conclusions concerning Satan and his devices, and then give you the reasons of the point, and so come to make some use and application of the whole to ourselves.

PROPOSITIONS

Six Propositions Concerning Satan and His Devices

The First Proposition

That though Satan has his devices to draw souls to sin, yet we must be careful that we do not lay all our temptations upon Satan; that we do not wrong the devil, and father that upon him that is to be fathered upon our own base hearts. I think that oftentimes men charge that upon the devil that is to be charged upon their own hearts. "And the Lord said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat" (Genesis 3:13). Sin and shifting came into the world together. This is no small baseness of our hearts, that they will be naught, ay, very naught, and yet will father that naughtiness upon Satan.

Man has an evil root within him; that were there no devil to tempt him, nor no wicked men in the world to entice him, yet that root of bitterness, that cursed sinful nature that is in him, would draw him to sin, though he knows beforehand "that the wages of sin is eternal death" (Romans 6:23). "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnesses, blasphemies" (Matthew 15:19). The whole frame of man is out of frame: the understanding is dark, the will cross, the memory slippery, the affections crooked, the conscience corrupted, the tongue poisoned, and the heart wholly evil, only evil, and continually evil. Should God chain up Satan, and give him no liberty to tempt or entice the sons of men to vanity and folly, yet they would not, yet they could not but sin against him, by reason of that cursed nature that is in them, that will still be a-provoking them to those sins that will provoke and stir up the anger and wrath of God against them.

Satan has only a persuading sleight, not an enforcing might. He may tempt us, but without ourselves he cannot conquer us; he may entice us, but without ourselves he cannot hurt us. Our hearts carry the greatest stroke in every sin. Satan can never undo a man without himself, but a man may easily undo himself without Satan. Satan can only present the golden cup, but he has no power to force us to drink the poison that is in the cup. He can only present to us the glory of the world; he cannot force us to fall down and worship him to enjoy the world. He can only spread his snares; he has no power to force us to walk in the midst of his snares. Therefore do the devil so much right as not to excuse yourselves by

your accusing him, and laying that load upon him that you should lay upon your own hearts.

The Second Proposition

That Satan has a great hand and stroke in most sins. It was Satan that tempted our first parents to rebellion (Genesis 3:1, 4-5). It was Satan that provoked David to number the people (1 Chronicles 21:1). It was Satan that put Peter upon rebuking Christ; therefore says Christ, "Get thee behind me, Satan" (Matthew 16:22-23). It was Satan that put Cain upon murdering of righteous Abel; therefore it is that he is called "a murderer from the beginning" (John 8:44). It was Satan that put treason into the heart of Judas against Christ: "And supper being ended, the devil having put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him" (John 13:2). It was Satan that put Ananias upon lying. Peter said, "Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?" (Acts 5:3).

As the hand of Joab was in the tale of the woman of Tekoah, so Satan's hand is usually in all the sins that men commit. Such is Satan's malice against God, and his envy against man, that he will have a hand one way or another in all their sins, though he knows that all the sins that he provokes others to shall be charged upon him, to his greater woe and eternal torment. Ambrose brings in the devil boasting against Christ, and challenging Judas as his own: "He is not thine, Lord Jesus, he is mine. His thoughts beat for me; he eats with thee, but is fed by me; he takes bread from thee, but money from me; he drinks wine with thee, and sells thy blood to me." Such is his malice against Christ, and his wrath and rage against man, that he will take all advantages to draw men to that that may give him advantage to triumph over Christ and men's souls forever.

The Third Proposition

That Satan must have a double leave before he can do anything against us: he must have leave from God, and leave from ourselves, before he can act anything against our happiness. He must have his commission from God, as you may see in the example of Job. Though the devil had malice enough to destroy him, yet he had not so much as power to touch him till God gave him a commission.

They could not so much as enter into the swine without leave from Christ (Luke 8:32). Satan would fain have combated with Peter, but this could not he do without leave: "Satan hath desired to have you," to winnow you (Luke 22:31). So Satan could never have overthrown Ahab and Saul but by a commission from God (1 Kings 22). Ah! What a cordial, what a comfort should this be to the saints, that their greatest, subtlest, and most watchful enemy can-

not hurt nor harm them without leave from him who is their sweetest Savior, their dearest husband, and their choicest friend!

And as Satan must have leave from God, so he must have leave of us. When he tempts, we must assent; when he makes offers, we must hearken; when he commands, we must obey; or else all his labor and temptations will be frustrate, and the evil that he tempts us to shall be put down only to his account. That is a remarkable passage of the apostle in Acts 5:3: "Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?"

He does not expostulate the matter with Satan; he does not say, "Satan, why hast thou filled Ananias's heart to make him lie to the Holy Ghost?" But he expostulates the case with Ananias. Peter said, "Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? Why hast thou given him an advantage to fill thy heart with infidelity, hypocrisy, and obstinate audacity, to lie to the Holy Ghost?" As if he had said, "Satan could never have done this in thee (which will now forever undo thee) unless thou hadst first given him leave." If, when a temptation comes, a man cries out and says, "Ah, Lord! Here is a temptation that would force me, that would deflower my soul, and I have no strength to withstand it. Oh, help, help, for your honor's sake, for your Son's sake, for your promise's sake!" it is a sign that Satan has not gained your consent, but committed a rape upon your souls, which he shall dearly pay for.

The Fourth Proposition

That no weapons but spiritual weapons will be useful and serviceable to the soul in fighting and combating with the devil. This the apostle shows: "Wherefore take unto you," says he, "the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand" (Ephesians 6:13). So the same apostle tells you "that the weapons of your warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the casting down of strong holds" (2 Corinthians 10:4). You have not to do with a weak, but with a mighty enemy; and therefore you had need look to it that your weapons are mighty; and that they cannot be unless they are spiritual. Carnal weapons have no might nor spirit in them towards the making of a conquest upon Satan. It was not David's sling nor stone that gave him the honor and advantage of setting his feet upon Goliath, but his faith in the name of the Lord of hosts. "Thou comest to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a shield: but I am come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied" (1 Samuel 17:45). He that fights against Satan in the strength of his own resolutions, constitution, or education will certainly fly and fall before him. Satan will be too hard for such a soul, and lead him captive at his pleasure.

The only way to stand, conquer, and triumph is still to plead, "It is written," as Christ did (Matthew 4:10). There is no sword but the two-edged sword of the Spirit that will be found to be metal of proof when a soul comes to engage against Satan. Therefore when you are tempted to uncleanness, plead, It is written, "Be ye holy, as I am holy" (1 Peter 1:15-16); and, "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 7:1). If he tempts you to distrust God's providence and fatherly care of you, plead, It is written, "They that fear the Lord shall want nothing that is good" (Psalm 34:9). It is written, "The Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that purely live" (Psalm 84:11). If he tempts you to fear that you shall faint and fall, and never be able to run to the end of the race that is set before you, plead, It is written, "The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger" (Job 17:9). It is written, "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me" (Jeremiah 32:40). It is written, "They that wait upon the Lord, they shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run, and not be weary, and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31).

If Satan tempts you to think that because your sun for the present is set in a cloud, that therefore it will rise no more, and that the face of God will shine no more upon you, that your best days are now at an end, and that you must spend all your time in sorrow and sighing, plead, It is written, "He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us, and cast all our sins into the depths of the sea" (Micah 7:19). It is written, "For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer" (Isaiah 54:7-8). It is written, "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee" (Isaiah 54:10). It is written, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will not I forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me" (Isaiah 49:15-16).

If ever you would be too hard for Satan, and after all your assaults have your bow abide in strength, then take to you the word of God, which is the two-edged sword of the Spirit, and the shield of faith, whereby you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the devil (Ephesians 6:16-17). It is not spitting at Satan's name, nor crossing yourselves, nor leaning to your own resolutions, that will get you the victory.

Luther reports of Staupitz, a German minister, that he acknowledged himself that, before he came to understand aright the free and powerful grace of God, that he vowed and resolved a hundred times against some particular sin, and never could get power over it. At last he saw the reason to be his trusting to his own resolution. Therefore be skillful in the word of righteousness, and in the actings of faith upon Christ and his victory, and that crown of glory that is set before you; and Satan will certainly fly from you.

The Fifth Proposition

That we may read much of Satan's nature and disposition by the divers names and epithets that are given him in the Scriptures. Sometimes he is called Behemoth, which is brutal, whereby the greatness and brutishness of the devil is figured. Those evil spirits are sometimes called accusers, for their calumnies and slanders; and evil ones, for their malice. Satan is *Adversarius,* an adversary that troubles and molests; Abaddon is a destroyer. They are called tempters for their suggestion, lions for their devouring, dragons for their cruelty, and serpents for their subtlety. As his names are, so is he. As face answers to face, so do Satan's names answer to his nature. He has the worst names and the worst nature of all created creatures.

The Sixth Proposition

That God will shortly tread down Satan under the saints' feet (Romans 16:20). Christ our champion has already won the field, and will shortly set our feet upon the necks of our spiritual enemies. Satan is a foiled adversary; Christ has led him captive, and triumphed over him upon the cross (Colossians 2:15). Christ has already overcome him, and put weapons into your hands, that you may overcome him also, and set your feet upon his neck. Though Satan be a roaring lion, yet Christ, who is "the Lion of the tribe of Judah," will make Satan fly and fall before you. Let Satan do his worst, yet you shall have the honor and the happiness to triumph over him. Cheer up, you precious sons of Zion; for the certainty and sweetness of victory will abundantly recompense you for all the pains you have taken in making resistance against Satan's temptations. The broken horns of Satan shall be trumpets of our triumph and the cornets of our joy.

Five Reasons Why Satan Has So Many Devices

Now I shall come to the reasons of the point, and so draw to a close.

The first reason is that their hearts may be kept in a humble, praying, watching frame. Oh, has Satan so many devices to ensnare and undo the souls of men? How should this awaken dull, drowsy souls, and make them stand upon their watch! A saint should be like a seraphim, beset all over with eyes and lights, that he may avoid Satan's snares, and stand fast in the hour of temptation. The Lord has in the Scripture discovered the several snares, plots, and devices that the devil has to undo the souls of men, that so, being forewarned, they may be forearmed; that they may be always upon their watchtower, and hold their weapons in their hands, as the Jews did in Nehemiah's time.

The second reason is from that malice, envy, and enmity that is in Satan against the souls of men. Satan is full of envy and enmity, and that makes him very studious to suit his snares and plots to the tempers, constitutions, fancies, and callings of men, that so he may make them as miserable as himself. The Russians are so malicious that you shall have a man hide some of his own goods in the house of him whom he hates, and then accuse him for the stealth of them. So does Satan, out of malice to the souls of men, hide his goods, his wares, as I may say, in the souls of men, and then go and accuse them before the Lord. And a thousand, thousand other ways Satan's malice, envy, and enmity puts him upon, eternally to undo the precious souls of men.

The third reason is drawn from that long experience that Satan has had. He is a spirit of mighty abilities, and his abilities to lay snares before us are mightily increased by that long standing of his. He is a spirit of above five thousand years' standing. He has had time enough to study all those ways and methods which tend most to ensnare and undo the souls of men; and as he has time enough, so he has made it his whole study, his only study, his constant study, to find out snares, depths, and stratagems to entangle and overthrow the souls of men. When he was but a young serpent, he did easily deceive and outwit our first parents (Genesis 3); but now he is grown "that old serpent," as John speaks (Revelation 12:9). He is as old as the world, and is grown very cunning by experience.

The fourth reason is in judgment to the men of the world, that they may stumble, and fall, and be ensnared forever. Wicked men, that withstand the offers of mercy, and despise the Spirit of grace; that will not open, though God knocks never so hard by his word and rod, by his Spirit and conscience; are given up by a hand of justice to be hardened, deceived, and ensnared by Satan to their everlasting ruin (1 Kings 22:22). And what can be more just than that they should be taken and charmed with Satan's wiles, who have frequently refused to be charmed by the Spirit of grace, though he has charmed never so wisely, and never so sweetly?

The fifth reason is that the excellency and power of God's grace may be the more illustrated and manifested, by making man able to grapple with this mighty adversary; and that notwithstanding all the plots, devices, and stratagems of Satan, yet he will make them victorious here, and crown them with glory hereafter. The greater and the subtler the enemies of the children of Israel were, the more did divine power, wisdom, and goodness sparkle and shine, that notwithstanding all their power, plots, and stratagems, yet to Canaan he would bring them at last. When Paul had well weighed this, he sits down and glories in his infirmities, and distresses, and Satan's buffetings, that the power of Christ might rest upon him (2 Corinthians 12:7-9).

RULES AND HELPS

The Use of the Point: Special Rules and Helps Against Satan's Devices

If Satan has such a world of devices and stratagems to ensnare and undo the souls of men, then instead of wondering that so few are saved, sit down and wonder that any are saved; that any escape the snares of this cunning fowler, who spreads his nets and casts forth his baits in all places, and in all cases and companies.

But this is not the main thing that I intend to speak to. My main business shall be to set before you some special rules and helps against all his devices; and the first is this.

If you would not be taken by any of Satan's devices, then walk by rule. He that walks by rule walks most safely; he that walks by rule walks most honorably; he that walks by rule walks most sweetly (Proverbs 12:28; 15:24; Galatians 6:16). When men throw off the word, then God throws off them, and then Satan takes them by the hand, and leads them into snares at his pleasure. He that thinks himself too good to be ruled by the word will be found too bad to be owned by God; and if God do not nor will not own him, Satan will by his stratagems overthrow him. They that keep to the rule, they shall be kept in the hour of temptation. "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Revelation 3:10).

Secondly, as you would not be taken with any of Satan's devices, take heed of vexing and grieving the Holy Spirit of God. It is the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ that is best able to discover Satan's snares unto us. It is only he that can point out all his plots, and discover all his methods, and enable men to escape those pits that he has digged for their precious souls. Ah, souls! If you set that sweet and blessed Spirit a-mourning, that alone can secure you from Satan's depths, by whom will you be secured? Man is a weak creature, and no way able to discover Satan's snares, nor to avoid them, unless the Spirit of the Lord gives skill and power. Therefore whoever be grieved, be sure the Spirit be not grieved: by your enormities (Isaiah 63:10), nor by your refusing the cordials and comforts that he sets before you (Psalm 77:2-3), nor by slighting and despising his gracious actings in others (1 Thessalonians 5:19), nor by calling sincerity hypocrisy, faith fancy (Acts 2:13), nor by fathering those things upon the Spirit that are the brats and fruits of your own hearts. The Spirit of the Lord is

your counselor, your comforter, your upholder, your strengthener. It is only the Spirit that makes a man too great for Satan to conquer. "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

Thirdly, if you would not be taken with any of Satan's devices, then labor for more heavenly wisdom. Ah, souls! You are much in the dark; you have but a little to that others have, and to that you might have had, had you not been wanting to yourselves. There are many knowing souls, but there are but a few wise souls. There is oftentimes a great deal of knowledge where there is but a little wisdom to improve that knowledge. Knowledge without wisdom is like mettle in a blind horse, which is often an occasion of the rider's fall, and of his bones being jostled against the walls. It is not the most knowing Christian, but the most wise Christian, that sees, avoids, and escapes Satan's snares. "The way of life is above to the wise," says Solomon, "that he may depart from hell beneath" (Proverbs 15:24). Heavenly wisdom makes a man delight to fly high; and the higher any man flies, the more he is out of the reach of Satan's snares. Ah, souls! You had need of a great deal of heavenly wisdom to see where and how Satan lays his baits and snares; and wisdom to find out proper remedies against his devices; and wisdom to apply those remedies seasonably, inwardly, and effectually to your own hearts; that so you may avoid the snares which that evil one has laid for your precious souls.

Fourthly, if you would not be taken with any of Satan's devices, then make present resistance against Satan's first motions. It is safe to resist; it is dangerous to dispute. Eve disputes, and falls in paradise (Genesis 3); Job resists, and conquers upon the dunghill. He that will play with Satan's bait will quickly be taken with Satan's hook. The promise of conquest is made over to resisting, not to disputing: "Resist the devil, and he shall fly from you" (James 4:7). Ah, souls! Were you better at resisting than at disputing (though haply you are not very expert at either), your temptations would be fewer, and your strength to stand would be greater than now it is.

Fifthly, if you would not be taken with any of Satan's devices, then labor to be filled with the Spirit. The Spirit of the Lord is a Spirit of light and power; and what can a soul do without light and power against "spiritual wickednesses in high places" (Ephesians 6:12)? It is not enough that you have the Spirit, but you must be filled with the Spirit, or else (Satan) that evil spirit will be too hard for you, and his plots will prosper against you. That is a sweet word of the apostle, "Be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18); that is, labor for abundance of the Spirit. He that thinks he has enough of the Holy Spirit will quickly find himself vanquished by the evil spirit. Satan has his snares to take you in prosperity and adversity, in health and sickness, in strength and weakness; when you are alone, and when you are in

company; when you come on to spiritual duties, and when you come off from spiritual duties; and if you are not filled with the Spirit, Satan will be too hard and too crafty for you, and will easily and frequently take you in his snares, and make a prey of you in spite of your souls. Therefore labor more to have your hearts filled with the Spirit than to have your heads filled with notions, your shops with wares, your chests with silver, or your bags with gold. So shall you escape the snares of this fowler, and triumph over all his plots.

Sixthly, if you would not be taken in any of Satan's snares, then keep humble. A humble heart will rather lie in the dust than rise by wickedness, and sooner part with all than the peace of a good conscience. Humility keeps the soul free from many darts of Satan's casting and snares of his spreading, as the low shrubs are free from many violent gusts and blasts of wind which shake and rend the taller trees. The devil has least power to fasten a temptation on him that is most humble. He that has a gracious measure of humility is neither affected with Satan's proffers nor terrified with his threatenings. I have read of one who, seeing in a vision many snares of the devil spread upon the earth, sat down and mourned, and said in himself, *Quis pertransiet ista?* "Who shall pass through these?" Whereunto he heard a voice answering, *Humilitas pertransiet*, "Humility shall." God has said that he will teach the humble, and that he will dwell with the humble, and that he will fill and satisfy the humble (Psalm 25:9; Isaiah 57:15; James 4:6). And if the teachings of God, the indwellings of God, if the pourings in of God, will not keep the soul from falling into Satan's snares, I do not know what will. And therefore, as you would be happy in resisting Satan, and blessed in triumphing over Satan and all his snares, keep humble. I say again, keep humble.

Seventhly, if you would not be taken in any of Satan's snares, then keep a strong, close, and constant watch. A secure soul is already an ensnared soul. That soul that will not watch against temptations will certainly fall before the power of temptations. Satan works most strongly on the fancy when the soul is drowsy. The soul's security is Satan's opportunity to fall upon the soul and to spoil the soul, as Joshua did the men of Ai. The best way to be safe and secure from all Satan's assaults is, with Nehemiah and the Jews, to watch and pray, and pray and watch. By this means they became too hard for their enemies, and the work of the Lord did prosper sweetly in their hands. Remember how Christ chid his sluggish disciples: "What, could you not watch with me one hour?" (Matthew 26:40-41; Mark 13:33-37; Luke 21:36). "What, cannot you watch with me? How will you then die with me?" If you cannot endure words, how will you endure wounds?

Satan always keeps a crafty and malicious watch, "seeking whom he may devour," or whom he may drink or sip up, as the apostle speaks (1 Peter 5:8). Satan is very envious at our condition, that we should enjoy that paradise out of which he is cast, and out of which he shall

be forever kept (1 Corinthians 16:13; 1 Peter 4:7; Revelation 3:3). Shall Satan keep a crafty watch, and shall not Christians keep a holy, spiritual watch? Our whole life is beset with temptations. Satan watches all opportunities to break our peace, to wound our consciences, to lessen our comforts, to impair our graces, to slur our evidences, and to damp our assurances. Oh, what need then have we to be always upon our watchtower, lest we be surprised by this subtle serpent! Watchfulness includes a waking, a rousing up of the soul. It is a continual, careful observing of our hearts and ways in all the turnings of our lives, that we still keep close to God and his word.

Watchfulness is nothing else but the soul running up and down, to and fro, busy everywhere. It is the heart busied and employed with diligent observation of *quid inde,* what comes from within us, and of *quid unde,* what comes from without us and into us. Ah, souls! You are no longer safe and secure than when you are upon your watch. While Antipater kept the watch, Alexander was safe; and while we keep a strict watch, we are safe. A watchful soul is a soul upon the wing, a soul out of gunshot, a soul upon a rock, a soul in a castle, a soul above the clouds, a soul held fast in everlasting arms.

I shall conclude this seventh head with this advice: remember the dragon is subtle, and bites the elephant's ear, and then sucks his blood, because he knows that to be the only place which the elephant cannot reach with his trunk to defend. So our enemies are so subtle that they will bite us and strike us where they may most mischief us; and therefore it does very much concern us to stand always upon our guard.

Eighthly, if you would not be taken with any of Satan's snares and devices, then keep up your communion with God. Your strength to stand and withstand Satan's fiery darts is from your communion with God. A soul high in communion with God may be tempted, but will not easily be conquered; such a soul will fight it out to the death. Communion with God furnishes the soul with the greatest and the choicest arguments to withstand Satan's temptations. Communion is the result of union. Communion is a reciprocal exchange between Christ and a gracious soul. Communion is Jacob's ladder, where you have Christ sweetly coming down into the soul, and the soul by divine influences sweetly ascending up to Christ. Communion with Christ is very inflaming, raising, and strengthening.

While Samson kept up his communion with God, no enemy could stand before him, but he goes on conquering and to conquer; but when he was fallen in his communion with God, he quickly falls before the plots of his enemies. It will be so with your souls. So long as your communion with God is kept up, you will be too hard for "spiritual wickednesses in high places"; but if you fall from your communion with God, you will fall as others before the

face of every temptation. David, so long as he kept up his communion with God, he stands and triumphs over all his enemies; but when he was fallen in his communion with God, then he falls before the enemies that were in his own bosom, and flies before those that pursued after his life. It will be so with your souls if you do not keep up your communion with God. Job keeps up his communion with God, and conquers Satan upon the dunghill. Adam loses his communion with God, and is conquered by Satan in paradise. Communion with God is a shield upon land as well as an anchor at sea; it is a sword to defend you as well as a staff to support you. Therefore keep up your communion.

Ninthly, if you would not be taken in any of Satan's snares, then engage not against Satan in your own strength, but be every day drawing new virtue and strength from the Lord Jesus. Certainly that soul that engages against any old or new temptation without new strength, new influences from on high, will fall before the power of the temptation. You may see this in Peter. He rested upon some old received strength ("Though all men should deny thee, yet will not I"), and therefore he falls sadly before a new temptation. He curses and swears, and denies him thrice that had thrice appeared gloriously to him (Matthew 26).

Ah, souls! When the snare is spread, look up to Jesus Christ, who is lifted up in the gospel as the brazen serpent was in the wilderness, and say to him, "Dear Lord, here is a new snare laid to catch my soul, and grace formerly received, without fresh supplies from your blessed bosom, will not deliver me from this snare. Oh, give me new strength, new power, new influences, new measures of grace, that so I may escape this snare." Ah, souls! Remember this, that your strength to stand and overcome must not be expected from graces received, but from the fresh and renewed influences of heaven. You must lean more upon Christ than upon your duties; you must lean more upon Christ than upon spiritual taste and discoveries; you must lean more upon Christ than upon your graces; or else Satan will lead you into captivity.

Tenthly and lastly, if you would not be taken in any of Satan's snares, then be much in prayer. Prayer is a shelter to the soul, a sacrifice to God, and a scourge to the devil. David's heart was oft more out of tune than his harp. He prays, and then, in spite of the devil, cries, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul" (Psalm 116:7). Prayer is *porta coeli, clavis paradisi*, the gate of heaven, a key to let us into paradise. There is nothing that renders plots fruitless like prayer. Therefore says Christ, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation" (Matthew 26:41). You must watch and pray, and pray and watch, if you would not enter into temptation. When Sennacherib and Haman had laid plots and snares to have destroyed the Jews, they prayed, and their souls were delivered, and Sennacherib and Haman destroyed.

David had many snares laid for him, and this puts him upon prayer. "Keep me," says he, "from the snare which they have laid for me, and the gins of the workers of iniquity. Let the wicked fall into their own nets, while that I escape" (Psalm 141:9-10). "The proud," says he, "hath hid a snare for me, and cords; they have spread a net by the wayside; they have set gins for me. Selah. I said unto the Lord, Thou art my God: hear the voice of my supplication, O Lord" (Psalm 140:5-6). Saul and many others had laid snares for David, and this puts him upon prayer; and so the snares are broken, and he is delivered.

Ah, souls! Take words to yourselves, and tell God that Satan has spread his snares in all places and in all companies. Tell God that he digs deep, and that he has plot upon plot, and device upon device, and all to undo you. Tell God that you have neither skill nor power to escape his snares. Tell God that it is a work too high and too hard for any created creature to work your deliverance, unless he puts under his own everlasting arms. Tell God how his honor is engaged to stand by you and to bring you off, that you be not ruined by his plots. Tell God how the wicked would triumph if you should fall into Satan's snares. Tell God of the love of Christ, of the blood of Christ, and of the intercession of Christ for you, that a way may be found for your escape. Tell God, if he will make it his honor to save you from falling into Satan's snares, you will make it your glory to speak of his goodness, and to live out his kindness. Christians must do as Daedalus, that, when he could not escape by a way upon earth, went by a way of heaven; and that is the way of prayer, which is the only way left to escape Satan's snares.

The next use is a use of thankfulness to those that escape Satan's snares, that are not taken by him at his will. Ah, Christians! It stands you upon, with that princely prophet David, to call upon your souls, and say, "Bless the Lord, O our souls, and all that is within us, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O our souls, and forget not all his benefits" (Psalm 103:1-2), who has not given us to be a prey to Satan, and to be ensnared by those snares that he has laid for our souls. The sense of this great favor did work up David's heart to praises: "Blessed be the Lord," says he, "who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped" (Psalm 124:6-7). Ah, Christians! Remember that the greatest part of the world, yea, the greatest part of professors, are taken in Satan's snares. Can you think seriously of this, and not blush to be unthankful? What are you better than others? And what have you deserved of God, or done for God, more than others, that you should by the help of a divine hand escape the snares, when others are taken and held in the snares of the devil to their eternal overthrow?

Will you be thankful for the escaping the snares that men spread for your lives or estates, and will you not be much more thankful for escaping those snares that Satan has laid for

your precious souls?

Remember this, that deliverance from Satan's snares does carry with it the clearest and the greatest evidence of the soul and heart of God to be towards you. Many a man by a common hand of providence escapes many a snare that man has laid for him, but yet escapes not the snares that Satan has laid for him. Saul, and Judas, and Demas doubtless escaped many snares that men had laid for them, but none of them escaped the snares that the devil had laid for them. Many men are lifted up above the snares of men by a common hand of providence that are left to fall into the snares of the devil by a hand of justice. Your deliverance from Satan's snares is a fruit of special love. Can you thus look upon it, and not be thankful, O precious souls? I judge not.

The last use of this point is to bespeak Christians to long to be at home. Oh, long to be in the bosom of Christ; long to be in the land of Canaan; for this world, this wilderness, is full of snares, and all employments are full of snares, and all enjoyments are full of snares. In civil things Satan has his snares to entrap us, and in all spiritual things Satan has his snares to catch us. All places are full of snares: city and country, shop and closet, sea and land; and all our mercies are surrounded with snares. There are snares about our tables, and snares about our beds. Yea, Satan is so powerful and subtle that he will oftentimes make our greatest, nearest, and dearest mercies to become our greatest snares. Sometimes he will make the wife that lies in the bosom to be a snare to a man, as Samson's was, and as Job's was. Sometimes he will make the child to be a snare, as Absalom was, and Eli's sons were. And sometimes he will make the servant to be a snare, as Joseph was to his mistress.

Ah, souls! Satan is so cunning and artificial that he can turn your cups into snares, and your clothes into snares, and your houses into snares, and your gardens into snares, and all your recreations into snares. And oh, how should the consideration of these things work all your souls to say with the church, "Make haste, my beloved, and be like to a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains of spices" (Song of Solomon 8:14), and to love, and look, and long for the coming of Christ! Shall the espoused maid long for the marriage day, the servant for his freedom, the captive for his ransom, the traveler for his inn, the mariner for his harbor (Philippians 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:2, 4), and shall not the people of the Lord long much more to be in the bosom of Christ, there being nothing below the bosom of Christ that is not surrounded with Satan's snares?

What Paul once spoke of bonds and afflictions, that they attended him in every place (Acts 20:23), that may all the saints say of Satan's snares, that they attend them in every place; which should cause them to cry out, *Migremus hinc, migremus hinc,* "Let us go hence, let us

go hence"; and to say with Monica, Augustine's mother, "What do we here? Why depart we not hence? Why fly we no swifter?" Ah, souls! Till you are taken up into the bosom of Christ, your comforts will not be full, pure, and constant. Till then, Satan will still be tempting you, and spreading snares to entangle you; therefore you should always be crying out with the church, "Come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20).

Is not Christ that Star of Jacob (Numbers 24:17), that giveth light to them that are in darkness (Luke 1:79)? That Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6), who brings the olive branch of peace to souls that are perplexed? Is not the greatest worth and wealth in him? Is not all the petty excellencies and perfections of all created creatures epitomized in him? Is not he the crown of crowns, the glory of glories, and the heaven of heavens? Oh, then be still a-longing after a full, clear, and constant enjoyment of Christ in heaven; for till then, Satan will still have plots and designs upon you. He acts by an untired power, and will never let you rest till you are taken up to an everlasting rest in the bosom of Christ.

APPENDIX

Five More Devices to Keep Souls from Believing in Christ

An appendix touching five more several devices that Satan has to keep poor souls from believing in Christ, from receiving of Christ, from embracing of Christ, from resting, leaning, or relying upon Christ for everlasting happiness and blessedness, according to the gospel; and remedies against those devices.

Device 1: Pointing to the greatness of their sins

Now the first device that Satan has to keep the soul off from believing in Christ, from closing with Christ, is by suggesting to the soul the greatness and vileness of his sins. "What," says Satan, "do you think that you shall ever obtain mercy by Christ, that have sinned with so high a hand against Christ? That have slighted the tenders of grace? That have grieved the Spirit of grace? That have despised the word of grace? That have trampled under feet the blood of the covenant, by which you might have been pardoned, purged, justified, and saved? That have spoken and done all the evil that you could? No, no," says Satan, "he has mercy for others, but not for you; pardon for others, but not for you; righteousness for others, but not for you. Therefore it is in vain for you to think of believing in Christ, or resting and leaning your guilty soul upon Christ."

Now the remedies against this device of Satan are these that follow.

The first remedy against this device of Satan is to consider that the greater your sins are, the more you stand in need of a Savior. The greater your burden is, the more you stand in need of one to help to bear it. The deeper the wound is, the more need there is of the surgeon; the more dangerous the disease is, the more need there is of the physician. Who but madmen will argue thus: "My burden is great, therefore I'll not call out for help; my wound is deep, therefore I'll not call out for balm; my disease is dangerous, therefore I'll not go to the physician"? Ah! It is spiritual madness; it is the devil's logic, to argue thus: "My sins are great, therefore I'll not go to Christ; I dare not rest nor lean on Christ." Whereas the soul should reason thus: "The greater my sins are, the more I stand in need of mercy, of pardon; and therefore I will go to Christ, who delights in mercy, who pardons sin for his own name's

sake (Isaiah 43:25), who is as able and as willing to forgive pounds as pence, thousands as hundreds."

The second remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that the promise of grace and mercy is to returning souls; and therefore, though you are never so wicked, yet if you will return, God will be yours, mercy shall be yours, and pardon yours. "For if you turn again unto the Lord, your brethren and your children shall find compassion before them that lead them captive, so that they shall come again into this land: for the Lord your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, if ye return unto him" (2 Chronicles 30:9). So Jeremiah 3:12: "Go and proclaim these words towards the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord; and I will not cause my anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever." So Joel 2:13: "And rend your hearts, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil." So Isaiah 55:7: "Let the wicked forsake his ways, 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"; or, as the Hebrew reads it, "he will multiply pardons." So Ezekiel 18.

Ah, sinner! It is not your great transgressions that shall exclude you from mercy, if you will break off your sins by repentance, and return to the fountain of mercy. Christ's heart, Christ's arms, are wide open to embrace the returning prodigal. It is not simply the greatest of your sins, but your peremptory persisting in sin, that will be your eternal overthrow.

The third remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider that the greatest sinners have obtained mercy; and therefore all the angels in heaven, all the men on earth, and all the devils in hell cannot tell to the contrary but that you may obtain mercy. Manasseh was a notorious sinner. He erected altars for Baal; he worshipped and served all the host of heaven; "he caused his sons to pass through the fire; he gave himself to witchcraft and sorcery; he made Judah to sin more wickedly than the heathen did, whom the Lord destroyed before the children of Israel; he caused the streets of Jerusalem to run down with innocent blood" (2 Kings 21). Ah, what a devil incarnate was he in his actings! And yet when he humbled himself and sought the Lord, the Lord was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him to Jerusalem, and made himself known unto him, and crowned him with mercy and lovingkindness, as you may see in 2 Chronicles 33. So Paul was once "a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious," yet he "obtained mercy" (1 Timothy 1:13). So Mary Magdalene was a notorious strumpet, a common whore, one out of whom Christ cast seven devils; yet she is pardoned by Christ, and dearly beloved of Christ (Luke 7). So in

Mark 16:9: "Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils."

Jansenius on the place says it is very observable that our Savior after his resurrection first appeared to Mary Magdalene and Peter, that had been grievous sinners; that even the worst of sinners may be comforted and encouraged to come to Christ, to believe in Christ, to rest and stay their souls upon Christ for mercy here and glory hereafter. That is a very precious word for the worst of sinners to hang upon, Psalm 68:18. The psalmist, speaking of Christ, says, "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them."

What though you are a rebellious child, or a rebellious servant? What though you are a rebellious swearer, a rebellious drunkard, a rebellious Sabbath-breaker? Yet Christ has received gifts for you, even for the rebellious. He has received the gift of pardon, the gift of righteousness, yea, all the gifts of the Spirit for you, that your heart may be made a delightful house for God to dwell in.

Bodin has a story concerning a great rebel that had made a great, strong party against a Roman emperor. The emperor makes proclamation that whoever could bring the rebel, dead or alive, should have such a great sum of money. The rebel, hearing of this, comes and presents himself before the emperor, and demands the sum of money. "Now," says the emperor, "if I should put him to death, the world would say I did it to save my money"; and so he pardons the rebel, and gives him the money. Ah, sinners! Shall a heathen do this, that had but a drop of mercy and compassion in him; and will not Christ do much more, that has all fullness of grace, mercy, and glory in himself? Surely his bowels do yearn towards the worst of rebels. Ah! If you will but come in, you will find him ready to pardon, yea, one made up of pardoning mercy. Oh, the readiness and willingness of Jesus Christ to receive to favor the greatest rebels!

The Father of mercies did meet, embrace, and kiss that prodigal mouth which came from feeding with swine and kissing of harlots. Ephraim had committed idolatry, and was backslidden from God; he was guilty of lukewarmness and unbelief (Hosea 4:17; 5:3; 6:4; 8:11; 12:14; 13:12); yet says God, "Ephraim is my dear son, he is a pleasant child; my bowels are troubled for him; I will have mercy" (or rather, as it is in the original, "I will have mercy, mercy") "upon him, saith the Lord" (Jeremiah 31:20). "Well," says God, "though Ephraim be guilty of crimson sins, yet he is a son, a dear son, a precious son, a pleasant child. Though he be black with filth and red with guilt, yet my bowels are troubled for him; I will have mercy, mercy upon him." Ah, sinners! If these bowels of mercy do not melt, win, and draw

you, justice will be a swift witness against you, and make you lie down in eternal misery for kicking against the bowels of mercy.

Christ hangs out still, as once that warlike Scythian did, a white flag of grace and mercy to returning sinners that humble themselves at his feet for favor; but if sinners stand out, Christ will put forth his red flag, his bloody flag, and then they shall die forever by a hand of justice. Sinners, there is no way to avoid perishing by Christ's iron rod but by kissing his golden scepter.

The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is to consider that Jesus Christ has nowhere in all the Scripture excepted against the worst of sinners that are willing to receive him, to believe in him, and to rest upon him for happiness and blessedness. Ah, sinners! Why should you be more cruel and unmerciful to your own souls than Christ is? Christ has not excluded you from mercy; why should you exclude your own souls from mercy? Oh, that you would dwell often upon that choice Scripture, John 6:37: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (or, as the original has it, "I will not cast out"). "Well," says Christ, "if any man will come, or is coming to me, let him be more sinful or less, more unworthy or less; let him be never so guilty, never so filthy, never so rebellious, never so leprous; yet if he will but come, I will not, not, not cast him off."

So much is held forth in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." Ah, sinners! Do not think that he that has received such notorious sinners to mercy will reject you. He is "yesterday, and to day, and the same for ever" (Hebrews 13:8).

Christ was born in an inn, to show that he receives all comers. His garments were divided into four parts, to show that out of what part of the world soever we come, we shall be received. If we be naked, Christ has robes to clothe us; if we be harborless, Christ has room to lodge us. That is a choice Scripture, Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."

The three tongues that were written upon the cross, in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, to witness Christ to be the King of the Jews, do each of them in their several idiom avouch this singu-

lar axiom, that Christ is an all-sufficient Savior; and a threefold cord is not easily broken. The apostle puts this out of doubt in Hebrews 7:25: "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Now he were not an all-sufficient Savior if he were not as able to save the greatest as the least of sinners. Ah, sinners! Tell Jesus Christ that he has not excluded you from mercy, and therefore you are resolved that you will sit, wait, weep, and knock at the door of mercy, till he shall say, "Souls, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven, your persons are justified, and your souls shall be saved."

The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is to consider that the greater sinner you are, the dearer you will be to Christ when he shall behold you as the travail of his soul. "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied" (Isaiah 53:11). The dearer we pay for anything, the dearer that thing is to us. Christ has paid most, and prayed most, and sighed most, and wept most, and bled most, for the greatest sinners; and therefore they are dearer to Christ than others that are less sinful. Rachel was dearer to Jacob than Leah, because she cost him more (Genesis 29:30); he obeyed, endured, and suffered more by day and by night for her than for Leah. Ah, sinners! The greatness of your sins does but set off the freeness and riches of Christ's grace, and the freeness of his love. This makes heaven and earth to ring of his praise, that he loves those that are most unlovely; that he shows most favor to them that have sinned most highly against him; as might be showed by several instances in Scripture, as Paul, Mary Magdalene, and others. Who sinned more against Christ than these? And who had sweeter and choicer manifestations of divine love and favor than these?

The sixth remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider that the longer you keep off from Christ, the greater and stronger your sins will grow. All divine power and strength against sin flows from the soul's union and communion with Christ (Romans 8:10; 1 John 1:6-7). While you keep off from Christ, you keep off from that strength and power which is only able to make you trample down strength, lead captivity captive, and slay the Goliaths that bid defiance to Christ. It is only faith in Christ that makes a man triumph over sin, Satan, hell, and the world. It is only faith in Christ that binds the strong man hand and foot, that stops the issue of blood (Mark 5:25-34), that makes a man strong in resisting and happy in conquering. Sin always dies most where faith lives most; the most believing soul is the most mortified soul. Ah, sinner! Remember this: there is no way on earth effectually to be rid of the guilt, filth, and power of sin but by believing in a Savior. It is not resolving, it is not complaining, it is not mourning, but believing, that will make you divinely victorious over that body of sin that to this day is too strong for you, and that will certainly be your ruin if it be not ruined by a hand of faith.

The seventh remedy against this device of Satan is wisely to consider that as there is nothing in Christ to discourage the greatest sinners from believing in him, so there is everything in Christ that may encourage the greatest sinners to believe in him, to rest and lean upon him for all happiness and blessedness. If you look upon his nature, his disposition, his names, his titles, his offices, as King, Priest, and Prophet, you shall find nothing to discourage the greatest sinners to receive him, to believe on him (Song of Solomon 1:3). Christ is the greatest good, the choicest good, the chiefest good, the most suitable good, the most necessary good. He is a pure good, a real good, a total good, an eternal good, and a soul-satisfying good.

Sinners, are you poor? Christ has gold to enrich you. Are you naked? Christ has royal robes, he has white raiment, to clothe you. Are you blind? Christ has eyesalve to enlighten you (Revelation 3:17-18). Are you hungry? Christ will be manna to feed you. Are you thirsty? He will be a well of living water to refresh you. Are you wounded? He has balm under his wings to heal you (Malachi 4:2). Are you sick? He is a physician to cure you (Matthew 4:23). Are you prisoners? He has laid down a ransom for you (Matthew 20:28). Ah, sinners! Tell me, tell me, is there anything in Christ to keep you off from believing? No. Is there not everything in Christ that may encourage you to believe in him? Yes. Oh, then believe in him; and then, "though your sins be as scarlet, they be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18). Nay, then your iniquities shall be forgotten as well as forgiven; they shall be remembered no more (Isaiah 43:25). God will cast them behind his back (Isaiah 38:17); he will hurl them into the bottom of the sea (Micah 7:19).

The eighth and last remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider the absolute necessity of believing in Christ. Heaven is too holy and too hot to hold unbelievers; their lodging is prepared in hell. "But the fearful, and unbelieving, etc., shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8). "If ye believe not that I am he," says Christ, "you shall die in your sins" (John 8:24); and he that dies in his sins must to judgment and to hell in his sins. Every unbeliever is a condemned man. "He that believeth not," says John, "is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18). "And he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).

Ah, sinners! The law, the gospel, and your own consciences have passed the sentence of condemnation upon you, and there is no way to reverse the sentence but by believing in Christ. And therefore my counsel is this: stir up yourselves to lay hold on the Lord Jesus (Isaiah 64:7), and look up to him, and wait on him from whom every good and perfect gift comes (James 1:17), and give him no rest till he has given you that jewel faith (Isaiah 62:7),

that is more worth than heaven and earth, and that will make you happy in life, joyful in death, and glorious in the day of Christ. And thus much for the remedies against this first device of Satan, whereby he keeps off thousands from believing in Christ.

Device 2: Pointing to their unworthiness

The second device that Satan has to keep poor sinners from believing, from closing with a Savior, is by suggesting to them their unworthiness. "Ah," says Satan, "as you are worthy of the greatest misery, so you are unworthy of the least crumb of mercy. What, do you think," says Satan, "that ever Christ will own, receive, or embrace such an unworthy wretch as you are? No, no; if there were any worthiness in you, then indeed Christ might be willing to be entertained by you. You are unworthy to entertain Christ into your house; how much more unworthy are you to entertain Christ into your heart!"

Now the remedies against this device of Satan are these that follow.

The first remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider that God has nowhere in the Scripture required any worthiness in the creature before believing in Christ. If you make a diligent search through all the Scripture, you shall not find, from the first line in Genesis to the last line in the Revelation, one word that speaks out God's requiring any worthiness in the creature before the soul's believing in Christ, before the soul's leaning and resting upon Christ for happiness and blessedness. And why then should that be a bar and hindrance to your faith which God does nowhere require of you before you come to Christ, that you may have life? Ah, sinners! Remember, Satan objects your unworthiness against you only out of a design to keep Christ and your souls asunder forever; and therefore, in the face of all your unworthiness, rest upon Christ, come to Christ, believe in Christ, and you are happy forever.

The second remedy against this device of Satan is wisely to consider that none never received Christ, embraced Christ, obtained mercy and pardon from Christ, but unworthy souls. Pray, what worthiness was in Matthew, Zacchaeus, Mary Magdalene, Manasseh, Paul, and Lydia, before their coming to Christ, before their faith in Christ? Surely none. Ah, sinners! You should reason thus: "Christ has bestowed the choicest mercies, the greatest favors, the highest dignities, the sweetest privileges, upon unworthy sinners; and therefore, O our souls, do not you faint, do not you despair, but patiently and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord. Who can tell but that free grace and mercy may shine forth upon us, though we are unworthy, and give us a portion among those worthies that are now triumphing in heaven?"

The third remedy against this device of Satan is that if the soul will keep off from Christ till it be worthy, it will never close with Christ, it will never embrace Christ, it will never be one with Christ; it must lie down in everlasting sorrow (Isaiah 50:11). God has laid up all worthiness in Christ, that the creature may know where to find it, and may make out after it. There is no way on earth to make unworthy souls worthy but by believing in Christ. Believing in Christ, of slaves, it will make you worthy sons; of enemies, it will make you worthy friends (James 2:23). God will count none worthy, nor call none worthy, nor carry it towards none as worthy, but believers, who are made worthy by the worthiness of Christ's person, righteousness, satisfaction, and intercession.

The fourth and last remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that if you make a diligent search into your own hearts, you shall find that it is the pride and folly of your own hearts that puts you upon bringing of a worthiness to Christ. Oh, you would fain bring something to Christ that might render you acceptable to him; you are loath to come empty-handed. The Lord cries out, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price. Wherefore do you spend your money upon that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not?" (Isaiah 55:1-2).

Here the Lord calls upon moneyless souls, upon penniless souls, upon unworthy souls, to come and partake of his precious favors freely. But sinners are proud and foolish, and because they have no money, no worthiness to bring, they'll not come, though he sweetly invites them. Ah, sinners! What is more just than that you should perish forever, that prefer husks among swine before the milk and wine, the sweet and precious things of the gospel, that are freely and sweetly offered to you? Well, sinners, remember this: it is not so much the sense of your unworthiness as your pride that keeps you off from a blessed closing with the Lord Jesus.

Device 3: Pointing to their lack of preparation

The third device that Satan has to keep poor sinners from believing in Christ, from closing with Christ, from resting on Christ, is by suggesting to them the want of such and such preparations and qualifications. Says Satan, "You are not prepared to entertain Christ. You are not thus and thus humbled and justified. You are not heartsick of sin. You have not been under horrors and terrors as such and such. You must stay till you are prepared and qualified to receive the Lord Jesus."

Now the remedies against this device of Satan are these that follow.

The first remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider that such as have not been so and so prepared and qualified, as Satan suggests, have received Christ, believed in Christ, and been saved by Christ. Matthew was called sitting at the receipt of custom, and there was such power went along with Christ's call that made him to follow (Matthew 9:9). We read not of any horrors or terrors that he was under before his being called by Christ. Pray, what preparations and qualifications were found in Zacchaeus, Paul, the jailer, and Lydia before their conversion (Luke 19:9; Acts 16)? God brings in some by the sweet and still voice of the gospel; and usually such that are thus brought in to Christ are the sweetest, humblest, wisest, and fruitfullest Christians.

God is a free agent, to work by law or gospel, by smiles or frowns, by presenting hell or heaven to sinners' souls. God thunders from Mount Sinai upon some souls, and conquers them by thundering. God speaks to others in a still voice, and by that conquers them. You that are brought to Christ by the law, do not you judge and condemn them that are brought to Christ by the gospel (Romans 14); and you that are brought to Christ by the gospel, do not you despise those that are brought to Christ by the law. Some are brought to Christ by fire, storms, and tempests; others by more easy and gentle gales of the Spirit. The Spirit is free in the works of conversion, and as the wind, it blows when, where, and how it pleases. Thrice happy are those souls that are brought to Christ, whether it be in a winter's night or in a summer's day.

The second remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to dwell upon these following Scriptures, which do clearly evidence that poor sinners which are not so and so prepared and qualified to meet with Christ, to receive and embrace the Lord Jesus Christ, may notwithstanding that believe in Christ, and rest and lean upon him for happiness and blessedness, according to the gospel. Read the first of the Proverbs, from verse 20 to the end; and the first eleven verses of the eighth of the Proverbs; and the first six verses of the ninth of the Proverbs; and the first fourteen verses of Ezekiel 16; and John 3:14-18, 36; and Revelation 3:15-20. Here the Lord Jesus Christ stands knocking at the Laodiceans' door. He would fain have them to sup with him, and that he might sup with them; that is, that they might have intimate communion and fellowship one with another.

Now pray tell me, what preparations or qualifications had these Laodiceans to entertain Christ? Surely none; for they were lukewarm, they were neither cold nor hot; they were wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. And yet Christ, to show his free grace and his condescending love, invites the very worst of sinners to open to him, though they were no ways so or so prepared or qualified to entertain him.

The third remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider that the Lord does not in all the Scripture require such and such preparations and qualifications before men come to Christ, before they believe in Christ, or entertain or embrace the Lord Jesus Christ. God justifies the ungodly (Romans 4:5). Believing, believing in Christ, is the great thing that God presses upon sinners throughout the Scripture, as all know that know anything of Scripture.

Objection. But does not Christ say, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28)? To this I shall give these three answers.

1. That though the invitation be to such that "labor and are heavy laden," yet the promise of giving rest is made over to coming, to believing.

2. I answer that all that this Scripture proves and shows is that such as labor under sin as under a heavy burden, and that are laden with the guilt of sin and sense of God's displeasure, ought to come to Christ for rest. But it does not prove that only such must come to Christ, nor that all men must be thus burdened and laden with the sense of their sins and the wrath of God before they come to Christ. Poor sinners, when they are under the sense of sin and wrath of God, they are prone to run from creature to creature, and from duty to duty, and from ordinance to ordinance, to find rest; and if they could find it in anything or creature, Christ should never hear of them. But here the Lord sweetly invites them, and to encourage them, he engages himself to give them rest. "Come," says Christ, "and I will give you rest. I'll not show you rest, nor barely tell you of rest, but I will give you rest. I am faithfulness itself, and cannot lie; I will give you rest. I that have the greatest power to give it, the greatest will to give it, the greatest right to give it; come, laden sinners, and I will give you rest." Rest is the most desirable good, the most suitable good, and to you the greatest good. "Come," says Christ; that is, "Believe in me, and I will give you rest. I will give you peace with God, and peace with conscience. I will turn your storm into an everlasting calm. I will give you such rest that the world can neither give to you nor take from you."

3. I answer, no one Scripture speaks out the whole mind of Christ. Therefore do but compare this one Scripture with those several Scriptures that are laid down in the second remedy last mentioned, and it will clearly appear that though men are not thus and thus burdened and laden with their sins, and filled with horror and terror, yet they may come to Christ; they may receive and embrace the Lord Jesus Christ.

The fourth and last remedy against this device of Satan is to consider that all that trouble for him, all that sorrow, shame, and mourning, which is acceptable to God, and delightful

to God, and prevalent with God, flows from faith in Christ, as the stream does from the fountain, as the branch does from the root, as the effect does from the cause. "They shall look on him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him" (Zechariah 12:10). All gospel mourning flows from believing; they shall first look, and then mourn. All that know anything know this, "that whatever is not of faith is sin" (Romans 14:23). Till men have faith in Christ, their best services are but glorious sins.

Device 4: Suggesting that Christ is unwilling to save them

The fourth device that Satan has to keep Christ and a sinner asunder, to keep a poor sinner from believing in Christ, from embracing of Christ, is by suggesting to the sinner Christ's unwillingness to save. "It is true," says Satan, "Christ is able to save you; but is he willing? Surely, though he be able, yet he is not willing to save such a wretch as you are, that have trampled his blood under your feet, and that have been in open rebellion against him all your days."

The remedy against this device of Satan is briefly to consider these few things.

1. The great journey that he has taken from heaven to earth, on purpose to save sinners, does strongly demonstrate his willingness to save them. "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Matthew 9:13). "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (1 Timothy 1:15).
2. His divesting himself of his glory in order to sinners' salvation speaks out his willingness to save them. He leaves his Father's bosom, he puts off his glorious robes, and lays aside his glorious crown, and bids adieu to his glistering courtiers the angels; and all this he does that he may accomplish sinners' salvation.
3. That sea of sin, that sea of wrath, that sea of trouble, that sea of blood, that Jesus Christ waded through, that sinners might be pardoned, justified, reconciled, and saved, does strongly evidence his willingness to save sinners.
4. His sending his ambassadors early and late to woo and entreat sinners to be reconciled to him does with open mouth show his readiness and willingness to save sinners (2 Corinthians 5:19-20).
5. His complaints against such as refuse him, and that turn their backs upon him, and that will not be saved by him, does strongly declare his willingness to save them. "He came

to his own, and his own received him not" (John 1:11). So in the fifth of John, verse 40: "But ye will not come to me, that ye may have life."

6. The joy and delight that he takes at the conversion of sinners does demonstrate his willingness that they should be saved. "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance" (Luke 15:7). God the Father rejoices at the return of his prodigal son. Christ rejoices to see the travail of his soul (Isaiah 53:11). The Spirit rejoices that he has another temple to dwell in; and the angels rejoice that they have another brother to delight in.

Device 5: Turning their eyes to God's secret decrees instead of their duty

The fifth device that Satan has to keep a sinner and Christ asunder is by working a sinner to mind more the secret decrees and counsels of God than his own duty. "What need you to busy yourself about receiving, embracing, and entertaining of Christ?" says Satan. "If you are elected, you shall be saved; if not, all that you can do will do you no good." Nay, he will work the soul not only to doubt of its election, but to conclude that he is not elected, and therefore, let him do what he can, he shall never be saved.

Now the remedies against this device of Satan are these.

The first remedy is seriously to consider that all the angels in heaven, nor all the men on earth, nor all the devils in hell, cannot tell to the contrary but that you may be an elect person, a chosen vessel. You may be confident of this, that God never made Satan one of his privy council; God never acquainted him with the names or persons of such that he has set his love upon to eternity.

The second remedy against this device of Satan is to meddle with that which you have to do. Secret things belong to the Lord, but revealed things belong to you (Deuteronomy 29:29). Your work, sinner, is to be peremptory in believing, and in returning to the Lord. Your work is to cast yourself upon Christ, lie at his feet, to wait on him in his ways, and to give him no rest till he shall say, "Sinner, I am thy portion, I am thy salvation, and nothing shall separate between thee and me."

Finis.