PRECIOUS REMEDIES AGAINST SATAN'S DEVICES

By Thomas Brooks (1608 - 1680)

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

Choice excerpts from the book

The Epistle Dedicatory

A Word to the Reader

Introduction

I. THE PROOF OF THE POINT

II. SATAN'S DEVICES TO DRAW THE SOUL TO SIN

[12 devices and their remedies]

1. By presenting the bait and hiding the hook: For remedies, consider that
1) we ought to keep at the greatest distance from sin and from playing with the bait
2) sin is but a bitter sweet
3) sin will usher in the greatest and the saddest losses
4) sin is very deceitful and bewitching

2. By painting sin with virtue's colors: For remedies, consider that
1) sin is never the less vile by being so painted
2) the more sin is so painted the more dangerous it is
3) we ought to look on sin with that eye with which within a few hours we shall see it
4) sin cost the life-blood of the Lord Jesus

3. By the extenuating and lessening of sin: For remedies, consider that
1) sin which men account small brings God's great wrath on men
2) the giving way to a less sin makes way for the committing of a greater
3) it is sad to stand with God for a trifle
4) often there is most danger in the smallest sins
5) the saints have chosen to suffer greatly rather than commit the least sin
6) the soul can never stand under the guilt and weight of sin when God sets it home upon the soul
7) there is more evil in the least sin than in the greatest affliction

4. By showing to the soul the best men's sins and by hiding from the soul their virtues, their sorrows, and their repentance: For remedies, consider that
1) the Spirit of God records not only the sins of the saints, but also their repentance
2) these saints did not make a trade of sin
3) though God does not disinherit his sinning people, He punishes them severely
4) God has two main ends in recording the falls of His saints

5. By presenting God to the soul as One made up all of mercy: For remedies, consider that
1) It is the sorest of judgments to be left to sin upon any pretense whatever
2) God is as just as He is merciful
3) sins against mercy will bring the greatest and sorest judgments on men
4) though God's general mercy is over all His works, yet His
special mercy is confined to those that are divinely qualified
5) the saints now glorified regarded God's mercy as a most powerful argument against, and not for, sin

6. By persuading the soul that repentance is easy and that therefore the soul need not scruple about sinning: For remedies, consider that
1) repentance is a difficult work above our own power
2) repentance changes and converts the whole man from sin to God
3) repentance is a continued act
4) if repentance were easy, the lack of it would not strike millions with terror and drive them to hell
5) to repent of sin is as great a mark of grace as not to sin
6) Satan now suggests that repentance is easy, but shortly he will drive his dupes to despair by presenting it as the hardest work in the world

7. By making the soul bold to venture upon the occasions of sin: For remedies, consider that
1) certain scriptures expressly command us to avoid occasions of sin and the least appearance of evil
2) there is no conquest over sin unless the soul turns from the occasions of sin
3) saints now glorified have turned from the occasions of sin as from hell itself
4) to avoid the occasions of sin is an evidence of grace

8. By representing to the soul the outward mercies enjoyed by men walking in sin, and their freedom from outward miseries: For remedies, consider that
1) we cannot judge of how the heart of God stands towards a man by the acts of His providence
2) nothing provokes God's wrath so much as men's abuse of His goodness and mercy
3) there is no greater curse or affliction in this life than not to be in misery or affliction
4) the wants of evil men are far greater than their outward blessings
5) outward things are not as they seem, nor as they are esteemed
6) God has ends and designs in giving evil men outward mercies and present rest from sorrows and sufferings that cause saints to sigh
7) God often plagues and punishes those whom others think He most spares and loves
8) God will call evil men to a strict account for all the outward good that they have enjoyed

9. By presenting to the soul the crosses, losses, sorrows and sufferings that daily attend those who walk in the ways of holiness: For remedies, consider that
1) all afflictions suffered by Christians turn to their profit
2) all such afflictions only reach their worst, not their best, part
3) all such afflictions are short and momentary
4) all such afflictions proceed from God's dearest love
5) it is our duty and glory to measure afflictions not by the smart but by the end
6) God's design in saints' afflictions is to try, not to ruin, their souls
7) the afflictions, wrath and misery consequent upon wickedness are far worse than those linked with holiness

10. By causing saints to compare themselves and their ways with those reputed to be worse than themselves: For remedies, consider that
1) to be quick-sighted abroad and blind at home proves a man a hypocrite
2) it is far better to compare our internal and external actions with the Word than to compare ourselves with others worse than ourselves
3) though our sins may not appear as great as those of others, yet without repentance responding to mercy, we shall be as certainly damned as others

11. By polluting the souls and judgments of men with dangerous errors that lead to looseness and wickedness: For remedies, consider that
1) an erroneous vain mind is as odious to God as a wicked life
2) it is needful to receive the truth affectionately and plenteously
3) error makes its owner suffer loss
4) it is needful to hate and reject all doctrines that are contrary to godliness, that lead to self-righteousness, and that make good works co-partners with Christ
5) it is needful to hold fast the truth
6) it is needful to keep humble
7) errors have been productive of great evils

12. By leading men to choose wicked company: For remedies, consider that
1) there are express commands of God to shun such company
2) wicked company is infectious and dangerous
3) it is needful to look upon the wicked in such terms as Scripture describes them
4) the company of wicked men was once a grief and burden also to saints now glorified

III. SATAN'S DEVICES TO KEEP SOULS FROM HOLY DUTIES, TO HINDER SOULS IN HOLY SERVICES, TO KEEP THEM OFF FROM RELIGIOUS PERFORMANCES

[8 devices and their remedies]
1. By presenting the world in such a garb as to ensnare the soul: For remedies, consider that
1) all things here below are impotent and weak
2) they are also full of vanity
3) all things under the sun are uncertain and mutable
4) the great things of the world are hurtful to men owing to the corruption of their hearts
5) all the felicity of this world is mixed
6) it is needful to get better acquainted with, and assurance of, more blessed and glorious things
7) true happiness and satisfaction does not arise from worldly good
8) the value and dignity of the soul is to be a subject of contemplation

2 By presenting to the soul the dangers, losses and sufferings that accompany the performance of certain religious duties: For remedies, consider that
1) all such troubles cannot harm the true Christian
2) saints now glorified encountered such dangers, but persevered to the end
3) all such dangers are but for a moment, whereas the neglect of the service of God lays the Christian open to spiritual and eternal dangers
4) God knows how to deliver from troubles by troubles, from dangers by dangers
5) In the service of God, despite troubles and afflictions, the gains outweigh the losses

3. By presenting to the soul the difficulty of performing religious duties: For remedies, consider that
1) it is better to regard the necessity of the duty than the difficulty of it
2) the Lord Jesus will reveal Himself to the obedient soul and thus make the service easy
3) the Lord Jesus has Himself engaged in hard service and in suffering for your temporal and eternal good
4) religious duties are only difficult to the worse, not to the more noble part of a saint
5) a glorious recompense awaits saints who serve the Lord in the face of difficulties and discouragements

4. By causing saints to draw false inferences from the blessed and glorious things that Christ has done: For remedies, consider that
1) it is as needful to dwell as much upon scriptures that state Christian duty as upon those that speak of the glorious things that Christ has done for us
2) the glorious things that Christ has done and is now doing for us should be our strongest motives and encouragements for the performance of our duties
3) other precious souls who have rested on Christ's work
have been very active and lively in religious duties
4) those who do not walk in God's ways cannot have such evidence of their righteousness before God as can those who rejoice in the service of the Lord
5) duties are to be esteemed not by their acts but by their ends

5. By presenting to view the fewness and poverty of those who hold to religious practices: For remedies, consider that
1) though saints are outwardly poor, they are inwardly rich
2) in all ages God has had some that have been rich, wise and honorable
3) spiritual riches infinitely transcend temporal riches, and satisfy the poorest saints
4) saints now appear to be 'a little flock', but they belong to a company that cannot be numbered
5) it is but as a day before these despised saints will shine brighter than the sun
6) the time will come even in this life when God will take away the reproach and contempt of His people, and make those the 'head' who have been the 'tail'

6. By showing saints that the majority of men make light of God's ways and walk in the ways of their own hearts: For remedies, consider that
1) certain scriptures warn against following the sinful examples of men
2) those who sin with the multitude will suffer with the multitude
3) the soul of a man is of more worth than heaven and earth

7. By casting in vain thoughts while the soul is seeking God or waiting on God: For remedies, consider that
1) the God with whom we have to do is great, holy, majestic and glorious
2) despite wandering thoughts it is needful to be resolute in religious service
3) vain and trifling thoughts that Satan casts into our souls are not sins if they are abhorred, resisted and disclaimed
4) watching against, resisting and lamenting sinful thoughts evidences grace and the sincerity of our hearts
5) we must labor to be filled with the fullness of God and enriched with all spiritual blessings
6) we must labor to keep up holy and spiritual affections
7) we must labor to avoid multiplicity of worldly business

8. By tempting Christians to rest in their performances: For remedies, consider that
1) our choicest services have their imperfection and weaknesses
2) our choicest services are unable to minister comfort and aid in days of trouble
3) good works, if rested upon, will as certainly destroy us as the greatest sins that we commit
4) God has met our need of a resting place in Christ Himself

IV. SATAN'S DEVICES TO KEEP SAINTS IN A SAD, DOUBTING, QUESTIONING AND UNCOMFORTABLE CONDITION

[8 devices and their remedies]
1. By causing saints to remember their sins more than their Savior, yes, even to forget and neglect their Savior: For remedies, consider that
1) though Jesus Christ has not freed believers from sin's presence, He has freed them from its damnatory power
2) though Jesus Christ has not freed believers from the vexing and molesting power of sin, He has freed them from the reign and dominion of sin
3) it is needful to keep one eye on the promise of remission of sin, and the other eye on the inward operations of sin
4) believers' sins have been charged to the account of Christ as debts which He has fully satisfied
5) the Lord has good reasons for allowing His people to be troubled with sinful corruption
6) believers must repent of their being discouraged by their sins

2. By causing saints to make false definitions of their graces: For remedies, consider that
1) there may be true faith, even great faith, where there is no assurance
2) the Scriptures define faith other than Satan tempts the saints to define it
3) there may be true faith where there is much doubting
4) assurance is an effect of faith, not faith itself

3. By causing saints to make false inferences from the cross actings of Providence: For remedies, consider that
1) many things, though contrary to our desires, are not contrary to our good
2) God's hand may be against a man when His love and His heart are set upon him
3) Cross providences are sent by God to work some noble good for saints
4) all the strange and deep providences that believers meet with further them in their way to heaven

4. By suggesting to saints that their graces are not true, but counterfeit: For remedies, consider that
1) grace may mean either the good will and favor of God, or the gifts of grace
2) there are differences between renewing grace and restraining grace, between sanctifying and temporary grace (to particulars given)

5. By suggesting to saints that the conflict that is in them is found also in hypocrites and profane souls: For remedies, consider that
1) the whole frame of a believer's soul is against sin
2) a saint conflicts against sin universally, the least sin as well as the greatest
3) the conflict in a saint is maintained for several reasons
4) the saint's conflict is constant
5) the saint's conflict is within the same faculties
6) the saint's conflict is blessed, successful and prevailing

6. By suggesting to the saint who has lost joy and comfort that his state is not good: For remedies, consider that
1) the loss of comfort is a separable adjunct from grace
2) the precious things still enjoyed are far better than the joys and comforts lost
3) the glorified saints were once in the same condition
4) the causes of joy and comfort are not always the same
5) God will restore the comforts of His people

7. By reminding the saint of his frequent relapses into sin formerly repented of and prayed against: For remedies, consider that
1) many scriptures show that such relapses have troubled saints
2) God nowhere promises that such relapses will not happen
3) the most renowned of glorified saints have, on earth, experienced such relapses
4) relapses into enormities must be distinguished from relapses into infirmities
5) involuntary and voluntary relapses must be distinguished
6) no experience of the soul, however deep or high, can in itself secure the soul against relapses

8. By persuading saints that their state is not good nor their graces sound: For remedies, consider that
1) the best of Christians have been most tempted by Satan 2) all the saints' temptations are sanctified to them by a hand of love
3) temptations cannot harm the saints as long as they are resisted by them

V. SATAN'S DEVICES TO DESTROY AND ENSNARE ALL SORTS AND RANKS OF MEN IN THE WORLD

[5 devices and their remedies]

I. DEVICES AGAINST THE GREAT AND HONORABLE OF THE EARTH

1. By causing them to seek greatness, position, riches and security: For remedies, consider that
1) self-seeking sets men upon sins against the law, the Gospel, and Nature itself
2) self-seeking exceedingly abases a man
3) the Word pronounces curses and woes against self-seekers
4) self-seekers are self-losers and self-destroyers
5) saints have denied self and set public good above personal advantage
6) self hinders the sight of divine things: hence prophets and apostles, when seeing visions, were carried out of themselves

2. By causing them to act against the people of the Most High: For remedies, consider that
1) all who have acted against the saints have been ruined by the God of saints
2) the Scriptures show that God gives victory to His people against their enemies
3) to fight against the people of God is to fight against God Himself
4) men of the world owe their preservation from instant ruin, under God, to the saints

II. DEVICE AGAINST THE LEARNED AND THE WISE

By moving them to pride themselves on their parts and abilities, and to despise men of greater grace but inferior abilities: For remedies, consider that
1) men have nothing but what they have received, gifts as well as saving grace coming alike from Christ
2) men's trusting to their parts and abilities has been their utter ruin
3) you do not transcend others more in parts and abilities than they do you in grace and holiness
4) men who pride themselves on their gifts and set themselves against the saints will find that God blasts and withers their gifts

III. DEVICE AGAINST THE SAINTS

By dividing them and causing them to 'bite and devour one another.' For remedies, consider that
1) it is better to dwell on the saints' graces rather than on their weaknesses and infirmities
2) love and union best promote safety and security
3) God commands and requires the saints to love one another
4) it is better to eye the things in which saints agree rather than those things wherein they differ
5) God is the God of peace, Christ the Prince of peace, and the Spirit the Spirit of peace
6) it is needful for the saints to make more care and conscience of maintaining their peace with God
7) it is needful to dwell much upon the relationship and union of the people of God
8) discord is productive of miseries
9) it is good and honorable to be the first in seeking peace and reconcilement
10) saints should agree well together, making the Word the only touchstone and judge of their words and actions
11) saints should be much in self-judging
12) saints should labor to be clothed with humility

IV. DEVICE AGAINST POOR AND IGNORANT SOULS

By causing them to affect ignorance and to neglect and despise the means of knowledge: For remedies, consider that
1) an ignorant heart is an evil heart
2) ignorance is the deformity of the soul
3) ignorance makes men objects of God's hatred and wrath
4) ignorance is a sin that leads to all sins

APPENDIX

I. FIVE MORE OF SATAN'S DEVICES

1. By suggesting to men the greatness and vileness of their sins [Eight Remedies]
2. By suggesting to sinners their unworthiness [Four Remedies]
3. By suggesting to sinners their want of certain preparations and qualifications [Three Remedies]
4. By suggesting to sinners that Christ Is unwilling to save them [Six Remedies]
5. By causing sinners to give more attention to the secret decrees and counsels of God than to their own duty [Two Remedies]

II. SEVEN CHARACTERS OF FALSE TEACHERS

III. SIX PROPOSITIONS CONCERNING SATAN AND HIS DEVICES

[Five reasons of the point added]

IV. CONCLUSION: TEN SPECIAL HELPS AND RULES AGAINST SATAN'S DEVICES

"Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against **the devil's schemes**. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand." Eph_6:11-13

Choice excerpts from Thomas Brooks'
Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices

Soul-killing plots, devices, stratagems & machinations!

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

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.

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 the chains of darkness until the judgment of the great day," makes use of all his power and skill to bring all people 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 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!** Satan loves to sail with the wind, and to **suit men's temptations to their conditions and inclinations.**

From the power, malice and skill of Satan—proceeds all the **soul-killing plots, devices, stratagems and machinations**, which are in the world. A man may as well count the stars, and number the sands of the sea, as reckon up all the devices of Satan!

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

He hides the hook!

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

Satan has his several devices to deceive, entangle, and undo the souls of men. Satan has . . .
  snares for the wise, and snares for the simple;
  snares for hypocrites, and snares for the upright;
  snares for brave, and snares for the timorous;
  snares for the rich, and snares for the poor;
  snares for the aged, and snares for youth.
Happy are those souls which are not captured and held in the snares that he has laid!

Satan's first device to draw the soul into 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 deceived our first parents, "And the serpent said unto the woman, You shall not surely die—for God knows, that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened; and you shall be as gods." Your eyes shall he opened, and you 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! So Satan cheats them—giving them an apple in exchange for a paradise!

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

Alas! Many have fallen forever by this vile strumpet, the **world**, who, by showing forth her two fair breasts of PROFIT and PLEASURE, has wounded their souls, and cast them down into utter perdition! She has, by the glistening of her pomp and preferment, slain millions!

The pouring forth of all His wrath

"I will sing of Your **love** and **justice**." *Psalm 101:1*

Mercy is God's Alpha—justice is His Omega.

When God's mercy is despised—then His justice takes the throne!

God is like a prince, who first hangs out the **white flag** of mercy; if this wins men—they are happy forever! But if they remain rebellious, then God will put forth His **red flag** of justice and judgment.

If His mercy is despised—His justice shall be felt!

God is as just—as He is merciful. As the Scriptures portray Him to be a very merciful God—so they portray Him to be **a very just God**.

Witness His casting the angels out of heaven and His binding them in chains of darkness until the judgment of the great day.

Witness His turning Adam out of Paradise.

Witness His drowning of the old world.

Witness His raining hell out of heaven upon Sodom.

Witness all the troubles, losses, sicknesses, and diseases, which are in the world.

Witness His treasuring up of wrath against the day of wrath.

But above all, witness **the pouring forth of all His wrath** upon His bosom Son, when Jesus bore the sins of His people, and cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

As I know not the man who can reckon up his **mercies**; so I know not the man who can sum up the **miseries** which are coming upon him for his sins.

God is slow to anger—but He recompenses His slowness with grievousness of punishment. If we abuse His mercy to serve our lust—then He will rain hell out of heaven, rather than not visit for such sins.

Men shall be deeper in hell, because heaven was offered unto them—and they abused God's mercy. Sins against God's mercy, will bring upon the soul the greatest misery!

A soul given up to sin

It is the greatest judgment in the world to be left to sin. 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 at. 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) Ephraim will be unteachable and incorrigible; he has made a match with sin—and he shall have his bellyful of it!

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 hastening 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—but do not give me up to the ways of my own heart!

Augustine says, "Deliver me, O Lord, from that evil man—myself!"

It is but a little sin!

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

"Ah!" says Satan, "**It is but a little sin**—a little pride, a little worldliness, a little lust, etc. 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."

Consider, that there is great danger, yes, many times most danger—in the smallest sins. "A little leaven leavens the whole lump" (1 Cor. 5:6). If the serpent sneaks in his head—he will draw in his whole body after him. 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 indiscernibly in the soul, until they come to be so strong, as to trample upon the soul, and to cut the throat of the soul.

Many are eternally killed and betrayed by the 'little sins', as they call them, that are nourished in their own bosoms.

A little hole in the ship, sinks it.

A small breach in a dyke, carries away all before it.

A little stab at the heart, kills a man.

A little sin, without a great deal of mercy, will damn a man!

Sweet poisons!

"I will give You all these things—if You will fall down and worship me." *Matthew 4:9*

Satan presents the world in such a dress, and in such a garb, as to ensnare the soul, and to win the affection of the soul. He represents the world to them in its beauty and finery, which proves a bewitching sight to carnal men. Satan 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! the time, the thoughts, the hearts, the souls—which the inordinate love of this wicked world eats up and destroys! Where one thousand are destroyed by the world's **frowns**—ten thousand are destroyed by the world's **smiles**!

The world, siren-like, sings to us—then sinks us!

It kisses us—then betrays us, like Judas!

It kisses us—then stabs us under the rib, like Joab.

The honors, splendor, and all the glory of this world, are but **sweet poisons**, which will much endanger us, if they do not eternally destroy us. Ah! the multitude of souls that have glutted on these sweet baits, and died forever! Such men will sell Christ, heaven, and their souls for a trifle! "How long will you love what is worthless and pursue a lie?" *Psalm 4:2*

Ah, how many thousands are there now on earth, who have found this true by experience; who have spun a lovely rope to strangle themselves, both temporally and eternally, by being bewitched by the beauty and finery of this world!

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, until they were acquainted with the use of wheat. Ah, did men but taste more of heaven, and live more in heaven, and had more glorious hopes of going to heaven, ah, how easily would they trample the world under their feet!

"You joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions." *Hebrews 10:34*

Let heaven be a man's object, and earth will soon be his abject. Assurance of more great and glorious things, breed in the soul **a holy scorn and contempt** of all these poor, base worldly things—which the soul before valued above God, Christ and heaven.

A sea of blood, wrath, sin, sorrow, misery

Ah, what **a sea of blood**, of **wrath**, of **sin**, of **sorrow** and **misery**—did the Lord Jesus wade through for your 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 of suffering, which has in it all the ingredients of divine wrath, is too bitter for Me to sip of—how much more to drink the very dregs of it!" No! Christ does not plead the difficulty of the service—but resolutely and bravely wades through all! "I gave My back to those who beat Me, and My cheeks to those who tore out My beard. I did not hide My face from scorn and spitting." *Isaiah 50:6.* Christ bears . . .
  His Father's wrath,
  the punishment of your sins,
  the malice of Satan,
  the rage of the world,
and sweetly and triumphantly passes through all.

Christ has freed you from . . .
  all your enemies,
  the curse of the law,
  the damnatory power of sin,
  the wrath of God,
  the sting of death,
  the torments of hell.

"Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God." *2 Corinthians 7:1*

Sheep or swine?

It is possible for Christians to fall into the same sins of which they have formerly repented—by the secret, subtle, and strong workings of sin in their hearts. And no wonder, for though their repentance is ever so sincere and sound—yet their graces are but weak, and their mortification of sin is 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 indwelling of any one sin. Therefore it is possible for a Christian to fall again and again into the same sin.

God will graciously pardon those sins to His people, which He will not in this life totally subdue in His people.

I have never seen a promise in Scripture, which says that when our sorrow and grief has been so great, or so much, for this or that sin—that God will then 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.

Yet, there is a great difference between a **sheep** which by weakness falls into the mire—and a **swine** which delights to wallow in the mire! There is a great difference between a woman who is raped, though she fights and cries out—and an alluring adulteress!

Hell's greatest enrichers!

"The prophets who lead my people astray." *Micah 3:5*

Satan labors by false teachers, who are his emissaries to deceive, delude, and forever undo the precious souls of men! They seduce them, and carry them out of the right way into by-paths and blind thickets of error and wickedness—where they are lost forever!

As strumpets paint their faces, and deck and perfume their beds, the better to allure and deceive simple souls; so false teachers will put a great deal of paint and garnish upon their most dangerous principles and blasphemies, that they may the better deceive and delude poor ignorant souls. They know **sugared-poison** goes down sweetly. They wrap up their pernicious, soul-killing pills in gold! "Peace, peace! they say, when there is no peace." *Jeremiah 6:14*

"Beware of false prophets, for they come to you in sheep's clothing—but inwardly they are ravening wolves!" These lick and suck the blood of souls! These kiss and kill! They cry, 'Peace, peace!' until souls fall into everlasting flames!

False teachers handle holy things with wit and trifling, rather than with fear and reverence. They are soul-murderers! They are like evil surgeons, who skin over the wound—but never heal it. False teachers are **hell's greatest enrichers!** Such smooth teachers are sweet soul-poisoners! This age is full of such teachers—such monsters!

They eye your goods more than your good; and mind more the serving of themselves—than the saving of your souls. So they may have your substance—they care not though Satan has your souls! That they may the better pick your purse—they will hold forth such principles as are very indulgent to the flesh.

These are Satan's great benefactors, and such as divine justice will hang up in hell as the greatest malefactors!

The worst & most infectious plague in the world

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

Keep at the greatest distance from sin, and from playing with the golden bait which Satan holds forth to catch you!

It is our wisest and our safest course to stand at the farthest distance from sin; not to go near the house of the harlot—but to fly from all appearance of evil. The best course to prevent falling into the pit is to keep at the greatest distance from it; he who 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! 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 fellowship with his God.

Sin is a plague, yes, **the worst and most infectious plague in the world**; and yet, ah! how few are there who tremble at it—who keep at a distance from it! Ah, how does the father's sin infect the child, the husband's infect 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!

Dance and dine with the devil

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

Sin is but **a bitter sweet**. That seeming sweet which is in sin will quickly vanish; and lasting shame, sorrow, horror, and terror will come in the room thereof.

Forbidden profits and pleasures 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 soul which receives them. **Many eat that on earth which they digest in hell.** Sin's murdering morsels will deceive those who devour them.
Adam's apple was a bitter sweet;
Esau's bowl of stew was a bitter sweet;
the Israelites' quails a bitter sweet;
Jonathan's honey a bitter sweet;
Adonijah's dainties a bitter sweet.

After the meal is ended, then 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 should not slay them!

Nibbling at Satan's golden baits!

". . . the deceitfulness of sin." *Hebrews 3:13*

Sin is of a **very deceitful and bewitching** nature. It will kiss the soul, and look enticing 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 betrayed Samson into the hands of the Philistines.

Tell the bewitched soul that sin is a viper that will certainly kill; that sin often kills secretly, insensibly, eternally—yet the bewitched soul cannot, and will not, cease from sin.

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 with or **nibbling at Satan's golden baits!**

Painted and gilded over

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

Satan knows that if he would 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 of it.

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 a wolf is never a whit the less a wolf because he has put on a sheep's skin; nor the devil is never 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 most dangerous vermin is too often to be found under the fairest and sweetest flowers; the fairest glove is often drawn over the foulest hand; and the richest robes are often put upon the filthiest bodies. So are the fairest and sweetest names upon the greatest and the most horrible vices and errors that be in the world.

True repentance

True repentance includes **a sensibleness of sin's sinfulness**—how opposite and contrary sin 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 destructiveness**; how sin cast angels out of heaven, and Adam out of paradise; how sin laid the first cornerstone in hell, and brought in all the curses, crosses, and miseries, which are in the world; and how sin makes men liable to all temporal, spiritual and eternal wrath; how sin has made men Godless, Christless, hopeless and heavenless.

Further, true repentance includes **sorrow for sin, contrition of heart**. It breaks the heart with sighs, and sobs, and groans—that by sin—a loving God and Father is 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 which has the smell of the poison; so a true penitent does not only loathe his sin—but he loathes himself, the vessel which smells of it. So Ezek. 20:43: 'And there shall you remember your ways and all your doings, wherein you have been defiled; and you shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that you have committed.' True repentance will work your hearts, not only to loathe your sins—but 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 had you in those things whereof you are now ashamed?' says the apostle (Rom. 6:21). So Ezekiel: 'And you shall be confounded, and never open your mouth any more, because of your shame, when I am pacified toward you for all that you have done, says the Lord God' (16:63). When a penitent soul sees his sins pardoned, the anger of God pacified, the divine justice satisfied, then he sits down and blushes, as one ashamed.

Yes, true repentance makes a man to **deny his sinful self**, and to walk contrary to sinful self, to take a holy revenge upon sin, as you may see in Paul, the jailor, Mary Magdalene, and Manasseh. This the apostle shows in 2 Cor. 7:10, 11: 'Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter.'

True repentance is **a continual act**. The word repent implies the continuation of it. Anselm confesses, that all his life was either damnable for sin committed, or unprofitable for good omitted; and at last concludes, "Oh, what then remains, but in our whole life—but to lament the sins of our whole life." 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 sin is ever before me' (Psalm 51:3). 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 once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man,' says another penitent.

Repentance is a continual 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, who is his chief good and his only happiness, optimum maximum, the best and the greatest. They are every day a-crying out, 'O wretched men that we are, who shall deliver us from this body of death!' (Rom. 7:24). They are still sensible of sin, and still conflicting with sin, and still sorrowing for sin, and still loathing of themselves for sin. Repentance is no transient act—but a continued act of the soul.

Those who do not burn now in zeal against sin, must before long burn in hell for sin.

As the flood drowned Noah's own friends and servants, so must the flood of repenting tears drown our sweetest and most darling sins.

Flee from the occasions of sin!

Whatever has the least appearance of evil, shun it, as you would do a serpent in your way, or poison in your food.

To venture upon the occasion of sin, and then to pray, 'Lead us not into temptation,' is as to thrust your finger into the fire, and then to pray that it might not be burnt.

There is no conquest over sin, without the soul turning from the occasion of sin. It is impossible for that man to get the conquest of sin—who plays and sports with the occasions of sin. God will not remove the temptation to sin, except you turn from the occasion of sin. It is a just and righteous thing with God, that he should fall into the pit—who will adventure to dance upon the brink of the pit; and that he should be a slave to sin—who 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 who has gunpowder about him had need keep far enough away 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 the occasions of sin—but that soul is then ensnared by sin!

It is seldom that God keeps that soul from the acts of sin, who will not keep off from the occasions of sin. He who adventures upon the occasions of sin, is as he who would quench the fire with gasoline!

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.

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 devil's logic

"Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?
God forbid. How shall we who are dead to sin, live
any longer therein?" Romans 6:1, 2

To argue from God's mercy to sinful liberty—is **the devil's logic**—and such logicians do ever walk as upon a mine of gunpowder ready to be blown up! No such soul 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! There is not a worse spirit than this in hell. Ah, Lord, does not wrath, yes, 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 bestial; no, 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!

There is nothing in the world which renders a man more *un*like a Christian, and more like Satan—than to argue from God's mercy to sinful liberty; from divine goodness to licentiousness. This is devilish logic, and in whomever you find it, you may write, 'This soul is lost!'

A man may as truly say, 'the sea burns', or 'the fire cools' —as that God's free grace and mercy should make a truly gracious soul to live wickedly.

A flower which does not grow in nature's garden!

"Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that **God will grant them repentance** leading them to a knowledge of the truth." *2 Timothy 2:25*

Repentance is a turning from sin (the most darling sin) to God. It is mighty work, a difficult work; a work which is above our power. There is no power below that power which raised Christ from the dead, and which made the world—which can break the heart of a sinner, or turn the heart of a sinner!

You are as well able to melt adamant—as to melt your own heart! You are as well able to turn a flint into flesh —as to turn your own heart to the Lord! You are as well able to raise the dead and to make a world—as to repent!

Repentance is **a flower which does not grow in nature's garden!**

"Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Neither **can** you do good, who are accustomed to doing 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! It is not in the power of any mortal to repent at pleasure.

Afflictions

All the afflictions which attend the people of God, are such as shall turn to their profit and glorious advantage.

Afflictions discover that filthiness and vileness in sin, which the soul has never yet seen.

Afflictions contribute to the mortifying and purging away of their sins. 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.

Afflictions are medicines which heal soul diseases. Colds and frosts destroy vermin; so do afflictions destroy the corruptions which are in our hearts. The Jews, under all the prophet's thunderings, retained their idols; but after their Babylonish captivity, there have been no idols found among them.

Afflictions are sweet preservatives to keep the saints from sin—which is a greater evil than hell itself.

Afflictions assist to make us more fruitful in holiness. 'But He afflicts us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.' The flowers smell sweetest after a shower; vines bear the better fruit, after pruning. 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 until he was in affliction.

God's house of correction is his school of instruction. All the stones that hit Stephen's head, did but knock him closer to Christ, the corner-stone.

Afflictions lift up the soul to more rich, clear, and full enjoyments of God. God makes afflictions to be but inlets to the soul's more sweet and full enjoyment of His blessed self.
Christians, by their afflictions, 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 of them to a greater love to holiness, and to a greater delight in holiness, and to a more vehement pursuing after holiness.

Afflictions keep the hearts of the saints humble and tender. Prosperity does not contribute more to the puffing up the soul, than adversity does to the bowing down of the soul. This the saints by experience find; and therefore they can kiss and embrace the cross, as others do the world's crown. The more the purest spices are beaten and bruised—the sweeter scent and fragrance they send abroad. So do saints when they are afflicted.

Afflictions bring the saints nearer to God, and to make them more importunate and earnest in prayer with God.

Afflictions revive and recover decayed graces; they inflame that love which is cold, and they quicken that faith which is decaying, and they put life into those hopes which are withering, and spirits into those joys and comforts which are languishing. Most men are like a top, which will not go unless you whip it, and the more you whip it the better it goes. You know how to apply it.

Those who are in adversity do better understand Scriptures. 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 which strives to entice us; it abates the lustiness of the flesh within, which strives to incite us to folly and vanity.

The afflictions which 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 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 possession of the heavenly inheritance. What is our life but a shadow, a bubble, a flower, a runner, a span, a dream?

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; before he will turn all your sighing into singing, all your lamentations into consolations, your sackcloth into silks, ashes into ointments, and your fasts into everlasting feasts!

There are none of God's afflicted ones, who have not their intermissions and respites while under their short and momentary afflictions. When God's hand is on your back, let your hand be on your mouth, for though the affliction be sharp, it shall be but short.

It is mercy that our affliction is not execution—but a correction. He who has deserved hanging, may be glad if he escapes with a whipping.

God's corrections are our instructions,
His lashes are our lessons,
His scourges are our schoolmasters,
His chastisements are our admonitions.

A house full of gold

Prosperity has been a stumbling-block, at which millions have stumbled and fallen, and broke the neck of their souls forever! Ah, the secret fretting, vexing, and gnawing that daily, yes hourly, attends those men's souls—whose hands are full of worldly goods! It is a heavy plague to have **a house full of gold**, and a heart full of sin.

"So if we have enough food and clothing, let us be content. But people who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is at the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows." *1 Timothy 6:8-10*

Names which the Holy Spirit has given them

Always look upon wicked men, under those names and notions which the Scripture describes them, such as:
lions for their fierceness,
bears for their cruelty,
dragons for their hideousness,
dogs for their filthiness,
wolves for their subtleness,
scorpions,
vipers,
thorns,
briars,
thistles,
brambles,
stubble,
dirt,
chaff,
dust,
dross,
smoke,
scum.

You may know well enough what is within them, by the apt **names which the Holy Spirit has given them**. By 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. Such monsters are wicked men—which should render their company to all who have tasted of the sweetness of divine love, a burden and not a delight.

"Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers." *Psalm 1:1*

A heavy burden

Riches are **a heavy burden**, and often a hindrance to heaven, and happiness.

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 minds are 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. **Surely all the things of this world are but bitter sweets.** 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,' a sea for the trouble of it, and glass for the brittleness and bitterness of it. (Rev. 4:6, 15:2, 21:18). The honors, profits, pleasures and delights of the world are like the gardens of Adonis, where we can gather nothing but trivial flowers, surrounded with many briars.

Tell 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 world is troublesome, and yet it is loved

Worldly things 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 take away the pain of the teeth. Our daily experience evidences this, that all the honors and riches which men enjoy, cannot free them from calamities, diseases, or death. Why then should that be a bar to keep you out of heaven—which cannot give you the least ease on earth?

Polycrates gave a large sum of money to Anacreon, who for two nights afterwards, was so troubled with worry how to keep it, and how to spend it; that he took the money back to Polycrates, saying that it was not worth the pains which he had already taken for it.

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 scarcely any leisure to look up to heaven, or to look after Christ, and the things that belong to their everlasting peace!

It is better to go to heaven alone

Those who walk with the many—shall perish with the many.

Those who do as the many, shall before long suffer with the many.

Those who live as the many, must die with the many, and go to hell with the many.

The way to hell is broad and well beaten.

The way to be undone forever is to do as the most do.

"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it." Matthew 7:13-14

Surely, **it is better to go to heaven alone**—than to hell with company!

What wise man would fetch gold out of a fiery crucible; that is, hazard his immortal soul, to gain the world, by following a multitude in those steps that led to the chambers of death and darkness?

Having nothing, yet possessing everything

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 enjoyment of Christ without pleasures, and without the smiles of creatures—will content and satisfy the soul.

'It is enough—Joseph is alive!' (Gen. 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 a bottomless ocean of all contentment, comfort and satisfaction. He who has Him lacks nothing. He who lacks him enjoys nothing. "**Having nothing, yet possessing everything**." *2 Corinthians 6:10*

Let me have Jesus!

"Christ is all that matters!" *Colossians 3:11*

So says the saved soul: "Why do you tell me of this and that outward comfort, when I cannot see the face of Him whom my soul loves? Why, honor is not my Christ; riches are not my Christ; the favor of the creature is not my Christ! **Let me have Jesus—and let the men of this world take the world, and divide it among themselves!** I prize my Christ above all, I would enjoy my Christ above all other things in the world."

His presence will make up the absence of all other comforts.

His absence will darken and embitter all other comforts.

Christ is all and in all, to truly gracious souls.

We have all things in Christ.

Christ is all things to a Christian.

If we are sick, Jesus is a physician.

If we thirst, Jesus is a fountain.

If our sins trouble us, Jesus is our righteousness.

If we stand in need of help, Jesus is mighty to save.

If we fear death, Jesus is life.

If we are in darkness, Jesus is light.

If we are weak, Jesus is strength.

If we are in poverty, Jesus is plenty.

If we desire heaven, Jesus is the way.

The soul cannot say, 'this I would have, and that I would have.' But having Jesus, he has all he needs—eminently, perfectly, eternally.

Luther said he had rather be in hell with Christ, than in heaven without Him.

'None but Christ! none but Christ!' said Lambert the martyr, lifting up his hands and his flaming fingers!

Conflicts against sin

"I hate every false way." Psalm 119:104. The Hebrew signifies to hate with a deadly and irreconcilable hatred.

A Christian **conflicts against sin** **universally**—the least as well as the greatest; the most profitable and the most pleasing sin, as well as against those which are less pleasing and profitable. He will combat with all sin, though he cannot conquer one as he should, and as he desires. 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.

The Christian knows that all sin is hateful to God, and that all sinners are traitors to the crown and dignity of the Lord Jesus. He looks upon one sin, and sees that which threw down **Noah**, the most righteous man in the world; and he looks upon another sin, and sees that which cast down **Abraham**, the greatest believer in the world; and he looks upon another sin, and sees that which threw down **David**, the best king 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 most patient man in the world. This raises a holy indignation against all sin, so that nothing can satisfy and content his soul, but a destruction of all those lusts and vermin which vex and rack his righteous soul.

It will not suffice 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!
Though there is no one sin mortified and subdued in
me, as it should be, and as I would desire; yet every
sin is hated and loathed by me."

Oh! but the conflict which is in wicked men is **partial**.
They frown upon one sin and smile upon another; they
strike at some sins yet 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
against the laws of society—but make nothing of lesser
sins; as vain thoughts and idle words. They fight against
those sins which fight against their honor, profits, and
pleasures; but make truce with those which are as dear
as right hands and as right eyes to them.

Ah! were Christians more humble

Labor to be clothed with humility. 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 lowest saint. Humility can feed upon the lowest dish, and yet it is maintained by the choicest delicacies, as God, Christ, and glory. Humility will make a man bless him who curses him, and pray for those who persecute him.

Humility is the nurse of our graces, the preserver of our mercies, and the great promoter of holy duties. 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 rejoice over their graces. Humility will make a man quiet and contented in the lowest condition, and it will preserve a man from envying other men's prosperous condition. Humility honors those who are strong in grace, and puts two hands under those who are weak in grace.

Ah, Christian! though **faith** is 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, selfish, and sour. 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 himself; it will make a man see much glory and excellency in others, and much baseness and sinfulness in himself; it will make a man see 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. **Ah! were Christians more humble**, there would be less contention, and more love among them than now is.

The humble soul is like the violet, which grows low, hangs the head downwards, and hides itself with its own leaves; and were it not that the fragrance of his many virtues discovered him to the world, he would choose to live and die in his self-contenting secrecy.

Ignorant people

The Catholic Church says that ignorance is the mother
of devotion. But the Scripture says that it is the mother
of destruction.

'My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.' Hosea 4:6

'You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures.'
Matthew 22:29

Ignorance is the mother of mistake, and the cause of
trouble, error, and of terror.

Ignorance is the highway to hell, and it makes a man
both a prisoner and a slave to the devil at once.

Ignorance unmans a man; it makes a man a beast, yes,
makes him more miserable than the beast which perishes.

There are none so easily nor so frequently captured in
Satan's snares—as **ignorant people**. They are easily
drawn to dance with the devil all day—and to dream
of supping with Christ at night.

Sin at first was the cause of ignorance—but now
ignorance is the cause of all sin.

There are none so frequent, and so impudent in the
ways of sin—as **ignorant people**. They care not, nor
mind not what they do, nor what they say against
God, Christ, heaven, holiness, and their own souls.

He loves those who are most unlovely

Ah! sinners, the greatness of your sins does but set
off the freeness and riches of Christ's grace, and the
immensity of His love! This makes heaven and earth
to ring of his praise, that **He loves those who are
most unlovely**, that he shows most favor to those
who 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?

Until men have faith in Christ, their best services are
but **splendid sins!**

The unsearchable riches of Christ!

There is everything in Christ to encourage the greatest
sinners to believe on Him, to rest and lean upon Him for
all happiness and blessedness. Christ is . . .
the greatest good,
the choicest good,
the chief good,
the most suitable good,
the most necessary good
a pure good,
a real good,
a total good,
an eternal good,
a soul-satisfying good!

Sinners, are you poor? Christ has gold to enrich you.

Are you naked? Christ has royal robes, and white clothing to clothe you.

Are you blind? Christ has eye-salve to enlighten you.

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 a balm under his wings to heal you.

Are you sick? He is a physician to cure you.

Are you prisoners? He has laid down a ransom for you.

"**The unsearchable riches of Christ!**" Ephesians 3:8

He has the worst names

We may read much of Satan's nature and disposition
by the diverse names and epithets that are given him
in the Scripture. Sometimes he is called **Behemoth**,
whereby the greatness and brutishness of the devil
is figured (Job 40:15). 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 (1 Pet. 5:8).
Abaddon is a **destroyer** (Rev. 9:11). They are . . .
tempters, for their suggestions;
lions, for their devouring;
dragons, for their cruelty;
serpents, for their subtlety.

As his names are, so is he. Satan's names answer
to his nature. **He has the worst names** and the
worst nature of all created creatures.

Should God chain up Satan

"For out of the **heart** come evil thoughts, murder, adultery,
sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander." *Mt. 15:19*

Man has an evil root within him. Were there no devil to
tempt him, nor any wicked men to entice him, yet that
cursed sinful nature which is in him, would draw him to
sin, though he knows beforehand that 'the wages of sin
is eternal death.'

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,
the heart wholly evil, only evil, and continually evil.

Should God chain up Satan, and give him no liberty to
tempt or entice people to vanity or folly, yet they could
not but sin against Him, by reason of that cursed nature
that is in them.

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.

From the cradle to the cross, His whole life was
a life of sufferings. Jesus waded through . . .
a sea of trouble,
a sea of sin,
a sea of blood
a sea of wrath,
that sinners might be pardoned, justified, reconciled,
and saved!

When he was but a young serpent

Satan is full of envy and enmity, and that makes him very studious to suit his snares and plots to the tempers, constitutions, desires, and callings of men—that so he may make them as miserable as himself.

Satan is a spirit of mighty abilities; and his abilities to lay snares before us are mightily increased by that long standing of his. He has had time enough to study all those ways and methods which tend most to ensnare and undo the souls of men. He has made it his whole study, his only study, his constant study—to find out snares, traps, and stratagems, to entangle and overthrow the souls of men. **When he was but a young serpent**, he easily deceived and outwited our first parents. But now he is grown into that 'old serpent,' as John speaks (Rev. 12:9). He is as old as the world, and has grown very cunning by experience.

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 Christian should be like the 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, we may be forearmed; that we may be always upon their watch-tower, and hold our weapons in our hands, as the Jews did in Nehemiah's time.

Ah, friends! 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.

Satan has his snares to capture you in prosperity and adversity, in health and sickness, in strength and weakness, when you are alone and when you are in company; and if you are not filled with the Spirit, Satan will be too hard and too crafty for you, and will easily and frequently capture you in his snares, and make a prey of you! 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.

Your strength to stand and withstand Satan's fiery darts is from your communion with God. A soul in close 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.

If you would not be taken in any of Satan's snares, then do not engage Satan in your own strength—but be every day drawing new virtue and strength from the Lord Jesus. Certainly the one engages against any old or new temptation without new strength, new influences from on high—will fall before the power of the temptation. Ah, souls! when the snare is spread, look up to Jesus Christ, 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 heart, 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 these snares!"

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. Prayer is the gate of heaven, a key to let us into paradise. There is nothing that renders Satan's plots fruitless like prayer!

"Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against **the devil's schemes**. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand." *Ephesians 6:11-13*

Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices

By Thomas Brooks, (1608 - 1680)

THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY

To his most dear and precious ones, the sons and daughters of the Most High God, over whom the Holy Spirit 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 (Lev. 2:2; 5:12), and a small quantity of goat's hair for an oblation; and I know that you have not so "learned the Father," as to despise "the day of small things" (Zech. 4:10).

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 the chains of darkness until 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 finery 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 is proud of his people, Satan will provoke him to number them, that he may be yet prouder (2 Sam. 24). If Peter is slavishly fearful, Satan will put him upon rebuking and denying of Christ, to save his own skin (Matt. 16:22; 26:69-75). If Ahab's prophets are given to flatter, the devil will immediately become a lying spirit in the mouths of four hundred of them, and they shall flatter Ahab to his ruin (2 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 heathen 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 Spirit (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 (Proverbs 30:9); if they be in adversity, he will tempt them to distrust God; if their knowledge be weak, he will tempt them to have low thoughts of God; if their conscience be tender, he will tempt to scrupulosity; if large, to carnal security; if bold-spirited, he will tempt to presumption; if timorous, to desperation; if flexible, to inconstancy; if stiff, to impenitency.

From the power, malice and skill of Satan--proceeds all the soul-killing plots, devices, stratagems and machinations, which are in the world. Several devices he has to draw souls to sin, and 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 Christians.

At one time, he will restrain from tempting, that we may think ourselves secure, and neglect our watch. At another time he will seem to flee, that he may make us proud of the victory. At one time he will fix men's eyes on others' sins than their own, that he may puff them up. At another time he may fix their eyes more on others' graces than their own, that he may discourage them. A man may as well count 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 in the following treatise discovered, 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**, and they are these that follow:

Reason 1. Because Satan has a greater influence upon men, and higher advantages over them than they think he has--and the knowledge of his high advantage is the highway to disappoint him, and to render the soul strong in resisting, and happy in conquering.

Reason 2. Your importunity, and the importunity of many other "precious sons of Zion" (Lam. 4:2), 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.

Reason 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 men.

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

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

Reason 6. I have many precious friends in several countries, who are desirous that my pen may reach them, now that 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.

Reason 7. Lastly, Not knowing how soon my hour-glass may be out, and how soon I may be cut off by a 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; that 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, which I hope will, by the blessing of the Lord, be as effectual for the healing of all your wounds, as their looking up to the bronze serpent was effectual to heal theirs--who were bit and stung with fiery serpents. 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 out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge--that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God." (Eph. 3:16-19) "And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light." (Col. 1:10-12) "That you do no evil." (2 Cor. 13:7); "That your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment." "That you may approve things that are excellent, that you may be sincere, and without offence until the day of Christ." (Phil. 1:27, 4:1) 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 you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thess. 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 lives may not be earthly, when the things you hear are heavenly; but that it may be "as becomes the gospel" (Phil. 1:9, 10).

That as the fish which live in the salt sea yet are fresh, so you, though you live in an ungodly world, may yet be godly 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 shine like the stone in Thracia, which 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 you have given me" (Is. 8:18).

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 mere name to live. That you would labor with all your might to be thankful under mercies, and faithful in your places, and 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 a 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 who 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" (Eph. 6:19); 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 in 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 sweet of those things upon my own heart**, that I give out to you and others; 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 who love his appearing." (John 5:35 and 2 Tim. 1:8).

For a close, remember this, that 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

Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices

By Thomas Brooks, (1608 - 1680)

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

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 ever so dear. We must love truth 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, "Where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge, and nothing but death shall part you 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, land and jewels—but truth is a jewel that exceeds all price, and must not be sold; it is our heritage: "Your testimonies have I taken as an heritage forever" (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 (Matt. 13:45), purchase this precious pearl, 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, yet every man may be useful. An iron key may unlock the door with a golden treasure behind it; yes, iron can do some things that gold cannot.

Secondly, Remember, **it is not hasty reading—but serious meditating upon holy and heavenly truths**, that make them prove sweet and profitable to the soul. It is not the bee's touching of the flower, which gathers honey—but her abiding for a time upon the flower, which draws out the sweet. It is not he who reads most—but he who meditates most, who 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." "Not everyone that *says*, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven—but he who DOES the will of my Father that is in heaven" (John 13:17, Matt. 7:21). Judas called Christ Lord, Lord; and yet betrayed him, and has 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 is 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 a man you are, the more miserable a man you will be in the day of recompense; your light and knowledge will more torment you 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, what the third? he answered, Action! The same may I say. If any should ask me, what is the first, the second, the third part of a Christian? I must answer, Action! As that man who reads that he may know, and that 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. 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 recommend you "to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among those who are sanctified" (Acts 20:32).

Your soul's servant in every office of the gospel,
Thomas Brooks

Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices

By Thomas Brooks, (1608 - 1680)

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

INTRODUCTION

In the fifth verse, the apostle shows, that the incestuous person had by his incest saddened those precious souls who God would not have saddened. Souls who walk sinfully are Hazaels to the godly (2 Kings 8:12-15), and draw many sighs and tears from them. Jeremiah weeps in secret for Judah's sins (Jer. 9:1); and Paul cannot speak of the belly-gods with dry eyes (Phil. 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 (Zech. 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!** "Streams of tears flow from my eyes, for your law is not obeyed." Psalm 119:136. "I look on the faithless with loathing, for they do not obey your word." Psalms 119:158.

In the 6th verse, he shows that the punishment which 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 some that recanted at the stake, saying, "That they would send them into another world while they were in a good mind."

In the 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th 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 going about to mix the detestable weeds (Matt. 13:25) of despair, with the godly sorrow of a pure penitent heart. It was a sweet saying of Jerome, "Let a man grieve for his sin, and then joy for his grief." That sorrow for sin which keeps the soul from looking towards the mercy-seat, and that keeps Christ and the soul asunder, or that shall render the soul unfit for the communion of saints--is a sinful sorrow.

In the 11th 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; that is, 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—lest Satan overreach us. The word in the Greek signifies to have more than-belongs to one. The comparison is taken from the greedy merchant, who 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!

We are not ignorant of Satan's **devices**, or plots, or machinations, or stratagems. He is but a Christian in title only, who has not personal experience of Satan's stratagems, his set and composed machinations, his artificially molded methods, his plots, darts, depths, whereby he outwitted our first parents.

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—

1. Prove the point.

2. Show you his several devices.

3. Show the remedies against his devices.

4. Show how it comes to pass that he has so many various devices to deceive, entangle, and undo the souls of men.

5. Lay down some propositions concerning Satan's devices.

Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices

By Thomas Brooks, (1608 - 1680)

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

THE PROOF OF THE POINT

For the proof of the point, take these few Scriptures: (Eph. 6:11), "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the **wiles** of the devil." 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 by surprise, 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 (Gen. 49:17). The word signifies an ambush or stratagem of war, whereby the enemy sets upon a man at 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; but suddenly he is caught by thieves, or falls into a pit, etc.

(3) It signifies such as are purposely, artificially, and craftily set for the taking the prey at the greatest advantage that can be. The Greek signifies properly a waylaying, circumvention, or going about, as they do, who seek after their prey. Julian, by his craft, drew more away from the faith than all his persecuting predecessors could do by their cruelty. So does Satan more hurt in his *sheep's skin* than by roaring like a lion.

Take one scripture more for the proof of the point, and that is in 2 Tim. 2:26, "And that they might recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will." The Greek word that is here rendered recover themselves, signifies to awaken themselves. The apostle alludes to one who 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 military 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 Rev. 2:24, "But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and who have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak, I will put upon you no other burden but to hold fast until I come." These 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.

SATAN'S DEVICES TO DRAW THE SOUL TO SIN

[12 *devices and their remedies*]

DEVICE 1. TO PRESENT THE BAIT AND HIDE THE HOOK

Satan's first device to draw the soul into 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 deceived our first parents, "And the serpent said unto the woman, You shall not surely die—for God does know, that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened; and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:4-5). Your eyes shall he opened, and you 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 Satan cheats them—giving them an apple in exchange for a paradise, as he deals by thousands now-a-days.

Satan with ease pawns falsehoods upon us, by his golden baits, and then he leads us and leaves us in a fool's paradise. He promises the soul honor, pleasure, profit—but pays the soul with the greatest contempt, shame, and loss that can be. By a golden bait he labored to catch Christ (Matt. 4:8, 9). He shows him the beauty and the finery 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 did not ignite. These tempting objects did not at all win upon his affections, nor dazzle his eyes, though 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 glistening of her pomp and preferment, slain millions; as the serpent Scytale, which, when she cannot overtake the fleeing passengers, does, with her beautiful colors, dazzle and amaze them, so that they have no power to pass away until she has stung them to death! **Adversity has slain her thousand—but prosperity her ten thousand.**

Remedy (1). First, **Keep at the greatest distance from sin, and from playing with the golden bait which 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 to 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 farthest distance from sin; not to go near the house of the harlot—but to fly from all appearance of evil (Proverbs 5:8, 1 Thess. 5:22). The best course to prevent falling into the pit is to keep at the greatest distance from it; he who 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! *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 fellowship with his God.

Sin is a plague, yes, the worst and most infectious plague in the world; and yet, ah! how few are there who tremble at it--who keep at a distance from it! (1 Cor. 5:6)—"Don't you know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?" As soon as one sin had seized upon Adam's heart, all sin entered into his soul and infested it. How has Adam's one sin spread over all mankind! (Romans 5:12)—"Therefore 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." Ah, how does the father's sin infect the child, the husband's infect 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 unmixed malignity of sin; and oh! that what has been spoken upon this head may prevail with you, to stand at a distance from sin!

Remedy (2). **Consider that sin is but a bitter sweet.** That seeming sweet that is in sin will quickly vanish; and lasting shame, sorrow, horror, and terror will come in the room thereof—"He enjoyed the taste of his wickedness, letting it melt under his tongue. He savored it, holding it long in his mouth. But suddenly, the food he has eaten turns sour within him, a poisonous venom in his stomach." (Job 20:12-14). Forbidden profits and pleasures 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—and the soul that receives them. Many eat that on earth what they digest in hell. Sin's murdering morsels will deceive those who devour them. Adam's apple was a bitter sweet; Esau's bowl of stew was a bitter sweet; the Israelites' quails a bitter sweet; Jonathan's honey a bitter sweet; and Adonijah's dainties a bitter sweet. After the meal is ended, then 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 should not slay them.

When the asp stings a man, it does first tickle him so as it makes him laugh, until the poison, little by 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 at last; yes, if there were the least real delight in sin, there could be no consummate hell, where men shall most completely be tormented with their sin.

Remedy (3). Solemnly to **consider that sin will usher in the greatest and the saddest losses that can be upon our souls.** It will usher in the loss of that divine favor which is better than life, and the loss of that joy which is unspeakable and full of glory, and the loss of that peace which passes understanding, and 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.

Remedy (4). 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 'today', lest any of you be hardened through *the deceitfulness of sin*." Heb. 3:13. It will kiss the soul, and look enticing 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. Sin gives Satan a power over us, and an advantage to accuse us and to lay claim to us, as those who wear his badge; it is of a very bewitching nature; it bewitches the soul, where it is upon the throne, 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, and 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 sin. 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 with or nibbling at Satan's golden baits!

DEVICE 2. BY PAINTING SIN WITH VIRTUE'S COLORS.

Satan knows that if he would 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 of 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 business; and DRUNKENNESS to be good fellowship, and RIOTOUSNESS under the name and notion of liberality, and WANTONNESS as a trick of youth.

Remedy (1). **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 a wolf is never a whit the less a wolf because he has put on a sheep's skin; nor the devil is never 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.

Remedy (2). **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 sweetest names upon the greatest and the most horrible vices and errors that be in the world. Ah! that we had not too many sad proofs of this among us!

Remedy (3). **To look on sin with that eye with which within a short time, 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, and 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 until his sweet scent has drawn them into his danger. Until we have sinned, Satan is a parasite; when we have sinned, he is a tyrant. O 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 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!

Remedy (4). Seriously to consider, **That even those very sins that Satan paints, and puts new names and colors upon, cost the best blood, the noblest blood, the life-blood, the heart-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 who was clothed with glory should be wrapped with rags of flesh; he who filled heaven and earth with his glory should be cradled in a manger; that the almighty God should flee from weak man—the God of Israel into Egypt; that the God of the law should be subject to the law, the God of the circumcision circumcised, the God who made the heavens working at Joseph's homely trade; that he who 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 who is one with his Father should cry out of misery, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46); that he who had the keys of hell and death at his belt 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 do 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, which was fairer than the sons of men, to be spit on by those beastly wretched Jews; that MOUTH and TONGUE, which spoke as never man spoke, accused for blasphemy; those HANDS, which 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** pained with a spear and nails; his SMELL, with stinking odor, being crucified on Golgotha, the place of skulls; his TASTE, with vinegar and gall; his HEARING, with reproaches, and SIGHT of 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 sin, 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 the 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 which were in the place, and set them on fire, and ran to the houses of those who had slain Caesar, and burnt them. So that **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 food 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. BY EXTENUATING AND LESSENING OF SIN

Ah! says Satan, it is but a little pride, a little worldliness, a little uncleanness, a little drunkenness, etc. As Lot said of Zoar, "It is but a little one, and my soul shall live" (Gen. 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.

Remedy (1). 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 of 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 not we see daily the vengeance of the Almighty falling upon the bodies, names, states, families, and souls of men—for those sins that are but little ones in their eyes? Surely if we are not utterly forsaken by God, and blinded by Satan—we cannot but see it! Oh! therefore, when Satan says it is but a little one—you must say, Oh! but those sins which you call little, are such as will cause God to rain hell out of heaven upon sinners as he did upon the Sodomites!

Remedy (2). Seriously to consider, **That the giving way to a less sin makes way for the committing of a greater sin.** He who, 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 we should avoid neither, we having not 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, until it has 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 upon the golden wedge, and then to desire the golden wedge, and then to handle the golden wedge, and then at last by wicked ways to take 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-still (Psalm 1:1), first ungodly, then sinners, then scorners. Here they go on from sin to sin, until they come to the top of sin, that is, to sit in the seat of scorners.

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 man's soul by insensible degrees. "The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness, and the end of his talking is mischievous madness." (Eccles. 10:13) Corruption in the heart, when it breaks forth, is like a breach in the sea, which begins in a narrow passage, until it eats through, and cast 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, until it is ripe for eternal misery!

Remedy (3). 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 sin against God for a trifle.** Dives would not give a crumb, therefore he should not receive a drop (Luke 16:21). **It is the greatest folly in the world—to adventure the going to hell for a small matter.** "I tasted but a little honey," said Jonathan, "and I must die" (1 Sam. 14:29). 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 waiting 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 kingdom.

It is the greatest unkindness that can be showed to a friend, to venture the complaining, bleeding, and grieving of his soul—upon a light and a 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, you must 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 greatest enemy.

Remedy (4). The fourth remedy against this device of Satan, is seriously to consider, **That there is great danger, yes, many times most danger—in the smallest sins.** "A little leaven leavens the whole lump" (1 Cor. 5:6). If the serpent sneaks in his head, he will draw in his whole body after him. 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 indiscernibly in the soul, until they come to be so strong, as to trample upon the soul, and to cut the throat of the soul. There is oftentimes 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 removing of them, until they are grown so strong that they prove mortal to us. So there is most danger often 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, until they are grown 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 acts 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 nurture 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 dyke carries away all before it. A little stab at the heart kills a man. A little sin, without a great deal of mercy, will damn a man!

Remedy (5). The fifth remedy against this device of Satan, is solemnly to consider, **That other saints have chosen to suffer the worst of torments, rather than commit the least sin**, that is, such as the world accounts little sins. So as you may see in Daniel and his companions, that would rather choose to burn, and be cast to the lions—than they would bow to the idol which Nebuchadnezzar had set up. When this 'slight offense', in the world's account, and a hot fiery furnace stood in competition, 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 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 Marcus refused; whereupon those who 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 pen-knives, and then caused him to be put in a basket, and drenched 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 towards the building up of this idol temple! No, they came to this, that if he would do but the least towards it, if he would give but a half-penny to it, they would save him. But he refused all, though the giving of a half-penny 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.

Remedy (6). 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!" (Exod. 8:16; 10. 19). When little creatures, yes, the least creatures, shall be armed with a power from God, they shall press and sink down the greatest, proudest, and stoutest tyrants who breathe!

So when God shall cast 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 contemplated adultery, without any actual acting 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 those sins, which are small in men's account, that they have wished they had never been born; that they could take no delight in any earthly comfort, that they have been put to their wits' end, ready to make away themselves, wishing themselves annihilated.

William 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 afore eating, to ask God's blessing, dare 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.

Remedy (7). 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 upon him, and that for the least sin as well as for the greatest.

"The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23); of ALL sin, 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. 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, etc., and by hiding from the soul the tears, the sighs, the groans, the meltings, the humblings, and repentings of these precious souls.

***Remedy* (1).** 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 sins.** David falls fearfully—but by repentance he rises sweetly. 'Blot out my transgressions, wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, 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, God of my salvation.' 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. 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 you? I will lay my hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken—but I will not answer; yes twice—but I will proceed no further. I have heard of you by the hearing of the ear—but now my eye sees you; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes' (Job 40:4, 5; 42:5, 6). Tertullian says that he was born for no other purpose but to repent.

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, because he had denied Christ. Some say that, after his sad fall, he was ever and always weeping, and that his face was even furrowed with continual tears. He had no sooner took 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. Luther confesses that, before his conversion, he met not with a more displeasing word in all his study of divinity than *repent*—but afterward he took delight in the word. 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 his 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, excuses his own foul act by David's doing the like; to which Ambrose replies, You have followed David transgressing, follow David repenting, and then think you of the table of the Lord.

***Remedy* (2).** 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 reluctancy; and you sin presumptuously, obstinately, readily, delightfully, and customarily. The saints cannot sin with a whole will—but, as it were, with a half-will, an unwillingness; not with a full consent—but with a dissenting consent. You have, by your making a trade of sin, contracted upon your soul a kind of cursed necessity of sinning, 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 can not, 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 (2 Peter 2:14, Prov. 4:6); and when they were fallen, they rise 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 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, yes, self-murderers! Though sin **dwells** in the regenerate, yet it does not **reign** over the regenerate; they rise by repentance.

***Remedy* (3).** The third remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, **That though God does not, nor never 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 you have broken may rejoice' (Psalm 51:8). 'And because you have done this, the sword shall never depart from your house, to the day of your death' (2 Sam. 12:10). Though God will not utterly take from them his loving-kindness, nor allow his faithfulness to fail, nor break his covenant, nor alter the thing that is gone out of his mouth, yet will he 'visit their transgression with the 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. Josephus reports that, not long after the Jews had crucified Christ on the cross, so many of them were condemned to be crucified that there were not places enough for crosses nor crosses enough for the bodies that were to be hung thereon.

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, as 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 kind of misery.

One writing to a dead 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.' Luther says, 'There is not a Christian that carries not his cross.' It is mercy that our affliction is not execution—but a correction. He who 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 admonitions. And to note this, both the Hebrews and the Greeks express **chastening** and **teaching** by one and the same word (*Musar, Paideia*),*** because the latter is the true end of the former, according to that in the proverb, 'Smart makes wit, and vexation gives understanding.' Whence Luther fitly calls affliction The Christian man's divinity.' So says Job (Chap. 33:14-19), 'But God speaks again and again, though people do not recognize it. He speaks in dreams, in visions of the night when deep sleep falls on people as they lie in bed. He whispers in their ear and terrifies them with his warning. He causes them to change their minds; he keeps them from pride. He keeps them from the grave, from crossing over the river of death. Or God disciplines people with sickness and pain, with ceaseless aching in their bones.' When Satan shall tell you of other men's sins to draw you to sin—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!

***Remedy* (4).** 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.**

And the one is, to keep those from fainting, sinking, and despair, under the burden of their sins, who fall through weakness and infirmity.

And the other is, that their falls may be as landmarks to warn others 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 look to themselves, and hang the faster upon the skirts of Christ, and 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, namely—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, than 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 where he will lead him. I have known a good man, says Bernard, who, when he heard of any that had committed some notorious sin, he was accustomed to say with himself—he fell today, so may I tomorrow.

DEVICE 5. 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, not 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?

***Remedy* (1).** The first remedy is, seriously to consider, **That it is the greatest judgment in the world to be left to sin, upon any pretense whatever.** 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 does wink. 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 unteachable 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 hastening to destruction!

Ah Lord! this mercy! 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.

Augustine says, 'It is a human thing to fall into sin, devilish to persevere therein, and divine to rise from it. Deliver me, O Lord, from that evil man—myself!

***Remedy* (2).** 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 until the judgment of the great day.* Witness His turning Adam out of Paradise. Witness His drowning of the old world. Witness His raining hell out of heaven upon Sodom. Witness all the troubles, losses, sicknesses, and diseases, which are in the world. Witness Tophet, which "has long been prepared; it has been made ready for the king. Its fire pit has been made deep and wide, with an abundance of fire and wood; the breath of the LORD, like a stream of burning sulfur, sets it ablaze." (Isaiah 30:33) Witness His treasuring up of wrath against the day of wrath. But above all, witness the pouring forth of all His wrath upon His bosom Son, when Jesus bore the sins of His people, and cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

*God hanged them up in gibbets, as it were, that others might hear and fear, and do no more so wickedly.

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, **That sins against God's mercy will bring the greatest and sorest judgments upon men's heads and hearts.** **Mercy is God's Alpha, justice is His Omega.** David, speaking of these attributes, places mercy in the forefront, and justice in the rearward, saying, "I will sing of Your love and justice." (Psalm 101:1). When God's mercy is despised, then His justice takes the throne!* God is like a prince, who 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 remain rebellious, then God will put forth his red flag of justice and judgment. If His mercy is despised, His justice shall be felt!

The higher we are in dignity, the more grievous is our fall and misery.

God is slow to anger—but he recompenses his slowness with grievousness of punishment. If we abuse His mercy to serve our lust, then, in Salvian's phrase, God will rain hell out of heaven, rather than not visit for such sins.

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; from seventy souls they grew in few years to six hundred thousand; the more they were oppressed, the more they prospered. Like camomile, 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 the other: 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.' (Psalm 32:7; Exod. 19:4; Deut. 32:10) But they, abusing his mercy, became the greatest objects of his wrath. As I know not the man who can reckon up his mercies; so I know not the man who can sum up the miseries which are coming upon him 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, who, having besieged Jerusalem, the Jews were oppressed with a grievous famine, in which their food was old shoes, leather, old hay, and the dung of beasts. There died, partly by the sword and partly by the famine, eleven hundred thousand of the poorer sort; two thousand in one night were slaughtered; 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 taken captives, and forced to base and miserable service, as Eusebius and Josephus says. (Vespasian broke into their city at Kedron, where they took Christ, on he same feast day that Christ was taken; he whipped them where they whipped Christ; he sold twenty Jews for a penny, as they sold Christ for thirty pence.) And to this day, in all parts of the world, are they not the offscouring of the world? None more abhorred, than they. Men shall be deeper in hell, because heaven was offered unto them; but they abused God's mercy. Men's offences are increased by their obligations.

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 who are so apt to abuse God's 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, benumbedness of conscience, which are ten thousand times worse than the worst of outward plagues which 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?' (Heb. 2:3) says the apostle. 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 God's mercy, will bring upon the soul the greatest misery**; and therefore whatever becomes of you, you will not sin against mercy.

***Remedy* (4).** 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 who are divinely qualified.** Augustus, in his solemn feasts, gave trifles to some—but gold to others whom his heart was most set upon. So God, by a hand of general mercy, gives these poor trifles—outward blessings, to those who he least loves; but his gold, special mercy, is only towards those who his heart is most set upon. So in Exodus 34:6, 7: 'And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, patient, 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 those who 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 who trusts in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about.' Psalm 33:18, 'Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon those who fear him, upon those who hope in his mercy.' Psalm 103:11, 'For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward those who fear him.' Ver. 17, 'But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon those who 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 extend to all the works of his hand, yet his special mercy is confined to those who are divinely qualified, to those who love him and keep his commandments, to those who trust in him, that by hope hang upon him, and who 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.

***Remedy* (5).** The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, **That those who 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 I am constantly aware of your unfailing love, and I have lived according to your truth. I do not spend time with liars or go along with hypocrites. I hate the gatherings of those who do evil, and I refuse to join in with the wicked.'

So **Joseph** strengthens himself against sin from the remembrance of mercy: 'How then can I,' says he, 'do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' (Gen. 39:9). He had his eye fixed upon mercy, and therefore sin could not enter, though the irons entered into his soul; his soul being taken with mercy, was not moved with his mistress's impudence. Satan knocked often at the door—but the sight of mercy would not allow him to answer or open. Joseph, like a pearl in a puddle, keeps his virtue still. (The stone called *Pontaurus,* is of that virtue, that it preserves him who carries it, from taking any hurt by poison. The mercy of God in Christ to our souls is the most precious stone or pearl in the world, to prevent us from being poisoned with sin.)

Likewise with **Paul**: 'Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we who are dead to sin, live any longer therein?' (Rom. 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 God's 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 'the fire cools'—as that God's free grace and mercy should make a truly gracious soul to live wickedly.

So the same apostle: 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service' (Rom. 12:1). So John: 'These things I write unto you, that you sin not (1 John 2:1, 2). 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 cleanses us from all sin; and that if we confess our sin, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins; and that if we do sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.' 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. 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 forgive your debt, 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 of sin, or rather slaves to sin.

***Remedy* (1).** 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 which raised Christ from the dead, and which made the world—which can break the heart of a sinner, or turn the heart of a sinner! You are as well able to melt adamant, as to melt your own heart; to turn a flint into flesh, as to turn your own heart to the Lord; to raise the dead and to make a world, as to repent. **Repentance is a flower wich does not grow in nature's garden!** 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Neither can you do good who are accustomed to doing evil.' (Jer. 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: (Acts 5:31): 'Him has God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior—to **give** repentance.' Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will." (2 Timothy 2:25-26) 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, which caused on to say, 'Repentance damns more than sin!' It was a vain brag of king Cyrus, that caused it to be written upon his tombstone, 'I can do all things!' So could Paul, too—but it was 'through Christ, who strengthened him.'

***Remedy* (2).** The second remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to **consider of the nature of true repentance**. Repentance is some other thing, than what vain men conceive. The Hebrew word for repentance signifies to return, implying a going back from what a man had done. It denotes a turning or converting from one thing to another, from sin to God. The Greeks have two words by which they express the nature of repentance, one signifies to be careful, anxious, solicitous, after a thing is done; the other word denotes after-wisdom, the mind's recovering of wisdom, or growing wiser after our folly. True repentance is a thorough change both of the mind and life. Repentance *for* sin is nothing worth without repentance *from* sin. "If you repent with a contradiction," says Tertullian, "God will pardon you with a contradiction; if you repent and yet continue in your sin, God will pardon you, and yet send you to hell—there is a pardon with a contradiction. Negative goodness serves no man's turn, to save him from the axe."

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, namely, the **act**, **subject**, and **terms**.

(1) *The formal **ACT** of repentance is a changing and converting.* It is often set forth in Scripture by turning. 'Turn me, and I shall be turned,' says Ephraim; 'after I was turned, I repented,' says he (Jer. 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 lifestyle. 'Wash, be clean,' there is the change of their persons; 'Put away the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well' (Is. 1:16, 17); there is the change of their practices. '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' (18:31); there is the change of the heart.

(3) *The **TERMS** of this change and conversion, from which and to which both heart and life must be changed; **from sin to God**.* The heart must 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; and 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 his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord' (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 does suggest. Besides what has been spoken, I desire that you will take notice, that repentance does include turning from the most darling sin. Ephraim shall say, 'What have I to do any more with idols?' (Hosea 14:8). Yes, it is a turning from all sin to God (Ezek. 18:30): 'Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, everyone according to his ways, says the Lord God. Repent, and turn yourselves from your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.'

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 who 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 sins. 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 (1 Sam. 15:9).

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 (Ezek. 18:21): 'But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he has committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.' Mere *negative righteousness and holiness* is neither true righteousness nor true holiness. The evil servant did not use his one talent in debauchery (Matt. 25:18). Those reprobates (Matt. 25:41-45), did not rob the saints—but merely did not help them. For this they must eternally perish.

David fulfilled *all* the will of God, and had respect unto *all* his commandments, and so had Zacharias and Elizabeth. It is not enough that the tree does not bear bad fruit; but it must bring forth good fruit, else it must be 'cut down and cast into the fire' (Luke 13:7). So it is not enough that you are not thus and thus wicked—but you must be thus and thus gracious and godly, else divine justice will put the axe of divine vengeance to the root of your souls, and cut you off forever. 'The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.' (Matt. 3:10). Besides, repentance does include a sensibleness of sin's sinfulness—how opposite and contrary sin 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 destructiveness; 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.

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

Again, repentance does include, 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 smells of it; so Ezek. 20:43: 'And there shall you remember your ways and all your doings, wherein you have been defiled; and you shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that you have committed.' True repentance will work your hearts, not only to loathe your sins—but to loathe yourselves.

True repentance is a sorrowing for sin, as it is an offence to God and against God. Repentance both comes from God, and drives a man to God, as it did the church in the Canticles, and the prodigal.

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 had you in those things whereof you are now ashamed?' says the apostle (Rom. 6:21). So Ezekiel: 'And you shall be confounded, and never open your mouth any more, because of your shame, when I am pacified toward you for all that you have done, says the Lord God' (16:63). When a penitent soul sees his sins pardoned, the anger of God pacified, the divine justice satisfied, then he sits down and blushes, as one ashamed. 'So much the more God has been displeased with the blackness of sin, the more will he be pleased with the blushing of the sinner' (Bernard). **Those who do not burn now in zeal against sin must before long burn in hell for sin.**

Yes, true repentance makes a man to deny his sinful self, and to walk contrary to sinful self, to take a holy revenge upon sin, as you may see in Paul, the jailor, Mary Magdalene, and Manasseh. This the apostle shows in 2 Cor. 7:10, 11: 'Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter.'

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

***Remedy* (3).** 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. Anselm confesses, that all his life was either damnable for sin committed, or unprofitable for good omitted; and at last concludes, "Oh, what then remains, but in our whole life—but to lament the sins of our whole life." 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 sin is ever before me' (Psalm 51:3). 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 once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man,' 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, who is his chief good and his only happiness, *optimum maximum,* the best and the greatest. They are every day a-crying out, 'O wretched men that we are, who shall deliver us from this body of death!' (Rom. 7:24). They are still sensible of sin, and still conflicting with sin, and still sorrowing for sin, and still loathing of 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 a-turning more and more from sin, and a-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, and exhorting 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.

***Remedy* (4).** 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! Yes, 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 horror 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 particle 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 particle of repentance to be the happiest exchange that ever a 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, 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 have 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 is, that it is an easy thing to repent. If it be so easy, why, then, do wicked men's hearts so rise against those who press the doctrine of repentance upon them in the sweetest way, and by the strongest and the choicest arguments that the Scriptures afford? 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.

"If you be backward in the thoughts of repentance, be forward in the thoughts of hell, the flames whereof only the streams of the penitent eye can extinguish" (*Tertullian*). "Oh, how shall you tear and rend yourself! how shall you lament fruitless repenting! What will you say? Woe is me, that I have not cast off the burden of sin; woe is me, that I have not washed away my spots—but am now pierced with my iniquities; now have I lost the surpassing joy of angels!" (*Basil*).

***Remedy* (5).** 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.** (Yet it is better to be kept from sin than cured of sin by repentance; as it is better for a man to be preserved from a disease than to be cured of the disease.) 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?); the 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—this 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 purgatives, none 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, 'I am constantly aware of your unfailing love, and I have lived according to your truth. I do not spend time with liars or go along with hypocrites. I hate the gatherings of those who do evil, and I refuse to join in 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 7:37-39). So those in Hosea: 'Come, let us return to the LORD! He has torn us in pieces; now he will heal us. He has injured us; now he will bandage our wounds. In just a short time, he will restore us so we can live in his presence.' (Hos. 6:1, 2); as the Hebrew has it, '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 the general, that there is as much of the power of God, and love of God, and faith in God, and fear of God, and care to please God, zeal for the glory of God (2 Cor. 7:11) requisite to work a man to repent of sin, as there is to keep a man from sin; by which 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? We know then certainly it is not an easy thing to repent of sin.

***Remedy* (6).** The sixth remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, **That he who now tempts you to sin upon this account, that repentance is easy, will, before long, to work you to despair, and forever to break the neck of your soul, present repentance as the most difficult and hardest work in the world;** and to this purpose he will set your sins in order before you, and make them to say, 'We are yours, and we must follow you.' Bede tells of a certain great man that was admonished in his sickness to repent, who answered that he would not repent yet; for if he should recover, his companions would laugh at him; but growing more and more sick, his friends pressed him again to repent—but then he told them it was too late, for now, said he; I am judged and condemned.

Now, Satan will help to work the soul to look up, and see God angry; and to look inward, and to 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 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? Yes, to mortify and cut off those sins, those darling lusts, which are as joints and limbs, which 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 would 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 condemned; 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, you shall not find it! Your sand has run through the hour-glass, your sun has set, the door of mercy is shut, the golden scepter is withdrawn; 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 off forever; to hell you must go, to hell you shall go! Ah, souls! he who now tempts you to sin, by suggesting to you the easiness of repentance, will at last work you to despair, and 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. Repentance is a work that must be timely done, or utterly undone forever.

DEVICE 7. By making the soul bold to venture upon the occasions of sin.

Says Satan, You may walk by the harlot's door though you won't go into the harlot's bed; you may sit and sup with the drunkard, though you won't 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.

***Remedy* (1).** The first remedy is, **solemnly to dwell upon those scriptures which expressly command us to avoid the occasions of sin, and the least appearance of evil** (1 Thess. 5:22): 'Abstain from all appearance of evil.' Whatever is heterodox, unsound and unsavory, shun it, as you would do a serpent in your way, or poison in your food. Epiphanius says that in the old law, when any dead body was carried by any house, they were enjoined to shut their doors and windows. Theodosius tore the Arian's arguments presented to him in writing, because he found them repugnant to the Scriptures. Augustine retracted even ironies, 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 'Abstained from whatever is of evil 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 have a regard to. 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, the garments, of unclean people. Under the law, men might not touch a menstruous cloth, nor would God accept of a blemished 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 Prov. 5:8, 'Remove your way far from her, and come not near the door of her house.' He who would not be burnt, must dread the fire; he who would not hear the bell, must not meddle with the rope. One speaks of two young men that flung away their belts, when, being in an idol's temple, the laving water fell upon them, detesting, says the historian, the garment spotted by the flesh. One said, As often as I have been among vain men, I returned home less a man than I was before.

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 burnt. So, in Prov. 4:14, 15, you have another command: '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.' This triple gradation of Solomon shows with a great emphasis, how necessary it is for men to flee from all appearance of sin, as the seaman shuns rocks and shelves; and as men shun those who have the plague-sores running upon them. As weeds endanger the corn, as an infection endangers the blood, or as an infected house endanger the neighborhood; so does the company of the wicked endanger the godly. Friendship with wicked consorts is one of the strongest chains of hell, and binds us to a participation in both their sin and their punishment.

***Remedy* (2).** The second remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, **That ordinarily there is no conquest over sin, without the soul turning from the occasion of sin.** It is impossible for that man to get the conquest of sin—who plays and sports with the occasions of sin. God will not remove the temptation to sin, except you turn from the occasion of sin. It is a just and righteous thing with God, that he should fall into the pit, who 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 who 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 the occasions of sin—but that soul is then ensnared by sin!

The fable says, that the butterfly asked the owl how she should deal with the fire which had singed her wings, who counseled her not to behold so much as its smoke.

It is seldom that God keeps that soul from the acts of sin, who will not keep off from the occasions of sin. He who adventures upon the occasions of sin, is as he who would quench the fire with gasoline. 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. 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!

***Remedy* (3).** The third remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, **That other precious saints, who were once glorious on earth, and are now triumphing in heaven, have turned from the occasion of sin, as hell itself;** as you may see in Joseph (Gen. 39:10), '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.' 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 what a man is indeed, that 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 knows that corrupt nature has a seed-plot for 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, until we remove the occasion to temptation. A bird whiles aloft is safe—but she comes not near the snare, without danger. The shunning the occasions of sin renders a man most like the godliest of men. A soul eminently gracious dares not come near the temptation. So Job 31:1, 'I made a covenant with my eyes not to look with lust upon a young woman.' I set a watch at the entrance of my senses, that my soul might not by them be infected or 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, that he may not love entirely. The disciples were set a-gog, 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 mariner's eye is fixed upon the star, when their hand is on the stern. So David, when he was himself, he shuns the occasion of sin (Psalm 26:4, 5): 'I do not spend time with liars or go along with hypocrites. I hate the gatherings of those who do evil, and I refuse to join in with the wicked.'

Stories speak of some who 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! Everyone should strive to be like them in grace, that they desire to be equal with in glory. He who shoots at the sun, though he be far short, will shoot higher than he who aims at a shrub. It is best, and it speaks out much of Christ within, to eye the highest and the worthiest examples.

***Remedy* (4).** The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, **That the avoiding 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 temperate 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 can be holy in Babylon; and with Abraham, righteous in Chaldea; and with Nehemiah, zealous in Damascus, etc.

Many a wicked man is full of corruption—but shows it not for lack of occasion; but that man is surely godly, who in his course will not be bad, though tempted by occasions to sin. A Christless soul is so far from refusing occasions to sin, 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.

Plutarch says of Demosthenes, that he was excellent at praising the worthy acts of his ancestors—but not so at imitating them. Oh that this were not applicable to many professors in our times!

DEVICE 8. By representing 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 see, O soul, the many blessings that such and such enjoy, who walk in those very ways that your soul startles to think of, and the many crosses that they are delivered from, even such as makes other men, who say they dare not walk in such ways, to 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 Jer. 44:16-18, "We will not listen to your messages from the Lord! We will do whatever we want. We will burn incense to the Queen of Heaven and sacrifice to her just as much as we like—just as we and our ancestors did before us, and as our kings and princes have always done in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. For in those days we had plenty to eat, and we were well off and had no troubles! But ever since we quit burning incense to the Queen of Heaven and stopped worshiping her, we have been in great trouble and have suffered the effects of war and famine." This is just the language of a world of ignorant, profane, and superstitious souls, who would have returned to bondage, yes, to that bondage that was worse than that the Israelites groaned under.

Remedy (1). The first remedy is, solemnly to consider, **That no man knows how the heart of God stands towards a person, by his outward blessings to that person.** His hand of mercy may be towards a man, when his heart may be 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 severely set against them, and yet the heart and affections of God were strongly working towards them.

No man knows either the love or hatred of God—by his outward mercy or misery towards them; 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. The sun of prosperity shines as well upon brambles of the wilderness—as upon fruit-trees of the orchard; the snow and hail of adversity comes upon the best garden—as well as upon the stinking ash-heap 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, honors, crosses, sicknesses, losses, are cast upon good men and bad men promiscuously. Moses dies in the wilderness—as well as those who murmured. Nabal is rich—as well as Abraham. Ahithophel wise—as well as Solomon. Doeg is honored by Saul—as well as Joseph was by Pharaoh. Usually the worst of men have most of these outward things. Usually the holiest of men have least of earth, though most of heaven.

Cicero judged the Jews' religion to be nothing, because they were so often overcome, and impoverished, and afflicted; and the religion of Rome to be right, because the Romans prospered and became rulers of the world; and yet, though the Romans had God's hand, yet the Jews had his heart, for they were dearly beloved, though severely afflicted.

***Remedy* (2).** 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 deluge of wrath which fell upon the old world, and by God's raining hell out of heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah. This is clear in Jeremiah 44:20-28. The words are worthy of your best meditation. Oh that they were engraven in all your hearts, and constant in all your thoughts! Though they are too large for me to transcribe them, yet they are not too large for me to remember them. To argue from God's mercy to sinful liberty—is the devil's logic—and such logicians do ever walk as upon a mine of gunpowder ready to be blown up! No such soul 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. There is not a worse spirit than this in hell. Ah, Lord, does not wrath, yes, 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 bestial; no, 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.

Such souls make God into a mere doll—one that will not do as he says; but they shall find God to be as severe in punishing as he is to others gracious in pardoning. Good turns aggravate unkindnesses, and our guilt is increased by our obligations.

Remedy (3). 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! (Hos. 4:17), 'Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone.' 'Why should you be smitten any more? you will revolt more and more' (Is. 1:5). When the physician gives up 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 chastisement is the mother of carnal security, 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 often times prove a snare to our souls. 'I will lay a stumbling block' (Ezek. 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 broke the neck of their souls forever! "Religion brought forth riches, and the daughter soon devoured the mother," said Augustine. So if we have enough food and clothing, let us be content. But people who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is at the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows." 1 Timothy 6:8-10

***Remedy* (4).** The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, **That the lack 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 lack more than they enjoy. The mercies which they enjoy are nothing to the mercies they lack. It is true, they have honors and riches, and pleasures and friends, and are mighty in power; their family is established, and their offspring are 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.'

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

Wicked men are the most needy men in the world, yes, they lack those two things that should render their mercies sweet, that is, the blessing of God, and contentment with their condition! Without these things, their heaven is but hell on this side hell. (Psalm 49:11, 73:7; Job 21:12) 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 a saving interest in Christ? Where is the favor of God? Where are the comforts of the Holy Spirit? Where are the evidences for heaven? This word from conscience makes the man's countenance to change, his thoughts to be troubled, his heart to 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 spiritual needs under their temporal 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?' (2 Sam. 14:23, 32). What is honor, and riches, and the favor of creatures—so long as I lack the favor of God, the pardon of my sins, a saving interest in Christ, and the hope of glory! O Lord, give me these, or I die! Give me these, or else I shall eternally die!

Neither Christ nor heaven can be hyperbolized. A crown of gold cannot cure the headache; a velvet slipper cannot ease the gout; honor or riches cannot quiet and still the conscience. **The heart of man is a three-sided triangle, which the whole round circle of the world cannot fill, as mathematicians say—but all the corners will complain of emptiness, and hunger for something else.**

***Remedy* (5).** 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 should be deceitful at home! Ah, the secret fretting, vexing, and gnawing that does daily, yes hourly, attend those men's souls whose hands are full of worldly goods!

It was a good speech of an emperor: 'You,' said he, 'gaze 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 26th 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 do usually cause 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 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.

***Remedy* (6).** 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 rest and quiet from those sorrows and sufferings that others sigh under.** David shows the end and design of God in this. "When I tried to understand all this, it was oppressive to me till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny. Surely you place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin. How suddenly are they destroyed, completely swept away by terrors! As a dream when one awakes, so when you arise, O Lord, you will make them vanish from this life." Psalm 73:16-20. So in Psalm 92:7, "Although the wicked flourish like weeds, and evildoers blossom with success, there is only eternal destruction ahead of them." 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. Exod. 9:16: 'And in very deed, for this cause have I raised you up, for to show in you my power, and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.' I have constituted and set you up as a target—that I may let fly at you, and follow you close with plague upon plague, until I have beaten the very breath out of your body, and got myself a name, by 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 ash-heap, 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, yes, make me worse than nothing, rather than set me up for a time, that you may bring me low forever. "Grant us, Lord, that we may so partake of temporal felicity, that we may not lose eternal happiness." (*Bernard*).

Valens, the Roman emperor, fell from being an emperor to be a footstool to Sapor, king of Persia. Dionysius, king of Sicily, fell from his kingly glory to be a schoolmaster. The brave Queen Zenobia was brought to Rome in golden chains. Belisarius, a famous general, Henry the Fourth, Bajazet Pythias, great Pompey, and William the Conqueror, these, from being very high were brought very low; they all fell from great glory and majesty to great poverty and misery.

***Remedy* (7).** The seventh remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider, **That God does often most plague and punish those whom others think he does most spare and love;** that is, God does plague and punish them most with spiritual judgments—which are the greatest, the sorest, and the heaviest—whom he least punishes with temporal punishments. (Psalm 81:12, 78:26-31, 106:15) He gave them their requests—but sent leanness into their soul. It is a heavy plague to have a fat body and a lean soul; a house full of gold, and a heart full of sin. There are no men on earth so internally plagued as those who meet with least 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, who 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 mad upon 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? It is better to have an ulcerated body—than a seared conscience. It is better to have no heart—than a hard heart. It is better to have no mind—than a blind mind.

***Remedy* (8).** The eighth remedy against this device of Satan is, **To dwell more upon that strict account that vain men must make for all that good that they do enjoy.** "In that day men shall give an account of good things committed unto them, of good things neglected by them, of evil committed by them, and of evils allowed by them. Then shall a good conscience be more worth than all the world's good." (*Bernard*) Ah! did men dwell more upon that account that they must before 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 to tremble and their lips to quiver, and rottenness to 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. Oh 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; oh 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 his kingdom than offend God willingly.' Yet being in the agony of death, and considering more thoroughly of his 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 that I have spent in my kingdom, I had lived a solitary life in the wilderness! Oh that I had lived a solitary life with God! How much more securely would I now have died! How much more confidently would 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 awakening of vengeance. Abused mercy will certainly turn into fury. God's forbearance of sin, is not the overlooking of sin. The day is at hand when he will pay wicked men for the abuse of old and new mercies. If he seems to be slow, yet he is sure. He has leaden heels—but iron hands. The farther he stretches his bow, 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 despisers and abusers of mercy.

Jerome still thought that voice was in his ears. 'Arise you dead, and come to judgment.' As often as I think on that day, how does my whole body quake, and my heart within me tremble.

DEVICE 9. By presenting to the soul the crosses, losses, reproaches, sorrows, and sufferings, which daily attend those who walk in the ways of holiness. Says Satan, Do not you see that there are none in the world that are so vexed, afflicted, and tossed, as those who 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 to 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?

***Remedy* (1).** 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 their profit and glorious advantage.** They shall discover that filthiness and vileness in sin, that yet the soul has never 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 in my experience, who God was, nor what sin meant—until 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 bitter-sweet; yes, 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 itself.

Again, They shall contribute to the mortifying and purging away of their sins (Isa. 1:15, and 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. Afflictions are medicines which heal soul diseases, better than all the remedies of physicians. Aloes kill worms; colds and frosts do destroy vermin; so do afflictions the corruptions that are in our hearts. The Jews, under all the prophet's thunderings, 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 fit to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more. That which I see not, teach me; if I have done iniquity, I will do it no more. Once have I spoken foolishly, yes, twice, I will do so no more' (Job 34:31, 32; 40:5). The burnt child dreads the fire. Ah! says the soul under the rod, sin is but a bitter-sweet; and for the future I intend, by the strength of Christ, that I will not buy repentance at so dear a rate.

Salt brine preserves from putrefaction, and salt marshes keep the sheep from the rot: so do afflictions the saints from sin. The ball in the Emblem says, the harder you beat me down in affliction, the higher I shall bound in affection towards heaven and heavenly things.

The Rabbis, to scare their scholars from sin, were accustomed 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 harm him. If afflictions did not put us out of our way, we would many times meet with some sin or other, that would harm our precious souls.

Again, They will work the saints to be more fruitful in holiness (Heb. 12:10, 11): 'But he afflicts us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.' The flowers smell sweetest after a shower; vines bear the better fruit, after pruning; 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 until 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 corner-stone. The waves did but lift Noah's ark nearer to heaven; and the higher the waters grew, the more near the ark was lifted up to heaven.

Afflictions lift up the soul to more rich, clear, and full enjoyments of God (Hosea 2:14): 'Behold, I will allure her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably to her' (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 between 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 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 their afflictions which 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 of them, to a greater love to holiness, and to a greater delight in holiness, and to a more vehement pursuing after holiness.

It is reported of Tiberius the emperor that, passing by a place where he saw a cross lying in the ground upon a marble stone, and causing the stone to be dug up, he found a great deal of treasure under the cross. So many a precious saint has found much spiritual and heavenly treasure under the crosses they have met withal.

I have read of a fountain, that at noonday is cold, and at midnight it grows warm; so many a precious soul is cold God-wards, and heaven-wards, and holiness-wards, in the day of prosperity; that grow warm God-wards and heaven-wards, and holiness-wards, in the midnight of adversity.

Again, Afflictions serve to keep the hearts of the saints humble and tender (Lam. 3:19, 20): 'Remembering my affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall. My soul has them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me,' or bowed down in me, as the original has it. So David, when he was under the rod, could say, 'I was mute, I opened not my mouth; because you did it' (Psalm 39:4).

I have read of Gregory Nazianzen, who, when anything fell out prosperously, would read over the Lamentation of Jeremiah, and that kept his heart tender, humbled, and low. Prosperity does not contribute more to the puffing up the soul, than adversity does to the bowing down of the soul. This the saints by experience find; and therefore they can kiss and embrace the cross, as others do the world's crown. The more the purest spices are beaten and bruised—the sweeter scent and fragrance they send abroad. So do saints when they are afflicted.

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 your word.' 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn your statutes.' '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, until they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.' And so they did. 'Come,' say they, 'and let us return unto the Lord: for he has torn, and he will heal us; he has 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.' (Psalm 119:67, 71. Hosea 5:14, 15; 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 contentment that did attend us, when we kept close communion with God, does 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 a little out, 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 bosom—which awakens 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. Most men are like a top, which will not go unless you whip it, and the more you whip it the better it goes. You know how to apply it. Those who are in adversity, says Luther, do better understand Scriptures; but those who are in prosperity read them as a verse in Ovid. Bees are killed with too much honey, but quickened with vinegar. The honey of prosperity kills our graces—but the vinegar of adversity quickens our graces. Musk, says one, when it has lost its fragrance, if it is put into the sink among filth—that recovers it. So do afflictions 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 which strives to entice us; it abates the lustiness of the flesh within, which strives to incite us to folly and vanity; and it assists the soul in his quarrel to the two former, which tends much to the reviving and recovering of decayed graces.

Now, suppose afflictions and troubles 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.

Remedy **(2).** The second remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, *that* **all the afflictions which befall the saints, only reach their worse part; they reach not, they hurt not, their noble part, their best part.** '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. The Christian soldier shall ever be master of the day. He may suffer death—but never conquest.

It was the speech of an heathen, when as by a tyrant he was commanded to be put into a mortar, and to be beaten to pieces with an iron pestle, he cries out to his persecutors: 'You do but beat the vessel, the case, the husk; 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.

Remedy **(3).** The third remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, **That the afflictions which 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 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 possession of the heavenly inheritance. What is our life but a shadow, a bubble, a flower, a runner, a span, a dream? Yes, so small 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 cross that we bear. The prophet in Isaiah 26:20, says the indignation does not pass—but 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 you have need of patience, that after you have done the will of God, you might receive the promise.' 'For yet a little while, he who shall come will come, and will not tarry' (Heb. 10:36, 37). 'A little, little, little while.'

There are none of God's afflicted ones that have not their intermissions and respites whiles under their short and momentary afflictions. When God's hand is on your back, let your hand be on your mouth, for though the affliction be sharp, it shall be but short.

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; before he will turn all your sighing into singing, all your lamentations into consolations, your sackcloth into silks, ashes into ointments, and your fasts into everlasting feasts!

Remedy **(4).** The fourth remedy against this device of Satan, is seriously to consider, **That the afflictions which befall the saints are such as proceed from God's dearest love.** 'As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten' (Rev. 3:19). Saints, says God, think not that I hate you, because I thus chide you. He who escapes discipline 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 God smiling on him. We must look through the anger of his correction to the sweetness of his countenance; even as by the rainbow we see the beautiful image of the sun's light in the midst of a dark and watery cloud.

Augustine asks—If he were beloved, how came he to be sick? So are wicked men apt to say, because they know not that corrections are pledges of our adoption, and badges of our sonship. **God had one Son without sin—but none without sorrow.**

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, with which 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 does square and fit, and fashion it for that glory above, which shows that discipline flows from precious love; therefore the afflictions which attend the people of God should be no bar to holiness, nor no motive to draw the soul to ways of wickedness.

Remedy **(5).** 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 ear-rings (Exod. 11:3); so the Jews were dismissed out of Babylon with gifts, jewels, and all necessary utensils (Ezra 1:7-11). Look more at the latter end of a Christian—than 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 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, and his son Solomon and all his glistering nobles about him.

Afflictions, they 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 which attend the ways of holiness.

Afflictions, they are but our Father's goldsmiths, who are working to add pearls to our crowns. Tiberius saw paradise when he walked upon hot burning coals. Herodotus said of the Assyrians, Let them drink nothing but wormwood all their life long; when they die, they shall swim in honey. You are wise, and know how to apply it.

Remedy **(6).** The sixth remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, **That the design of God in all the afflictions which befall them, is only to try them; it is not to wrong them, nor to ruin them, as ignorant souls are apt to think.** 'He knows the way that I take: and when he has tried me, I shall come forth as gold,' says patient Job, 33:10. So in Deut. 8:2, 'And you shall remember all the way which the Lord your God led you these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you, and to prove you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not.' 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 ash-heap, so does prosperity many a rotten heart. It is easy to wade in a warm bath, and every bird can sing in a sunshine 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, which 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 you, and favors of the Lord are flowing in on you' (Is. 60:1).

Dunghills raked send out a filthy stream; ointments crushed send out a sweet perfume. This is applicable to sinners and saints under the rod.

Remedy **(7).** The seventh remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, **That the afflictions, wrath, and misery which attend the ways of wickedness, are far greater and heavier than those which attend the ways of holiness.** Oh, the galling, girding, lashing, and gnawing of conscience, which attend souls in a way of wickedness! 'The wicked,' says Isaiah, 'are like the troubled sea, which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.' 'There is no peace to the wicked, says my God.'

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 Deuteronomy 28, and read from ver. 15 to the end of the chapter; and turn to Leviticus 26, and read from ver. 14 to the end of the 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 hovers over him; coming in, it accompanies him; going forth, it follows him, and in travel it is his comrade. It fills his heart with strife, and mingles the wrath of God with his sweetest morsels. It is a moth in his wardrobe, disease among his cattle, mildew in the field, rot among sheep, and ofttimes makes his children, his greatest vexation and confusion. There is no solid joy, nor lasting peace, nor pure comfort, which attends sinners in their sinful ways. **There is a sword of vengeance that every moment hang over their heads by a small thread!** And what joy and contentment 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!

Sin brings in sorrow and sickness. The Rabbis say, that when Adam tasted the forbidden fruit, his head ached. Sirens are said to sing curiously while they live—but to roar horribly when they die. So do the wicked.

(Sin oftentimes makes men insensible of the wrath of the Almighty. Sin transforms many a man, as it were, into those bears in Pliny, that could not be stirred with the sharpest prickles; or those fish in Aristotle, that though they have spears thrust into their sides, yet they awake not.)

DEVICE 10. By working them to be frequent in comparing themselves and their ways, with those who 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 you that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax-collector' (Luke 18:11). Why, says Satan—you are now and then a little lustful—but such and such do daily defile and pollute themselves by actual immorality and filthiness; you deceive and take advantage your neighbors in things that are but as toys and trifles—but such and such deceive and take advantage of 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 and are drunk with the drunkard; you are only a little proud in heart and habit, in looks and words.

Remedy (1). 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' (Matt. 7:3, 4); than to use spectacles to behold other men's sins rather than looking-glasses to behold his own; rather to be always holding his finger upon other men's sores, and to be amplifying and aggravating other men's sins—and mitigating of his own.

History speaks of a kind of witches that, stirring abroad, would put on their eyes—but returning home they boxed them up again. So do hypocrites.

Remedy **(2).** The second remedy against this device of Satan is, **To spend more time in comparing of your internal and external actions with the Rule, with the Word, by which you must be judged at last—than in comparing of yourselves with those who are worse than yourselves.** That man who, comparing his self with others that are worse than himself, may seem, to himself and others, to be an angel. Yet comparing himself with the word of God, may see himself to be like the devil, yes, a very devil. 'Have not I chosen twelve, and one of you is a devil?' (John 6:70). Such men are like him, as if they were spit out of his mouth.

The nearer we draw to God and his Word the more rottenness we shall find in our bones. The more any man looks into the body of the sun, the less he sees when he looks down again. It is said of the basilisk, that if he looks into a mirror he presently dies; so will sin, and a sinner (in a spiritual sense), when the soul looks into the Word, which is God's mirror.

Satan is called 'the god of this world' (2 Cor. 4:4), because, as God at first did but speak the word, and it was done, so, if the devil does but hold up his finger, give the least hint—they will obey 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.

Remedy **(3).** The third remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, **That though your sins be not as great as those of others, yet without sound repentance on your side, and pardoning mercy on God's side—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 go 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. (As in heaven one is more glorious than another, so in hell one shall be more miserable than another—*Augustine.*)

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, 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 (Acts 20:37) wept because they should see Paul's face no more, how deplorable is the eternal deprivation of the beautific vision! The gate of blessedness, the gate of hope, the gate of mercy, the gate of glory, the gate of consolation, and the gate of salvation—will be forever shut against them (Matt. 25:10).

But this is not all: you shall not be only 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 for ever; not only shut out from those sweet, surpassing, unexpressible, and everlasting pleasures that are at God's right hand—but shut up forever under those torments that are ceaseless, 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 until you feel the truth of what now you hear? It was a good saying of Chrysostom, speaking of hell: 'Let us not seek to figure out where it is—but how we shall escape it!'

God 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 the bounds of all desperation. Ah, how do the thoughts of this make the damned to roar and cry out for unquietness of heart, and tear their hair, and gnash their teeth, and rage for madness, that they must dwell in 'everlasting burnings' forever!

Surely one good means to escape hell is to take a turn or two in hell by our daily meditations.

DEVICE 11. By polluting and defiling the souls and judgments of men with such dangerous errors, which 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 the Scriptures are full of fallacies and uncertainties, and no further to be heeded, than they agree with their own carnal thoughts; 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; that there is no God nor devil, heaven nor hell—but what is within us; that sin and grace are equally good—with a hundred other horrid opinions, which have caused wickedness to break in as a flood among us.

Remedy **(1).** The first remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, **That an erroneous, vain MIND is as odious to God as a wicked LIFE.** He who had the leprosy in his head was to be pronounced utterly unclean (Levit. 13:44). Gross errors make the heart foolish, and render the life loose. Error spreads and frets like a gangrene, and renders the soul a leper in the sight of God. The breath of the erroneous is infectious, and, like the dogs of Congo—they bite though they bark not.

It was God's heavy and dreadful plague upon the Gentiles, to be given up to a mind void of judgment, or 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 (Rom. 1:28). I think that in these days **God punishes 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 the way of perishing forever. It were best that we never erred; next to that, that we amended our error. To persist in error is diabolical.

Remedy **(2).** The second remedy against this device of Satan is, **To receive the truth affectionately, and 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 the truth, God in justice gives up such souls to be deluded and deceived by error, to their eternal undoing (2 Thess. 2:10-12): '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.'

Ah, sirs, as you love your souls, do not tempt God, do not provoke God, by your withstanding 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, wherein they lie in wait to deceive' (The Greek, signifies such sleights as cheaters and false gamesters use at dice.) It is not he who receives most of the truth unto his head—but he who receives most of the truth affectionately into his heart—who 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. The greatest sinners are sure to be the greatest sufferers.

Ah, souls, as you would not have your judgments polluted and defiled with error, 'Let the word of the Lord,' which is more precious than gold, yes than fine gold, 'dwell plenteously in you' (Col. 3:16). Let it well in you as an ingrafted word incorporated into your souls, so digested by you, as that you turn it into a part of yourselves. 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—which will keep your judgments chaste and sound, in the midst of all those glittering errors that betray many souls into his hands, who can easily 'transform himself into an angel of light' (2 Cor. 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 who shall say, 'Lo, here is Christ, or lo, there is Christ.'

Ah, souls, if truth dwell plenteously in you, you are happy; if not, you are unhappy under all your greatest felicity. Truth at last triumphs.

Remedy **(3).** 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 no 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 Cor. 3:11-15). Ah, that all those who 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 of 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 account, and all your works must be tried by fire? Error as a glass, is bright, but brittle, and cannot endure the hammer, or fire—as gold can, which, though rubbed or melted, remains firm and lustrous.

Ah, that such souls would now at last 'buy the truth, and sell it not' (Prov. 23:23). Remember you can never over-buy it, whatever 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, yes, 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, which have their rise from hell, and not from heaven, from the god of this world and not from the God who shall at last judge this world, and all the corrupt opinions of men.

Remedy **(4).** The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is, ***To hate, reject and abominate all those doctrines and opinions which are contrary to godliness****, and which open a door to profaneness, and all such doctrines and opinions which require men to hold forth a strictness above what the Scripture requires; and all such doctrines and opinions which 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 such opinions which lift our own righteousness in the room of Christ's righteousness, which place good works in the throne of Christ, and makes them co-partners with Christ.* And all those opinions and doctrines which 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 which 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 his glory, when many who were once as shining stars may go forth as stinking snuffs. Gideon had seventy sons, and but one illegitimate child, and yet that illegitimate child destroyed all the rest (Judges 8:13, *et seq*.). One turn may bring a man quite out of the way. One old piece of gold is worth a thousand new counterfeits, and one old truth of God s more than a thousand new errors. True hatred is against all errors! It is sad to frown upon one error and smile upon another.

Remedy **(5).** The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is, ***To hold fast the truth.*** As men take no hold on the arm of flesh—until they let go the arm of God (Jer. 17:5); so men take no hold on error until they have let go their hold of truth; therefore hold fast the truth (2 Tim. 1:13, and Titus 1:9). 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, yes, sweeter than honey, or the honeycomb? and will not you 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 not you found truth a guide to lead you, a staff to uphold you, a cordial to strengthen you, and a medicine to heal you? And will not you 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 truth fast? 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' (Prov. 3:15). Truth is that heavenly mirror wherein we may see the luster and glory of divine wisdom, power, greatness, love and mercifulness. In this mirror 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 (Ruth 1:15, 16), 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.'

What John said to the church of Philadelphia I may say to you, 'Hold fast that which you have, that no man take your crown' (Rev. 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. Hold fast as with tooth and nail, against those who would snatch it from us. It is better to let go of anything, rather than truth! It is better to let go, of your honors and riches, your friends and pleasures, and the world's favors; yes, your nearest and dearest relations, yes, your very lives—than to let go of the truth. Oh, keep the truth, and truth will make you safe and happy forever. Blessed are those who are kept by truth. 'Though I cannot dispute for the truth, yet I can die for the truth,' said a blessed martyr.

Remedy (6). 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 tear the taller trees, so humble souls are free from those gusts and blasts of error which shake and tear proud, lofty souls. Satan and the world have 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 drink 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.

I have read of one who, seeing in a vision so many snares of the devil spread upon the earth, he sat down mourning, and said within himself, Who shall pass through these? whereupon he heard a voice answering, Humility shall pass through them.

That is a sweet word in Psalm 25:9, 'The humble, he will guide in judgment, and the meek he will 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, and 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 a-soaring up above the bounds and limits of humility, usually fall into the very worst of errors, as experience does daily evidence. The proud soul is like him who gazed upon the moon—but fell into the pit. You know how to apply it.

Remedy (7). 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. Errors in conscience produce many great evils, not only in men's own souls—but also in human affairs. Error is that whorish woman that has cast down many, wounded many, yes, slain many strong men, many great men, and many learned men, and many professing men in former times and in our time, as is too evident to all who are not 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 of this, and not tremble more at error, than at hell itself?

DEVICE 12. To choose wicked company, to keep wicked society.

And oh! the horrid impieties and wickedness that Satan has drawn men to sin—by moving them to sit and associate themselves with vain people.

Remedy **(1).** The first remedy against this device of Satan is, **To dwell, until your hearts are affected, upon those commands of God which expressly require us to shun the society of the wicked** (Eph. 5:11): 'And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness—but rather reprove them'; (Prov. 5:14-16): '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.' 1 Cor. 5:9-11, 2 Thess. 3:6, Prov. 1:10-15. Turn to these Scriptures, and let your souls dwell upon them, until 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 (34:20; 30:24). Why then should you? God's commands are not like those who are easily reversed—but they are like those of the Medes, they 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 commands of God must outweigh all authority and example of men. (*Jerome*).

Remedy **(2).** 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 scripture above mentioned. 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 shoals; as you shun those who have the plague-sores running upon them, so should you shun the society of wicked men. As weeds endanger the corn, as bad infections endanger the body, or as an infected house the neighborhood—so does wicked company the soul. (Prov. 13:20).

Eusebius reports of John the Evangelist, that he would not allow Cerinthus, the heretic, in the same bath with him, lest some judgment should abide them both. A man who keeps ill company is like him that walks in the sun—tanned insensibly.

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

Remedy **(3).** The third remedy against this device of Satan is, **To look always upon wicked men, under those names and notions which the Scripture describes them.** 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. (2 Tim. 4:17, Is. 11:7, Ezek. 3:10, Matt. 7:6, Rev. 22:15, Luke 13:32, Is. 10:17, Ezek. 2:6, Judges 9:14, Job 21:18, Psalm 83:13, Psalm 18:42, Ezek. 22:18, 19, Is. 65:5, Ezek. 24:6.)

It is not safe to look upon wicked men under those names and notions which they set out themselves by, or which 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 (1 Sam. 25:25), 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 Spirit has given them. Such monsters are wicked men—which should render their company to all who have tasted of the sweetness of divine love, a burden and not a delight.

Remedy **(4).** The fourth remedy against this device of Satan, is, solemnly 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** (Psalm 120:5, 6): 'Woe is me, that I sojourn in Meshech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar! My soul has long dwelt with him that hates peace.' 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' (Jer. 9:2). So they vexed Lot's righteous soul by their filthy conversation' (2 Pet. 2:7); they made his life a burden, they made death more desirable to him than life, yes, they made his life a lingering death. Guilt or grief is all that godly gracious souls get by conversing with wicked men.

'O Lord, let me not go to hell, where the wicked are: for Lord, you know I never loved their company here'—said a gracious gentlewoman, when she was to die.

SATAN'S DEVICES TO KEEP SOULS FROM HOLY DUTIES, TO HINDER SOULS IN HOLY SERVICES, AND TO KEEP THEM OFF FROM RELIGIOUS PERFORMANCES

The next thing to be shown 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' (Zech. 3:1).

DEVICE 1. 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 affection of the soul.

He represents the **world** to them in its beauty and finery, which proves a bewitching sight to a world of men. (It is true, this deceived not Christ, because Satan could find no matter in him for his 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; until the devil has set before them the world in all its beauty and finery, 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 hearts, the souls, the duties, the services--which the inordinate love of this wicked world eats up and destroys! Where one thousand are destroyed by the world's frowns--ten thousand are destroyed by the world's smiles! The world, siren-like, sings to us, then 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, which will much endanger us, if they do not eternally destroy us. Ah! the multitude of souls that have glutted on these sweet baits and died forever!

The inhabitants of Nilus are deaf from the noise of the waters; so the world makes such a noise in men's ears, that they cannot hear the things of heaven. The world is like the swallows' dung that put out Tobias's eyes. The champions could not wring an apple out of Milo's hand by a strong hand—but a fair maid, by fair means, got it presently.

Remedy (1). The first remedy against this device of Satan is, to dwell upon the impotency and weakness of all these things here 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 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 cholic, the fever, or lesser diseases. No, that which may seem most strange, is that a great deal of wealth cannot keep men from falling into extreme poverty. You shall find seventy kings, with their fingers and toes cut off, glad, like dogs, to lick up crumbs under another king's table; and shortly after, the same king that brought them to this poverty, is reduced to the same poverty and misery (Judg. 1:6). Why then should that be a bar to keep you out of heaven--which cannot give you the least ease on earth?

Nugas the Scythian, despising the rich presents and ornaments which were sent unto him by the emperor of Constantinople, asked whether those things could drive away calamities, diseases, or death.

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, to dwell upon the vanity of them as well as upon the impotency of all worldly good. This is the sum of Solomon's sermon, 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!' This our first parents found, and therefore named their second son Abel, or 'vanity.' Solomon, who had tried all these things, and could best tell the vanity of them—preaches this sermon over again and again. 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!' It is sad to think how many thousands there are, who can say with the preacher, 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity,' no, swear it, and yet follow after these things as if there were no other glory, nor felicity—but what is to be found in these things they call vanity! **Such men will sell Christ, heaven, and their souls for a trifle**, who *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 their royalty and glory. Oh let your souls dwell upon the vanity of all things here below, until 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!

Oh the imperfection, the ingratitude, the levity the inconstancy, the treachery of those creatures we most servilely bow down to. Ah, did we but weigh man's pain with his payment, his crosses with his mercies, his miseries with his pleasures—we would then see that there is nothing got bargain, and conclude, 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!'

Chrysostom once said, That if he were 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 trumpets 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 you love what is worthless and pursue a lie?" (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 thoughts 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?

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is, to dwell much upon the uncertainty, the mutability, and inconstancy of all things under the sun. Man himself is but the dream of a dream—but the generation of imagination—but an empty vanity—but the curious picture of nothing—a poor, feeble, dying shadow. All temporals are as transitory as a ruching current, a shadow, a ship, a bird, an arrow, a runner who passes by. 'Why should you set your eyes upon that which is not?' says Solomon (Prov. 23:5). And says the apostle, 'The fashion of this world passes away' (1 Cor. 7:31). This intimates, that there is nothing of any firmness, or solid consistency, in the creature. Heaven alone, has a foundation—earth has none, 'but is hung upon nothing,' as Job speaks (26:7). The apostle commanded Timothy to 'charge rich men that they be not high-minded, nor put their trust in uncertain riches' (1 Tim. 6:17). Riches were never true to any who trusted to them; they have deceived men, as Job's brook did the poor travelers in the summer season (Job. 6:15). They are like bad servants, who ramble about 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 until the end of the day; 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 tarries not' (Job 20:8). 'Like a hungry one who dreams he is eating, then wakes and is still hungry; and like a thirsty one who dreams he is drinking, then wakes and is still thirsty, longing for water,' as the prophet Isaiah says (Chap. 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, who 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 favor, Ahithophel for policy, Haman for favor, Asahel for swiftness, Alexander for great conquest and yet poisoned. The same you may see in the four mighty kingdoms, the Chaldean, Persian, Grecian, and Roman: how soon were they gone and forgotten! The most renowned Frederick lost all, and sued to be made but sexton of the church that himself had built. I have read of a poor fisherman, who, while his nets were a-drying, slept upon the rock, and dreamed that he was made a king, on a sudden starts up, and leaping for joy, fell down from the rock, and in the place of his imaginary felicities loses his little portion of pleasures.

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. The pomp of this world John compares to the moon, which increases and decreases (Rev. 12:1).

Remedy (4). The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously 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 contentment—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. '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 who made him, and lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation,' as Moses spoke (Deut. 32:15).

Ah, the time, the thoughts, the energy—which the things of the world consume and spend! 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 who are most unlike God! Oh, the deadness, the barrenness, which usually attend men under great outward mercies! Oh, the riches of the world chokes the word; 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 'Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver and in gold.' According to the Hebrew, it is 'Abram was very weary;' to show that riches are a heavy burden, and a hindrance many times to heaven, and happiness.

Four good mothers beget four bad daughters: great familiarity begets contempt; truth begets hatred; virtue begets envy; riches begets ignorance (a French proverb).

Polycrates gave a large sum of money to Anacreon, who for two nights afterwards, was so troubled with worry how to keep it, and how to spend it; that he carried the money back to Polycrates, saying that it was not worth the pains which he had already taken for it.

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 scarcely any leisure to look up to heaven, or to look after Christ, and the things that belong to their everlasting peace!

Riches, though justly acquired, yet are but like manna; those who gathered less had no lack, and those who gathered more, it was but a trouble and annoyance to them. **The world is troublesome, and yet it is loved**; what would it be, if it brought true peace? 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 those passing by, she does with her beautiful colors so astonish and amaze them, that they have no power to leave, until she has stung them! Ah, how many thousands are there now on earth, who have found this true by experience, who have spun a lovely rope to strangle themselves, both temporally and eternally, by being bewitched by the beauty and finery of this world!

Sicily is so full of sweet flowers that dogs cannot hunt there. And what do all the sweet contents of this world—but make us lose the scent of heaven!

Remedy (5). 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 minds are 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**. Surely all the things of this world are but bitter sweets.** 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,' a sea for the trouble of it, and glass for the brittleness and bitterness of it. (Rev. 4:6, 15:2, 21:18). The honors, profits, pleasures and delights of the world are like the gardens of Adonis, where we can gather nothing but trivial flowers, surrounded with many briars.

Remedy (6). 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 (Heb. 10 and 11) to trample upon all the beauty, finery and glory of the world, was the acquaintance with, 'and assurance of better and more durable things.' You joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.' 'They looked for a house which had foundations, whose builder and maker was God.' 'And they looked for another country, even a heavenly one.' 'They saw him who was invisible, and had an eye to the recompense of reward.' And this made them count all the glory and finery of this world, to be too poor and contemptible for them to set their hearts upon! (Heb. 10:34; 11:10, 16 26).

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, until 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 who has it' (Rev. 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 world under their feet!

Let heaven be a man's object, and earth will soon be his abject.

It was an excellent saying of Lewis of Bavaria, emperor of Germany, 'Such goods are worth getting and owning—which will not sink or wash away if a shipwreck happens—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 for 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 accommodation of this life. Now he who 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 finery 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 and the royal robes, he then begins to have low and contemptible thoughts of those base things which 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, base things, which the soul before valued above God, Christ and heaven.

When Basil was tempted with money and preferment, said he, 'Give me money that may last forever, and glory that may eternally flourish; for the fashion of this world passes away, as the waters of a river that runs by a city.

Remedy (7). The seventh remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, that true happiness and satisfaction is not to be had in the enjoyment of worldly good. True happiness is too big and too glorious a thing to be found in anything below that glorious God—who is a Christian's *summum bonum*—his chief good. True happiness lies only in our enjoyment of a **suitable** good, a **pure** good, a **total** good and an **eternal** good! God alone is such a good—and such a good can only satisfy the soul of man. Philosophers could say, that he was never a truly happy man—who might afterwards become miserable.

The blessed angels, those glittering courtiers, have all felicities and blessedness, and yet have they neither gold, nor silver, nor jewels, nor none of the beauty and finery of this world. Certainly if happiness was to be found in these earthly 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 poor provisions for the choicest delicacies. Certainly happiness lies not in those things which a man may enjoy—and yet be miserable forever. Now a man may be great and graceless with Pharaoh; honorable and damnable with king Saul; rich and miserable with Dives; therefore happiness lies not in these things.

Certainly happiness lies not in those things which cannot comfort a man upon a dying bed. Is it honors, riches or friends—which 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 eternally reigning with Christ? Can happiness lie in those things which 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. Gregory the Great used to say, He is poor whose soul is void of grace—not whose coffers are empty of money. The reasonable soul may be busied about other things—but it cannot be filled with 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 who loves silver shall not be satisfied with silver, nor he who loves abundance with increase; this is also vanity,' said the wise man (Eccles. 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. **Some one thing or another will be forever lacking to that soul, who has nothing but outward good to live upon.** You may as soon fill a bag with wisdom, a chest with virtue—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!

Remedy (8). 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 perishing earth.

Plutarch tells of Themistocles, that he accounted it not to stand with his state to stoop down to take up the spoils the enemies had scattered in flight; but says to one of his followers, 'You may have these things—for you are not Themistocles'. Oh what a sad thing it is that a heathen should set his feet upon those very things upon which most professors set their hearts, and for the gain of which, with Balaam, many run the hazard of losing their immortal souls forever!

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 (Eccles. 2:11), '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,' were engraved on the door-posts 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 bed-steads where you lie, on the walls of the house 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 whom you meet—that your souls may not, by the beauty and finery 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—who prefer Christ's spirituals and eternals above all temporal transitory things.

DEVICE 2. The second device that Satan has to draw the soul from holy duties, and to keep them off from religious services, is, **By presenting to them the danger, the losses, and the sufferings which attend the performance of such and such religious services.**

By this device Satan kept those who believed on Christ from confessing of Christ: in John 12:42, '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.' I would walk in all the ways of God, I would give up myself to the strictest way of holiness—but I am afraid dangers will attend me on the one hand, and losses, and 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!

Remedy (1). 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 who shall harm you, if you be followers of that which is good?' says the apostle, that is, none shall harm you (1 Pet. 3:13). Nobody is properly hurt but by himself, and by his own fault.

Natural conscience cannot but do homage to the image of God stamped upon the natures, words, works, and life of the godly; as we may see in the carriage of Nebuchadnezzar and Darius towards Daniel. All afflictions and troubles which 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 flowers or ribbons that be in their hats. Gordius, that blessed martyr, accounted it a loss to him not to suffer many kinds of tortures. He says tortures are but tradings with God for glory. The greater the combat is, the greater is the following reward.

The treasures of a saint are the presence of God, the favor of God, union and communion with God, the pardon of sin, the joy of the Spirit, and the peace of conscience. These are jewels which 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 am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him until that day,' says the apostle (2 Tim. 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. That was a notable speech of Luther—Let him who died for my soul see to the salvation of it.

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is to consider, That other precious saints who 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 held on building the temple and the wall of Jerusalem. So Daniel, and those precious worthies (Ps 44:19, 20), under the lack of outward encouragements, and in the face of a world of very great discouragements, their souls cleaved to God and his ways. 'Though they were sore broken in the place of dragons, and covered with the shadow of death, yes, 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.' Though bonds and imprisonments 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? (2 Cor. 6:5, Heb. 11:36).

William Fowler, the martyr said: "Heaven will as soon fail as I will forsake my profession or budge in the least degree from it." So Sanctus, being under great torments, cries out, "I am a Christian!" No torments could work him to decline the service of God. I might produce a cloud of witnesses; but if these do not assist you to be noble and brave, I am afraid more will not.

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That all the troubles and dangers which attend the performance of all 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?' (Heb. 2:3). He says not, if we reject or renounce so great salvation. No! but if we neglect, or shift off 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 'which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of men' (Is. 64:4). Remember this, there is no man who breathes, but shall suffer more by neglecting those holy and heavenly services that God commands, commends, and rewards, than he can possibly suffer by doing of them. Francis Xavier counseled John the Third, king of Portugal, to meditate every day a quarter of an hour upon that text, 'What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul!'

Remedy (4). The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is, to consider, 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 would have perished—if we had not perished; we would have been undone—if we had not been undone; we would have been in danger—if we had not been in danger. God will so order the afflictions that befall you in the way of righteousness, that your souls shall say—We would not for all the world, foregone 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, which God has cured us of, by the trouble 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 a ship for France, he broke his leg; and it pleased Providence so to order it, that the ship that he would have gone in, was sunk at sea, 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 portion that makes us heart-sick—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. 'Had saw not these things perished, I would not have been safe', said a philosopher when he saw what great possessions he had lost.

Remedy (5). 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 Tim. 6:6). Oh, the joy, the peace, the comfort, the rest—which 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 your beauty and your glory, as I have seen you in your sanctuary' (Psalm 63:2). Oh, the sweet looks, the sweet words, the sweet hints, the sweet joggings, the sweet influences, the sweet love-letters, which 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 finery 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. Tertullian, in his book to the martyrs, had an apt saying. 'That is right and good merchandise, when something is parted with to gain more.' He applies it to their sufferings, wherein, though the flesh lost something, yet their soul got much more.

Oh, the saints can say under all their troubles and afflictions, that they have food 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 perhaps the comforts and contentments of the creature—and we gain the favor of God, peace of conscience, and the comforts and contentments 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 enrapt up in the third heaven. For 'light afflictions,' they shall have 'a weight of glory!' For a few afflictions, they shall have these joys, pleasures, and contentments, that are as numerous as the stars of heaven, or as the sands of the sea! For momentary afflictions, they shall have an eternal crown of glory. 'It is but winking, and you shall be in heaven presently,' said the martyr. Oh, therefore, let not afflictions or troubles cause you to shun the ways of God, or to leave that service that should be dearer to you than a world, yes, than your very life.

When the noble General Zedislaus had lost his hand in the war, the king sent him a golden hand for it. What we lose in Christ's service he will make up, by giving us some golden mercies. Though the cross be bitter, yet it is but short; a little storm, as one said of Julian's persecution, and an eternal calm follows!

DEVICE 3 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. 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.

Remedy (1). 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 attends the duty. You should reason thus with your souls: O our souls, though such and such services be hard and difficult, yet are they exceeding necessary for the honor of God, and the keeping up his name in the world, and the keeping under of sin, and the strengthening of weak graces, and so 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 the ungodly, 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, until your souls be lifted up far above all the difficulties which attend religious duties.

The necessity of doing your duty appears by this, that you are his servants by a threefold right; you are his servants by right of creation, and by right of sustenation, and by right of redemption.

Remedy (2). 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. 'You meet him who rejoices and works righteousness,' as the prophet Isaiah says (Is. 64:5). The word in the Hebrew is diversely taken; but most take the word here to signify 'to meet a soul with those affections of love and tenderness as the father of the prodigal met the prodigal with.' God is *Pater miserationum*, he is all affections; he is swift to show mercy, as he is slow to anger. If meeting with God, who is goodness 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 you do? will you 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 which can be. Remember this, that God will suit your strength to your work, and in the hardest service you shall have the choicest assistance.

Luther speaks excellently to Melancthon, who was apt to be discouraged with doubts and difficulties, and fear from foes, and to cease the service they had undertaken. 'If the work is not good, why did we ever own it? If it is good, why should we ever give it up?' Why, should we, who have Christ the conqueror on our side—fear the conquered world?

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is, To dwell upon the hard and difficult things that the Lord Jesus has passed through for your temporal, spiritual, and eternal good. Ah, what a sea of blood, 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 of suffering, which has in it all the ingredients of divine wrath, is too bitter for me to sip of—how much more to drink the very dregs of it? No! Christ pleads not the difficulty of the service—but resolutely and bravely wades through all, as the prophet Isaiah shows: 'I gave My back to those who beat Me, and My cheeks to those who tore out My beard. I did not hide My face from scorn and spitting.' (Chap. 50:6).

Christ bears his Father's wrath, the burden of your sins, the malice of Satan, and the rage of the world—and 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 by God to much blindness and hardness.

'It is not fit, since the Head was crowned with thorns, that he members should be crowned with rosebuds' says Zanchius.

Godfrey Bouillon, Crusader King of Jerusalem (1099), refused to be crowned with a crown of gold, saying, 'it was not fitting for a Christian to wear a crown of gold, where Christ for our salvation had once worn a crown of thorns!'

Remedy (4). 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—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' (Rom. 7:22). To the noble part of a saint, Christ's 'yoke is easy, and his burden is light (Matt. 11:30). The Greek signifies that Christ's yoke is a kind, a gracious, a pleasant, a good, and a gainful yoke—as opposed to that which is painful and tedious.

All the commands and ways of Christ (even those who 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. 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, that my worse part might be more serviceable to my noble part, that I might act by an untired power in that service, which is a pleasure, a paradise, to me. As every flower has its sweet savor, so every good duty carries sweet and comfort in the performance of it.

Remedy (5). The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That great reward and glorious recompense that attends those who cleave to the service of the Lord in the face of all difficulties and discouragements. Though the work is hard—yet the wages are great. **Heaven will make amends for all!** Yes, 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.' Yes, 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' (Heb. 12:2).

Basil speaks of some martyrs who were cast out all night naked in the frigid weather, and were to be burned the next day, how they comforted themselves in this manner: The winter is sharp—but paradise is sweet; here we shiver for cold—but the bosom of Abraham will make amends for all.

Christians who would hold on in the service of the Lord, must look more upon the future crown than upon the present 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 which is unspeakable and full of glory,' and with 'peace which passes understanding.' Some degree of comfort follows every good action, as heat accompanies fire, as beams and warmth issue from the sun: 'Moreover, by them is your servant warned, and in keeping of them there is great reward,' Psalm 19:2. Not only for keeping—but in keeping of them, there is great reward. This is a reward before the reward, a sure reward of well doing; *in* doing thereof, not only *for* doing thereof, there is great reward (Psalm 19:11).

The joy, the rest, the refreshing, the comforts, the contents, the smiles—which 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 gratuities be thus sweet and glorious before pay-day 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 whom you have given me' (Is. 8:18). If there be so much to be had in a wilderness, what then shall be had in paradise?

DEVICE 4. 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 has gone to heaven to prepare a place for us, and in the mean time 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.

Remedy (1). 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.

Tertullian has this expression of the Scriptures: 'I adore the fullness of the Scripture.' Gregory calls the Scripture 'the heart and soul of God'—who would not then dwell in it?

It is a sad and dangerous thing to have two eyes to behold our dignity and privileges, and not one 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 rejoice 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: "Do you not know that your body is a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body" (1 Cor. 6:19, 20). 'Therefore, my beloved brethren, be you steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord' (1 Cor. 15:58). 'And let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not' (Gal 6:9). And that of the apostle 'Rejoice always' (1 Thess. 5:16), and 'Pray without ceasing' (1 Thess. 5:17). And that in the Philippians: 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling' (2:12); and that, 'This do until I come' (1 Tim. 4:13); 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' (Heb. 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 chief 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 interested in the great glorious things that have been accomplished by Christ. The Jews were much in turning over the leaves of the Scripture—but they did not weigh the matter of them (John 5:39): 'You search the Scriptures.'

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, to consider, That the great and glorious things that Jesus Christ has done, and is 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 life' (1 Peter 2:9, 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 we 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. This I am sure of, that all man's happiness here is his holiness, and his holiness shall hereafter be his happiness. Christ has therefore broke the devil's yoke from off our necks, that his Father might have better service from our hearts.

So the apostle says, 'I will be their God, and they shall be my people.' 'And I will be a Father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.' Mark what follows: 'Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.' (2 Cor. 6:17-7:1). And again: 'The grace of God that brings salvation has 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 us unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works' (Titus 2:12-14). Ah, souls! I know no such arguments to work you to a lively and constant performance of all heavenly services, like those who 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 hell fire in your faces will never do it!

Talk not of a godly life—but let your life speak. Your actions in passing pass not away; for every good work is a grain of seed for eternal life.

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That those precious souls which Jesus Christ has done and suffered as much for as he has for you—have been exceedingly 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? 'Your law is my meditation all the day' (Psalm 119:97). The same truth you may run and read in Jacob, Moses, Job, Daniel, and in the rest of the holy prophets and apostles, whom Christ has done as much for 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 which argue thus—Christ has done such and such glorious things for us, therefore we need not make any care and 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 saints' motto in all ages has been *'Laboremus'*—let us be doing.

'God loves the runner, not the questioner or disputer', says Luther.

He who talks of heaven—but does not the will of God, is like him who gazed upon the moon—but fell into the pit.

Remedy (4). The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider this, That those who do not walk in the ways of righteousness and holiness, who 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, who 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. Certainly it is one thing to judge by our graces, another thing to rest or put our trust in them. There is a great deal of difference between declaring and deserving. As David's daughters were known by their garments of diverse colors, so are God's children by their piety and sanctity. A Christian's emblem should be a house walking towards heaven. High words surely make a man neither holy nor just; but a virtuous life, a circumspect walking, makes him dear to God. A tree that is not fruitful is fit only for the fire. **Christianity is not a talking—but a walking with God**, who will not be put off with words. If he sees no fruit, he will take up his axe, and then the soul is cut off forever.

'Little children,' says the apostle, 'let no man deceive you: he who does 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; whoever does not righteousness is not of God, neither he who loves not his brother' (ver. 10). 'If you know that he is righteous,' says the same apostle, 'you know that everyone who practices righteousness, is born of him.' "This is how we are sure that we have come to know Him: by keeping His commands. The one who says, 'I have come to know Him,' without keeping His commands, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly in him the love of God is perfected. This is how we know we are in Him: the one who says he remains in Him should walk just as He walked." '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 his Son cleanses us from all sin,' says the same apostle (1 John 2:3-6, and 1:6, 7).

So (James 2:14, 20): 'What does it profit, my brethren, though a man say he has faith, and have no works; can faith save him?' *that is,* it cannot. 'For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.' 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 conscious 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 a 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.

Remedy (5). The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That there are other choice and glorious ends for the saint's 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 fruits' (Matt. 7:17), 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 indwelling of the Spirit, to stop the mouths of the worst of men, and to gladden those righteous souls, whom God would not have saddened. These, and abundance of other choice ends there are, why those who have a saving 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.

The end in view moves to action. Keep yourself within compass, and have an eye always to the end of your life and actions.

DEVICE 5. By presenting to them the fewness and poverty of those who walk in the ways of God—who continue in religious practices.

Says Satan, Do not you see that those who walk in such and such religious ways are the poorest, the lowest, and the most despicable people in the world? This took with them in John 7:47-49: 'Then answered the pharisees, Are you also deceived? Have any of the rulers, or of the pharisees, believed on him? But these ignorant crowds do, but what do they know about it? A curse is on them anyway!'

Remedy (1). 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, has not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he has promised to them that love him?' says James 2:5. 'I know your poverty—but you are rich,' says John to the church of Smyrna (Rev. 2:9). What though they have little in possession, yet they have a glorious kingdom in future promise. '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 future promise, though they have 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 future promise? I am sure the poorest saint who breathes, will not exchange, were it in his power, that which he has in hope and in future promise, for the possession of as many worlds as there be stars in heaven, or sands in the sea.

'Do not you see,' says Chrysostom, 'the places where treasures are hid are rough and overgrown with thorns? Do not the naturalists tell you, that the mountains that are big with gold within, are bare of grass without? Saints have, as scholars, poor daily fare here, because they must study hard to go to heaven.'

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, to consider, That in all ages God has had some who have been great, rich, wise, and honorable—who have chosen his ways, and cleaved to his service in the face of all difficulties. Though not many wise men, yet some wise men; and though not many mighty, yet some mighty have; and though not many noble, yet some noble have. 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.

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That the spiritual riches of the poorest saints infinitely transcend the temporal riches of all the wicked men in the world; their spiritual riches satisfy them; they can sit down satisfied with the riches of grace that are in Christ, without earthly honors or riches. 'He who drinks of that water that I shall give him, shall thirst no more' (John 4:13). Alexander's vast mind inquired if there were any more worlds to conquer.

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, yes, 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, we all know that the riches of this world cannot satisfy the souls of men—for they are as fading as a flower, or as the owners of them are.

Remedy (4). 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,' 'a remnant,' 'a garden enclosed,' 'a spring shut up, a fountain sealed'; though they are as 'the summer gleanings'; though they are 'one from a city, and two from a tribe'; though they are but a handful to a houseful, a spark to a flame, a drop to the ocean—yet considered altogether, are an innumerable number that cannot be numbered. As John speaks: 'After this I saw a vast crowd, too great to count, from every nation and tribe and people and language, standing in front of the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white and held palm branches in their hands.' (Rev. 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' (Matt. 8:11). So Paul: 'But you have come unto mount Zion, 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' (Heb. 12:22).

Remedy (5). The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That it will be only a short time, before these poor despised saints shall shine brighter than the sun in his 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: 'Don't you know, that the saints shall judge the world?' (1 Cor. 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 despised saints, and that their poverty became a stumbling-block to keep them off from the ways of sanctity.

John Foxe being once asked whether he knew a certain poor man answered, I remember him well. I tell you I forget lords and ladies to remember such. So will God deal by his poor saints. He will forget the great and mighty ones of the world to remember his few poor despised ones. Though John the Baptist was poor in the world, yet the Holy Spirit calls him the greatest that was born of woman. Ah, poor saints, men that know not your worth, have such low thoughts of you. "My thoughts are completely different from yours," says the Lord. "And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts." Isaiah 55:8-9

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 ever so poor, a greater ornament to his table, and more worthy of his company, than the greatest unconverted nobles; 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, yes, 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 has raised us up,' says the apostle, 'and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.' Oh! therefore, say to your own souls, when they begin to decline in the ways of Zion, because of the poverty and fewness of those who walk in them, The day is at hand when those few, poor, despised saints shall shine in glory, when they shall judge this world, and when all the wicked of this 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 fewness, they have neglected and despised in this world.

Remedy (6). The sixth 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 fewness of those who walk in those ways, shall be quite taken away, by his making them the head—who 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 fewness. John, speaking of the glory of the church, the new Jerusalem that came down from heaven (Rev. 21:24), tells us, 'The nations of the earth will walk in its light, and the rulers of the world will come and bring their glory to it.' So the prophet Isaiah: 'I will exchange your bronze for gold, your iron for silver, your wood for bronze, and your stones for iron.' (chap. 60:17). And so the prophet Zechariah speaks (chap. 14:14): 'And the wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance.' The Lord has promised that 'the meek shall inherit the earth' (Matt. 5:5); and 'heaven and earth shall pass away, before one jot or one tittle of his word shall pass unfulfilled' (ver. 18). Ah, poor saints! now some thrust sore at you, others look a-squint upon you, others shut the door against you, others turn their backs upon you, and most of men (except it be a few who 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 ash-heap, 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.

These following scriptures do abundantly confirm this truth: Jer. 31:12; Is. 30:23; 62:8, 9; Joel 2:23, 24; Micah 4:6; Amos 9:13, 14; Zech 8:12; Isa. 41:18, 19; 55:13; 66:6, 7; 65:21, 22; 61:4; 60:10 Ezek. 36:10. Only take these two cautions: 1. That in these times the saints' chief comforts, delights, and contents with consist in their more clear, full, and constant enjoyment of God. 2. That they shall have such abundant measure of the Spirit poured out upon them, that their riches and outward glory shall not be snares unto them—but golden steps to a richer living in God.

And this is not all—but God will also mightily increase the number of his chosen ones, multitudes shall be converted to him: 'Who has ever seen or heard of anything as strange as this? Has a nation ever been born in a single day? Has a country ever come forth in a mere moment? But by the time Jerusalems' birth pains begin, the baby will be born; the nation will come forth. They will bring the remnant of your people back from every nation. They will bring them to my holy mountain in Jerusalem as an offering to the Lord. They will ride on horses, in chariots and wagons, and on mules and camels' (Isa. 66:8, 20). Does not the Scripture say, that 'the kingdoms of this world must become the kingdoms of our Lord'? (Rev. 11:15). Has not God given to Christ 'the heathen, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession'? (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,' (Isa. 2:2 and 54:14 and 61:9).

Pray, read, and meditate upon Isaiah 60 and 66 and 2:1-5, 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. By presenting before them the examples of the greatest part of the world—who walk in the ways of their own hearts, and that make light and slight of the ways of the Lord.

Why, says Satan, do not you 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 odd? You had better do as the most do. (John 7:48, 49; 1 Cor. 1:26, 28; Micah 7:2-4.)

Remedy (1). The first remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, Of those scriptures which are directly opposed to following the sinful examples of men. As that in Exodus, 'You shall not follow a multitude to do evil' (chap. 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,' say they (Acts 28:22). So in Num. 16:21, 'Separate from them, and come out from among them.' So the apostle: 'Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness' (Eph. 5:11). So Solomon: 'Enter not into the way of the wicked; forsake the foolish, and live' (Prov. 4:14 and 9:6). Those who walk with the many—shall perish with the many. Those who do as the most, shall before long suffer with the most. Those who live as the many, must die with the many, and go to hell with the many. The way to hell is broad and well beaten. The way to be undone forever is to do as the most do. 'The multitude' is the weakest and worst argument. "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it." Matthew 7:13-14

Remedy (2). 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 a voice from heaven saying, Come out of her, my people, that you be not partakers of her sins, and that you receive not of her plagues' (Rev. 18:4). Come out in affection, in action, and in habitation, or else the infection of sin will bring upon you the infliction of punishment. So says the wise man, 'He who walks with wise men shall be wise—but a companion of fools shall be destroyed,' (Prov. 13:20). Multitudes may help you into sin, yes, one may draw you into sin—but it is not multitudes who 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.

Sin and punishment are linked together with chains of adamant. Of sin we may say, as Isidore does of the serpent, 'So many colors, so many dolours.'

Remedy (3). 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 your soul is 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? Be suspect of 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 straight way alone, than to wander into crooked ways with company? Surely, **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. What wise man would fetch gold out of a fiery crucible; that is, hazard his immortal soul, to gain the world, by following a multitude in those steps that led to the chambers of death and darkness?

DEVICE 7. 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, yes, 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, which Satan is injecting or casting into my soul. Lord, now how gladly would I serve you, and vain thoughts will not allow me!"

***Remedy* (1).** 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 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 with 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 allow him to behold the least iniquity. The reason why the blessed saints and glorious angels 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.

When Pompey could not keep his soldiers in the camp by persuasion he cast himself down along in the narrow passage which led out of it, and bade them go if they would—but they must first trample upon their general; and the thoughts of this overcame them. You are wise, and know how to apply it to the point in hand.

***Remedy* (2).** The second remedy against this device of Satan is, **To be faithful 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 steadfast in their waiting on God, that 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 steadfastness 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 steadfast in resisting his temptations.

It is a rule in the civil law that nothing seems to be done, if there remains anything to be done. If once you say, 'it is enough', you are undone.

***Remedy* (3).** 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 be not cherished and indulged—but abhorred, resisted, and disclaimed; they 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 are a world of vain thoughts crowd in upon me, which 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, spiritualness, 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.

It is not Satan casting in of vain thoughts that can keep mercy from the soul, or undo the soul—but the lodging and cherishing of vain thoughts: 'O Jerusalem, how long shall vain thoughts lodge within you?' (Jer.4:14) **Vain thoughts pass through the best hearts; they are lodged and cherished only in the worst hearts.**

***Remedy* (4).** 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** (Psalm 139:23). Many low and carnal considerations may cause 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 such like considerations. Oh! but to watch our thoughts, to weep and lament over them—this must needs be from some noble, spiritual, and internal principle—such as love to God, a holy fear of God, a holy care and delight to please the Lord. Thoughts are the first-born, the blossoms of the soul, the beginning of our strength—whether for good or evil; and they are the greatest evidences for or against a man, that can be.

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 devil's. There is nothing that so 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 Cor. 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. (Psalm 139:23; Is. 59:7; 66:18; Matt. 9:4; 12:25.)

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 138:6). He knew Herod's bloody thoughts, and Judas's betraying thoughts, and the Pharisees' cruel and blasphemous thoughts afar off. (Matt. 15:15-18).

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, heart-breaking, 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' (Rom. 6:21).

Tears, instead of gems, were the ornaments of David's bed when he had sinned; and so they must be yours, or else you must lie down in the bed of sorrow forever.

If I never repent, oh! then my sinful thoughts will be scorpions that will eternally vex me, the rods that will eternally lash me, the thorns that will everlastingly pierce 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 who does this, does more than the most glistering and blustering hypocrite in the world does.

Inward bleeding kills many a man; so will sinful thoughts, if not repented of.

***Remedy* (5).** 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 (Eph. 3:19). 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, then, 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, brings forth good things' (Matt. 12:35).

***Remedy* (6).** 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 your 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 you' (Psalm 139:18). That which we much like—we shall much mind. Those who 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.

***Remedy* (7).** 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. Souls which 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.

2 Tim. 2:4, 'No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs--he wants to please his commanding officer.' This is a comparison which Paul borrows from the custom of the Roman empire, wherein soldiers were forbidden to take up private businesses.

DEVICE 8. By working them to rest in their performances; to rest in prayer, and to rest in hearing, reading, and the communion of saints.

And when Satan has drawn the soul to rest upon the service done, then he will help the soul to reason thus: Why, you had better never pray, as to pray and rest in prayer; you had better never hear, as to hear and rest in hearing; you had better 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 (Is. 58:1-2, Zech. 7:4-6, Matt. 6:2, Rom. 1:7).

***Remedy* (1).** The first remedy against this device of Satan is, **To dwell much upon the imperfections and weaknesses which attend your choicest services.** Oh the spots, the blots, the blemishes that are to be seen on the face of our best duties! When you have done all you can, you have need to close up all with this, 'Oh enter not into judgment with your 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' (Is. 64:6). If God should be strict to mark what is done amiss in our best actions, we are undone! Oh the water that is mingled with our wine; the dross that cleaves unto our gold! Pride and high confidence is most apt to creep in upon 'duties well done'.

Remedy* (2).** The second remedy against this device of Satan is, to consider **The impotence 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 trouble, 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, 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 heavens.**

***Remedy* (3).** 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 foulest enormities which can be committed by us.** Those souls that after they have done all, do not look up so high as Christ—and rest, and center alone in Christ, laying down their services at the footstool of Christ—must lie down in sorrow; their bread is prepared for them in hell. 'But watch out, you who live in your own light and warm yourselves by your own fires. This is the reward you will receive from me: You will soon lie down in great torment' (Is. 50:11). Is it good to dwell with everlasting burnings, with a devouring fire? Why then, rest in your duties still? See that you center only in the bosom of Christ.

***Remedy* (4).** The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is, **To dwell much upon the necessity and excellency of that resting-place which God has provided for you.** Above all other resting-places—he 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 are gone from mountain to hill, and forgotten their resting-place' (Jer. 50:6). So poor souls who do not see 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 those who 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 I will rest only in the bosom of Christ, the love of Christ, the righteousness of Christ!'

SATAN'S DEVICES TO KEEP SAINTS IN A SAD, DOUBTING, QUESTIONING & UNCOMFORTABLE CONDITION

Though Satan 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,' he says, 'we have no interest in Christ; our graces are not true, our hopes are the hopes of hypocrites; our confidence is our presumption, our enjoyments are our delusions.'

Blessed John Bradford (the martyr) in one of his epistles, says thus, 'O Lord, sometime methinks I feel it so with me—as if there were no difference between my heart and the wicked. I have a blind mind as they, a stout, stubborn, rebellious hard heart as they,' and so he goes on.

I shall show you this in some particulars:

DEVICE 1. 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**; *yes, so to mind their sins as to forget, yes, 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. A Christian should wear Christ in his bosom as a flower of delight, for he is a whole paradise of delight. He who minds not Christ more than his sin, can never be thankful and fruitful as he should.

***Remedy* (1).** The first remedy 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 those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh—but after the Spirit' (Rom. 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.

My sins hurt me not, if they like me not. Sin is like that wild fig-tree, or ivy in the wall; cut off stump, body, bough, and branches, yet some strings or other will sprout out again, until the wall be plucked down.

***Remedy* (2).** 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 can not 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 you are not under the law—but under grace' (Rom. 6:14). Sin may rebel—but it shall never reign in a 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' (Dan. 7:12). The primitive Christians chose rather to be thrown to lions without, than left to lusts within.

Now sin **reigns** in the soul, when the soul willingly and readily obeys it, and submits 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 loving 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. It is a sign that sin has not gained your consent—but committed a rape upon your souls, when you cry out to God. If the ravished virgin under the law cried out—she was guiltless (Deut. 22:27); so when sin plays the tyrant over the soul, and the soul cries out, it is guiltless; those sins shall not be charged upon the soul.

Sin cannot say of a believer as the centurion said of his servants, 'I bid one, Go, and he goes; and to another, Come, and he comes; and to another, Do this, and he does it' (Matt. 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 hates his sin, 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 wars against your holiness as well as against my happiness; against your honor and glory, as my comfort and peace; therefore do me justice, O righteous judge of heaven and earth, and let this *tyrant sin* die for it! "What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?"

***Remedy* (3).** 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 the most certain truth, that God graciously pardons 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 you' (2 Cor. 12:9); I will graciously pardon that to you—which I will not conquer in you, says God. 'And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me, and whereby they have transgressed against me. I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember your sins (Jer. 33:8, Is. 43:25).

Ah! you lamenting souls, who 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?

Is. 44:2; Micah 7:18, 19; Col. 2:13, 14. The promises of God are a precious book; every leaf drops myrrh and mercy. Though the weak Christian cannot open, read, and apply them, Christ can and will apply them to their souls. 'I, I am he, blotting out your transgressions' today and tomorrow (the Hebrew denotes a continued act of God).

***Remedy* (4).** 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 has made him to be sin for us that knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him,' said the apostle (2 Cor. 5:21). Christ was the greatest of sinners by imputation and reputation.

All our sins were made to meet upon Christ, as that evangelical prophet has it: 'He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:3-6).

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 apprehension of those debts, which 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 cancelled the books. But to sit down discouraged when the debt is satisfied, is a sin which bespeaks repentance.

Christ has the greatest worth and wealth in him. As the worth and value of many pieces of silver is in one piece of gold, so all the excellencies scattered abroad in the creatures are united in Christ. All the whole volume of perfections which are spread through heaven and earth are epitomized in him.

Christ has cleared all reckoning between 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 (Lev. 16:21). 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 be remembered more.'

Christ is the channel of grace from God. 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 bloods of Abel, for so the Hebrew has it, as if the blood of one Abel had so many tongues as drops, cried for vengeance against sin; but the blood of Christ cries louder for the pardon of sin!

***Remedy* (5).** The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, **Of the reasons why the Lord is pleased to have his people exercised, troubled, and vexed with the operations of sinful corruption;** 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 heart-sick of their absence from Christ, and to maintain in them affections of compassion towards others who 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 when finally arrived there.

Now does the Lord upon these weighty reasons allow 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 sin so troubles and vexes his righteous soul. But he should 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.

***Remedy* (6).** 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 flow from ignorance and unbelief. It springs from their ignorance of the richness, 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 which exists between Christ and their precious souls. 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 operation of sin.

God never gave a believer a new heart that it should always lie a-bleeding, and that it should always be rent and torn in pieces with discouragements.

DEVICE 2. 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.

Oh how does Satan labor with 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 food, and sighing is their work all the day long.

The philosophers say there are eight degrees of. Now, if a man should define heat only by the highest degree, then all other degrees will be ruled 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, and walking; would not many thousands who groan under internal and external weaknesses, and who 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.

***Remedy* (1).** The first remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, **That there may be true faith, yes, 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, 'who believe on the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life' (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 has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus' (Eph. 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 written in the book of life; and to say to him (Luke 10:20), 'Rejoice, because your name is written in heaven.' So Paul: 'In whom you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after you believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise' (Eph. 1:13). So Micah: 'Rejoice not against me, O my enemy: for 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). 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 rise; 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. So also those in Is. 50:10 had faith, though they had no assurance. And let this suffice for the first answer.

***Remedy* (2).** The second remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, **That God in the Scripture defines 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' (John 1:12). 'To as many as believed on his name'—to be a cleaving of the soul unto God, though no joy—but afflictions, attend the soul (Act. 11:23). Yes, the Lord defines faith to be a coming to God in Christ, and often to a resting and staying, rolling of the soul upon Christ. 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 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. Matt. 11:23; John 6:37; Heb. 7:25, 26.

***Remedy* (3).** The third remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider this, **That there may be true faith where there is much doubtings.** Witness those frequent sayings of Christ to his disciples, 'Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?' (Matt. 6:30, 14:31, 16:8; Luke 12:28). People may be truly believing who nevertheless are sometimes doubting. In the same people that the fore-mentioned scriptures speak of, you may see their faith commended and their doubts condemned, which does necessarily suppose a presence of both.

***Remedy* (4).** 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 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 (Eph. 1:13); and the Spirit never witnesses this until we are believers: 'For we are sons by faith in Christ Jesus' (Gal. 4:6). 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 until he be united to Christ, until he be ingrafted into Christ; and a man cannot be ingrafted into Christ until 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 is a precious flower in the garden of a saint, and is more infinitely sweet and delightful to the soul than all outward comforts and contentments; yet it is but a flower which is subject to fade, and to lose its freshness and beauty, as saints by sad experience find. Psalm 51:12, 30:6, 7; Cant. 5:6; Is. 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 soundly follows that assurance is not faith.

There are many thousand precious souls, of whom this world is not worthy, that have the faith of reliance, and yet lack assurance and the effects of it; as high joy, glorious peace, and vehement longings after the coming of Christ.

DEVICE 3. By working the soul to make false inferences from the cross actings of Providence.

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 towards you, if his soul did delight and take pleasure in you—he would not deal thus with you. (Psalm 77:7, *et seq.;* 31:1; 73:2, 23).

***Remedy* (1).** The first remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, **That many things may be cross to our desires, which are not cross to our spiritual and eternal good.** Abraham, Jacob, David, Job, Moses, Jeremiah, Jonah, and 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. Medicine and surgery often works contrary to the patients' 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 board the ship, he broke his leg; and it pleased Providence so to order it, that the ship that he should have gone in, was sunk, and not a man saved; and so by breaking a bone his life was saved. Though Providence did work cross to his desire, yet it did not work cross to his good.

Some heretics, not being able to repudiate the preaching and writing of Augustine, sought his destruction, waiting to trap him on the way he was to go. But by God's providence Augustine, missing his way, escaped the danger.

***Remedy* (2).** 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 in providential dealings. The hand of God was against Ephraim, and yet his love, his heart, was dearly set upon Ephraim: "I have surely heard Ephraim's moaning: 'You disciplined me like an unruly calf, and I have been disciplined. Restore me, and I will return, because you are the Lord my God. After I strayed, I repented; after I came to understand, I beat my breast. I was ashamed and humiliated because I bore the disgrace of my youth.' Is not Ephraim my dear son, the child in whom I delight? Though I often speak against him, I still remember him. Therefore my heart yearns for him; I have great compassion for him," declares the Lord." Jeremiah 31:18-20 ' (Jer. 31:18-20).*

God's providential hand may be with people, when his heart is set against them. God's providential hand was for a time with Saul, Haman, Asshur, and Jehu—and yet his heart was set against them. 'No man knows love or hatred by all that is before him' (Eccles. 9:1, 2).

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 chaps. 1 and 2, with 41 and 42. The hand of God was sore against David and Jonah—when his heart was much set upon them. He who shall conclude that the heart of God is against those who his hand is against, will condemn the generation of the just, whom God unjustly would not have condemned.

***Remedy* (3).** The third remedy against this device of Satan, is, to consider, **That all the cross providences which befall the saints are for some noble good that God intends to confer upon them.** Providence wrought cross to David's desire in taking away the child sinfully begotten—but yet not cross to more noble good; for was it not far better for David to have such a legitimate heir as Solomon was, than that a illegitimate child 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 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 handled by a noble hand of providence, that what they sought to injure, they did promote. Joseph was therefore sold by his brethren that he might not be worshiped, and yet he was therefore worshiped because he was sold. Cf. Genesis 37:7, etc.

David was designed to a kingdom—but oh! the straits, troubles, and deaths that he runs through before he feels the weight of his 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** offence, and those cross actings of his which attended 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 it 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 motions of divine providence are so dark, so deep, so changeable, that the wisest and noblest believers cannot tell what conclusions to make.

***Remedy* (4).** 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, spiritual, and eternal good—of those who love him. 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 corner-stone—so all the strange rugged providences that we meet with, they shall raise us nearer heaven, and knock us nearer to Christ, that precious corner-stone.

DEVICE 4. By suggesting to them that their graces are not true—but counterfeit.

Says Satan—All is not gold which glitters, all is not free grace which you count grace, which you call grace. That which you call faith is but imagination; and that which you call zeal is but a natural heat and passion; and that light you have, it is but common, it is short, to what many have attained to—who 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.

Yet it must be granted that many a fair flower may grow out of a stinking root—and many sweet dispositions and fair actions may be where there is only the corrupt root of nature.

***Remedy* (1).** The first remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, **That grace is taken two ways.**

[1.] It is taken for *the gracious good-will 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.

[2.] 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, etc. Some are special graces, and they are proper and peculiar to the saints, as faith, humility, meekness, love, patience, etc. (Gal. 5:22, 23).

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, wisely to consider, **The differences between renewing grace and restraining grace, between sanctifying and temporary grace;** and this I will show you in these ten particulars.

[1.] True grace *makes all glorious within and without.* 'The King's daughter is all glorious within; her clothing is of wrought gold' (Psalm 45:13). True grace makes the understanding 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 those who have seen Jesus. God brings not a pair of scales to weigh our graces—but a touchstone to try our graces. Purity, preciousness, and holiness is stamped upon all saving graces. Acts 15:9; 2 Peter 4:1; Jude 20.

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 Cor. 5:17), but temporary grace does not this. (The Greek signifies 'a new creation': new man, new covenant, new paradise, new Lord, new law, new hearts, and new creatures go together.)

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 cage is a lion still; he is restrained—but not changed, for he retains his lion-like 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 penient, 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 which are worth more than a world, and a kingdom which cannot be shaken, a crown of glory which does not wither, and heavenly treasures which do not rust. The objects of temporary grace are low and poor, and always within the compass of reason's reach. 2 Cor. 14:18; Prov. 14. A saint has his feet where other men's heads are (Matt 6).

[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.' 'I delight in the law of God after the inward man,' says Paul. The blessed man is described by this, that he 'delights in the law of the Lord' (Psalm 1:2). To a gracious soul, 'All the ways of the Lord are pleasantness, and his paths are peace (Prov. 3:17)

But to souls that have but temporary grace—but moral virtues, pious services are a toil, not a pleasure; a burden, and not a delight. 'We have fasted before you! Why aren't you impressed? We have done much penance, and you don't even notice it!' (Is. 58:3). 'You have said—What's the use of serving God? What have we gained by obeying his commands or by trying to show the Lord Almighty that we are sorry for our sins?' (Mal. 3:14). 'You can't wait for the Sabbath day to be over and the religious festivals to end so you can get back to cheating the helpless. You measure out your grain in false measures and weigh it out on dishonest scales.' (Amos 8:5).

[4.] True grace makes *a man most careful, and most fearful of his own heart.* (Psalm 51:10; 119:36, 80; 86:11). It makes him most studious about his own heart—informing that, examining that, and watching over that. But temporary grace, mere moral virtues, make men more mindful and careful of others, to instruct them and counsel them, and stir up them, and watch over them. This does with open mouth, demonstrate that their graces are not saving—but that they are temporary; and no more than Judas, Demas, and the pharisees had.

[5.] True 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.* 'Your word is very pure, therefore your servant loves 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 has happened despite our loyalty to you. We have not violated your covenant. Our hearts have not deserted you. We have not strayed from your path. Yet you have crushed us in the desert. You have covered us with darkness and death.' (Psalm 44:17-19). But temporary grace will not bear up the soul against all oppositions and discouragements in the ways of God, as is clear by their apostasy in John 6:60, 66, and by the stony ground hearers falling away (Matt. 13:20, 21).

Grace is a panoply against all trouble, and a paradise of all pleasures.

[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 of this world.* It enabled Abraham, and Moses, and Daniel, with those other worthies in Heb. 11, to do so.

Godfrey Bouillon, crusader king of Jerusalem, refused to be crowned with a crown of gold, saying, 'That it not fitting for 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 has forsaken us to embrace this present world' (2 Tim. 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 (Matt. 19:19-22). 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.' If heaven be to be had upon no other terms, Christ may keep his heaven to himself, he will have none!

There are few are of Jerome's mind, who had rather have Paul's coat with his heavenly graces, than the purple of kings with their kingdoms.

[7.] Sanctifying grace, renewing grace, *puts the soul upon spiritual duties, from spiritual and intrinsic motives,* as from the sense of divine love—which constrains 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—stimulate and move them to wait upon him in holy duties.

As what I have if offered to you, pleases not you, O Lord, without myself; so the good things we have from you, though they may refresh us, yet they satisfy us not without yourself.

Ah! but restraining grace, temporary grace, puts men upon religious duties only from external motives, as the care of the creature, the eye of the creature, the rewards of the creature, and the keeping up of a name among the creatures, and a thousand such like considerations, as you may see in Saul, Jehu, Judas, Demas, and the scribes and pharisees.

The abbot in Melancthon 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 intolerably 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. (Num. 14:24). Zacharias and Elizabeth were righteous before God, and walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless (Luke 1:5, 6). The saints in the Revelation are described by this, that 'they follow the Lamb wherever he goes' (Rev. 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 weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith' (Matt. 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 (Psalm 119:104, 128). So that a soul truly gracious can say, **Though there is no one sin mortified and subdued in me, as it should be, and as I would desire; 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 desire, yet every word is sweet, every command of God is precious (Psalm 119:6, 119, 127, 167). 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 your commandments above gold, above fine gold:' 'My soul has kept your testimonies, and I love them exceedingly' (Psalm 119, 127, 167).

'I had rather go to hell pure from sin, then to heaven polluted with that filth' (Anselm). 'Give what you command, and command what you will' (Augustine).

[9.] True grace *leads the soul to rest in Christ, as in his 'summum bonum,' the chief good.* It works the soul to center in Christ, as in his highest and ultimate end. 'Where should we go? you have the words of eternal life' (John 6:68). 'My lover is dark and dazzling, better than ten thousand others! I found the one I love. I held on to him and would not let him go!' (Cant. 5:10; 3:4). That wisdom which a believer has from Christ—it leads him to center in the wisdom of Christ (1 Cor. 1:30). 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 (Phil. 3:9).

Grace is that star that leads to Christ; it is that cloud and pillar of fire that leads the soul to the heavenly Canaan, where Christ sits chief. 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,' said Christ (Matt. 6:1, 2): and so in an hundred other things (Zech. 7:5, 6).

[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 enjoyment of Christ without pleasures, and without the smiles of creatures, will content and satisfy the soul. 'It is enough; Joseph is alive' (Gen. 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, contentment, and satisfaction. He who has him lacks nothing: he who lacks him enjoys nothing. 'Having nothing,' says Paul, 'and yet possessing all things' (2 Cor. 6:10). A contented man cannot be a poor man.

Oh! but a man who has but temporary grace—who has but restraining grace, cannot sit down satisfied and contented, under the lack 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, who cannot sit down satisfied and contented, under the lack of this or that outward comfort and convenience—but are like bedlams, fretting and vexing, raging and angry—as if there were no God, no heaven, no hell, nor no Christ—to make up all such outward comforts.

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 farther 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 Sam. 14:32). So says the saved soul: Why do you tell me of this and that outward comfort, when I cannot see the face of him whom my soul loves? Why, honor is not my Christ; riches are not my Christ; the favor of the creature is not my Christ! Let me have Jesus—and let the men of this world take the world, and divide it among themselves! I prize my Christ above all, I would enjoy my Christ above all other things in the world. His presence will make up the absence of all other comforts. 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 who should comfort my soul stands afar off (Lam. 1:16). Christ is all and in all to souls truly gracious (Col. 3:11). We have all things in Christ. Christ is all things to a Christian. If we are sick, Jesus is a physician. If we thirst, Jesus is a fountain. If our sins trouble us, Jesus is our righteousness. If we stand in need of help, Jesus is mighty to save. If we fear death, Jesus is life. If we are in darkness, Jesus is light. If we are weak, Jesus is strength. If we are in poverty, Jesus is plenty. If we desire heaven, Jesus is the way. The soul cannot say, 'this I would have, and that I would have.' But having Jesus, he has all he needs—eminently, perfectly, eternally.

Luther said, he had rather be in hell with Christ than in heaven without him.

'None but Christ! none but Christ!' said Lambert the martyr, lifting up his hands and his flaming fingers!

Augustine upon Psalm 12 brings in rebuking a discontented Christian thus: What is your faith? have I promised you these things? What! were you made a Christian that you should flourish here in this world?

Contentment is the deputy of outward felicity, and supplies the place where it is absent. As the Jews throw the book of Esther to the ground before they read it, because the name of God is not in it, as the Rabbis have observed; so do saints in some sense those mercies wherein they do not read Christ's name, and see Christ's heart.

DEVICE 5. By suggesting to them, That that conflict which is in them, is not a conflict which 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 between the conflict which is in them, and that which is in wicked men, as there is between light and darkness, between heaven and hell. The devil is a liar, and the father of lies. The devil's breasts (says Luther) are very fruitful with lies. And the truth of this I shall evidence to you in the following particulars:

[I.] *The whole frame of a believer's soul is against sin.* the understanding, the will, and the 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. 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. 'You who preach a man should not steal—do you steal? You who say a man should not commit adultery—do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols—do you commit sacrilege? You who make your boast of the law—through breaking the law you dishonor God.' (Rom. 2:21-23).

But a saint's will is against sin. 'The evil that I would not do, that I do.' And his affections are against it, 'What I hate, I do' (Rom. 7:19,20).

It was a good saying of Augustine, 'Lord, deliver me from an evil man, myself!' He complains that men do not tame their beasts in their own bosoms.

[2.] A Christian conflicts against sin universally, the least as well as the greatest; the most profitable and the most pleasing sin, as well as against those which are less pleasing and profitable. "I hate every false way." Psalm 119:104. The Hebrew signifies to hate with a deadly and irreconcilable hatred. He will combat with all sin, though he cannot conquer one as he should, and as he desires. 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.

The Christian knows that all sin is hateful to God, and that all sinners are traitors to the crown and dignity of the Lord Jesus. He looks upon one sin, and sees that which threw down Noah, the most righteous man in the world; and he looks upon another sin, and sees that which cast down Abraham, the greatest believer in the world; and he looks upon another sin, and sees that which threw down David, the best king 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 most patient man in the world. This raises a holy indignation against all sin, so that nothing can satisfy and content his soul, but a destruction of all those lusts and vermin which vex and rack his righteous soul.

It will not suffice 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 yet 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 society—but make nothing of less sins; as vain thoughts, idle words, sinful motions, and petty oaths. They fight against those sins that fight against their honor, profits, and pleasures—but make truce with those which are as dear as right hands and as right eyes to them.

[3.] *The conflict that is in a saint, against sin, is maintained by several arguments:* by arguments drawn from the love of God, the honor of God, the sweetness and communion with God, and from the spiritual and heavenly blessings and privileges which 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 indwelling of the Spirit, the seal of the Spirit, the witness of the Spirit, the comforts of the Spirit. Though to be kept from sin brings comfort to us; yet we oppose sin from spiritual and heavenly arguments, which brings most glory to God.

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, and curses of the law (2 Cor. 12:7-9).

[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 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' (Rom. 7:2, 3).

A Christian lives fighting and dies fighting, he stands fighting and falls fighting, with his spiritual weapons in his hands. It was an excellent saying of Eusebius, 'Our fathers overcame the torrents of the flames, let us overcome the fiery darts of vices.' Consider that **the pleasure and sweetness which follows victory over sin, is a thousand times beyond that seeming sweetness that is in sin!**

But the conflict that is in wicked men is inconstant: now they fall out with sin, and later they fall in with sin. Now sin is bitter, later it is sweet. Now the sinner turns from his sin, and later he turns to the wallowing in sin, as the swine does to the wallowing in the mire (2 Pet. 2:19, 20). 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, to examine, scourge, judge, and condemn, and if you do such and such wickedness, I shall be your jailor and tormenter. 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: 'Those who are Christ's,' says the apostle, 'have crucified the world with its affections and lusts' (Gal. 5:24). Christ helps them to lead captivity captive, and to set their feet upon the necks of those lusts which have formerly trampled upon their souls and their comforts. As the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker, and the house of David stronger and stronger, so the Lord, by the discoveries of his love, and by the influences of his Spirit—causes grace, the nobler 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 (2 Tim. 3:13).

These two, grace and sin, are like two buckets of a well, when one is up, the other is down. When one flourishes the other withers. The more grace thrives in the soul, the more sin dies in the soul.

But remember this by way of caution: Though Christ has given sin its death-wound, yet it will die but a lingering death. As a man that is mortally wounded dies by little by 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 your 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 to keep us humble, wakeful, and watchful, and that our armor may be still kept on, and our weapons always in our hands.

Mortification of sin is a continued act, it is a daily dying to sin, 'I die daily.' A crucified man will strive and struggle, yet, in the eyes of the law, and in the account of all that see him, he is dead. It is just so with sin.

The best men's souls in this life hang between the flesh and the spirit, as it were, between two loadstones; like the tribe of Manasseh, half on this side of Jordan, in the land of the Amorites, and half on that side, in the Holy Land. Yet, in the final outcome, they shall overcome the flesh, and trample upon the necks of their spiritual enemies. The Romans lost many a battle, and yet in the final outcome, were conquerors in all their wars; it is just so with the saints.

There is no such pleasure, as to have overcome a sinful pleasure. Neither is there any greater conquest, as to overcome a man's corruption.

DEVICE 6. 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 was, 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 nothing, and I have but deceived my own soul.

Remedy **(1).** 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, yes, much grace, where there is not a drop of comfort, nor dram of joy. 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 which 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, and 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 fragile as glass, bright and brittle, and evermore in danger of breaking. Spiritual joy is a sun that is often clouded. It is like a precious flower—subject to fade and wither. (Psalm 63:1, 2, 8; Is. 50:10; Micah 7:8, 9; Psalm 42:5.)

Remedy **(2).** 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—which you still enjoy by Christ—are far better than the comforts you have lost by sin. What though your comforts are gone, yet your union and communion with Christ remains (Jer. 31:18, 19, 20). Though your comforts are gone, yet you are a son, though a comfortless son; an heir, though a comfortless heir; a saint, though a comfortless saint. Though the 'bag of silver'—your comforts, are 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. Yes, the least of those precious jewels is more worth than all the comforts in the world. 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 is lost.

When one objected to Faninus' cheerfulness, compared to Christ's agony and sadness—he answered, 'Christ was sad, that I might be merry; he had my sins, and I have his righteousness.'

Remedy **(3).** The third remedy against this device of Satan is, to consider, ***That your condition is no different 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.*** One day you shall have them praising and rejoicing, the next day a-mourning and a-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 you cast down, O our souls?' 'Why is our harp turned to mourning? and our organ to the voice of those who weep?' (Psalm 51:12, 30:6, 7; Job 23:6, 8, 9, 30, 31; Lam. 1:16; Matt. 27:46; Psalm 42:5; Lam. 5:15)

Remedy **(4).** The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, ***That the causes of joy and comfort are not always the same.*** Perhaps your former joy and comfort sprang 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 is a witnessing Spirit, it is not his office every day to witness to believers their interest in God, Christ, heaven. The Spirit does not every day make a feast in the soul; he does not make every day to be a day of weaving the wedding robes.

Or, perhaps your former joy and comfort sprang 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 darkness 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 to say to it, I have trod the wine-press 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!

A pardon given unexpectedly into the hand of a malefactor, when he is on the last step of the ladder, ready to be pushed off, will cause much joy and rejoicing. The newness and suddenness of the change of his condition will cause his heart to leap and rejoice; yet, in process of time, much of his joy will be abated, though his life be as dear to him still as ever it was.

Remedy **(5).** 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 bright than ever. Though your sun for the present be clouded, yet he who 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: 'You who have showed me great and sore troubles, shall quicken me again, and shall bring me up again from the depths of the earth. You shall 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' (Isa. 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. See Psalm 126:6, and 42:7, 8.

DEVICE 7. 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 only flatter yourself to think that ever God will eternally own and embrace such a one as you are—who complains against sin, and yet relapses into the same sin; who with tears and groans confesses your sin, and yet always falls 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; 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.

Remedy **(1).** The first remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, ***That there are many scriptures which clearly evidence a possibility of the saints falling into the same sins whereof they have formerly repented.*** 'I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely: for my anger is turned away from them,' says the Lord by the prophet Hosea (chap. 14:4). So the prophet Jeremiah speaks: 'Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, O backsliding Israel, says the Lord, and I will not cause my anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, says the Lord, and I will not keep my anger forever. Turn, O backsliding Israel, says the Lord; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion' (Chap. 3:12, 14). So the psalmist: 'They turned back, and dealt unfaithfully with their fathers; they were turned aside like a deceitful bow.' And no wonder, for **though their repentance is ever so sincere and sound, yet their graces are but weak, and their mortification of sin is 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 indwelling of any one sin; and therefore it is possible for a soul to fall again and again into the same sin. If the fire is not wholly put out, who would think it impossible that it should catch and burn again and again?

The sin of backsliding is a soul sin, 'I will heal their backsliding.' You read of no arms for the back though, you do for the bosom. When a soldier bragged too much of a great scar in his forehead, Augustus Caesar asked him if he did not get it as he looked back when he fled.

Remedy **(2).** 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 sin 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 should 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, which he will not in this life totally subdue in his people.** I have never seen a promise in Scripture, which says 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.

In some cases the saints have found God better than his word. He promised the children of Israel only the land of Canaan; but besides that he gave them two other kingdoms which he never promised. And to Zacharias he promised to give him his speech at the birth of the child—but besides that he gave him the gift of prophecy.

Remedy **(3).** 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 worshiped the angel; **Abraham** did often deceive, 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 your kindness which you shall show unto me; at every place where we shall come, say of me, He is my brother' (Gen. 20:13). **David** in his wrath was resolved, 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, they desired to be high, great, and glorious in this world. Their pride and ambitious desires put them—who were but as so many beggars—upon striving for pre-eminence and greatness in the world, when their Lord and Master told them several times of his sufferings in the world, and of his going out of the world. **Jehoshaphat**, though a godly man, yet joins with Ahab (2 Chron. 18:1-3, 30, 31); 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 Chron. 20:35-37). **Samson** is by the Spirit of the Lord numbered among the faithful worthies, yet he fell often into gross immorality. **Peter**, you know, relapsed often, and so did **Jonah**. **A sheep may often slip into a slough—as well as a swine.**

And this happens, that they may see their own inability to stand, or to resist or overcome any temptation or corruption (Jude 14-16), 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—who 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.

Perhaps the prodigal son, sets out unto us a Christian relapse, for he was a son before, and with his father, and then went away from him, and spent all; and yet he was not quite undone—but returned again. The prodigal saw the compassion of his father the greater, in receiving him after he had run away from him.

Remedy **(4).** 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 usually preserves 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)—as idle words, passion, and 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. These frequent relapses into infirmities shall never be their bane, because they are their burden.

Relapses into enormities are destructive sins. Therefore the Lord is graciously pleased to put under his everlasting arms, and keep his chosen ones from frequent falling into them.

Remedy **(5).** 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 us; for God will freely and readily pardon those, in course.

Voluntary relapses are, When the soul longs and loves to 'return to the flesh-pots of Egypt' (Exod. 16:3). 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.

There is a great difference between a sheep which by weakness falls into the mire--and a swine which delights to wallow in the mire; between a woman who is raped, though she fights and cries out--and an alluring adulteress.

Remedy **(6).** 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 may be prevailed against by the secret, subtle, and strong workings of sin in our hearts. And those discoveries which 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. We see this 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 slavish fears that he and his fellows could not be secure, if his Master should be brought to suffer (Matt. 16:15-19, 22-24). And again, after this, Christ had him up into the mount, and there showed him his beauty and his glory, to strengthen him against the hour of temptation which was coming upon him; and yet, soon after he had the honor and happiness of seeing the glory of the Lord (which most of his disciples had not), he basely and most shamefully denies the Lord of glory, thinking by that means to provide for his own safety. And yet again, after Christ had broke his heart with a look of love for his most unlovely dealings, and bade those who were first acquainted with his resurrection to 'go and tell Peter that he was risen' (Mark 16:7). 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 (Gal. 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, who can see you stripping and whipping your dearest ones for their relapses, and yet making nothing of returning to folly.

DEVICE 8. 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 Satan's method, first to weary and vex your soul with temptations, and then to persuade the soul, that surely it is not loved by God, 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. He may so tempt as to make a saint weary of his life (Job. 10:1): 'My soul is weary of my life.'

Remedy **(1).** The first remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, ***That those who 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 loved by God, and yet by Satan tempted him greatly. Job was highly praised by God himself, and yet much tempted and tried. Peter was much prized by Christ; witness that choice testimony which 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 has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for you, that your faith fail you not' (Luke 22:31, 32).

Pirates do not use to set upon poor empty vessels; and beggars need not fear the thief. Those that have most of God, and are most rich in grace—shall be most assaulted by Satan, who is the greatest and craftiest pirate in the world.

Paul had the honor of being exalted as high as heaven, and of seeing that glory which 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 Cor. 12:2, 7). If these, who were so really, so gloriously, so eminently beloved of God, if these, who have lived in heaven, and set their feet upon the stars, have been tempted, let no saints judge themselves not to be loved by God, because they are tempted. It is as natural for saints to be tempted, who are dearly loved by God, 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 of feathers, nor the nightingale of her voice—because these are natural to them. No more should saints complain 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' (Eph. 6:12).

Remedy **(2).** 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 succouring 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' (2 Cor. 12:7). 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.

Temptation is God's school, wherein he gives his people the clearest and 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. Temptation is 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. This is 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 outcome of all temptations shall be to the good of the saints, as you may see by the temptations which Adam and Eve, and Christ and David, and Job and Peter and Paul met with. Those hands of power and love, which 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 which come upon them.

Luther said, there were three things that made a preacher: meditation, prayer and temptation.

Remedy **(3).** The third remedy against this device of Satan is, wisely to consider, *That* ***no temptations do hurt or harm the saints, so long as they are resisted by them, and prove the greatest afflictions that can befall them.*** It is not Satan's tempting—but your assenting; not his enticing—but your yielding, which makes temptations hurtful to your soul. If the soul when it is tempted, resists temptation, and says with Christ, 'Get behind me, Satan' (Matt. 16:23); and with that young convert, 'I am not the man I was,' or as Luther counsels all men to answer all temptations with these words, "I am a Christian!"—if a man's temptation is 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 upon me, I have lost such and such a near mercy, and such and such desirable mercies; and yet you who knows 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, or tears from my eyes—as those temptations do, which Satan dogs 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 one. And this malice and envy of his he shows sometimes by tempting men to such sins as are quite contrary to the natural dispositions, 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 will bring them no honor nor profit. 'Fall down and worship me' (Matt. 4:9). He tempts to blasphemy, and atheism—the thoughts and first motions whereof cause the heart and 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.

Sometimes he shows his malice by letting those things abide by the soul as may most vex and plague the soul, as Gregory observes in his leaving of Job's wife, which was not out of his forgetfulness, carelessness, or any love or pity to Job—but to vex and torment him, and to work him to blaspheme God, despair, and die.

Make present and decided 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 artifices of dispute, when she should have resisted, and stood upon terms of defiance with Satan. He who would stand in the hour of temptation must plead with Christ, 'It is written.' He who would triumph over temptations must plead still, 'It is written.' Satan is bold and impudent, and if you are not decided in your resistance, he will give you fresh onsets. It is your greatest honor, and your highest wisdom, decidedly to withstand the beginnings of a temptation; for an after-remedy comes often too late.

Catherine Bretterege once, after a great conflict with Satan, said, 'Reason not with me, I am but a weak woman; if you have 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—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? You will be too hard for me!' He who does thus resist temptations, shall never be undone by temptations.

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 see that you make **constant** resistance, as well as **strong** resistance. 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 is weak—he will tempt you to error. If your conscience is tender—he will tempt you to scrupulosity and too much preciseness, as to do nothing but hear, pray, and 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 is always bent, and that it remains in strength. When you have overcome one temptation, you must be ready to enter the battle with another.

As distrust in some sense, is the mother of safety; so carnal security is the gate of danger. A man had need to fear this most of all—that he fears not at all. If Satan were always roaring, we would be always a-watching and resisting him. And certainly he who 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.

Luke 4:13, 'And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.' Christ had no rest until he was exactly tried with all sorts of 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. I will leave you to make the application.

He who will yield to sin to be rid of temptation, will be so much the more tempted—and the less able to withstand temptations.

SATAN'S DEVICES TO DESTROY & ENSNARE ALL SORTS & RANKS OF MEN IN THE WORLD

I. DEVICES AGAINST THE GREAT AND HONORABLE OF THE EARTH

DEVICE 1. 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 elevate themselves, to raise themselves, to enrich themselves, to secure themselves****,* as you may see in Pharaoh, Ahab, Rehoboam, Jeroboam, Absalom, Joab, Haman, and others. Self-seeking, like the deluge, overthrows the whole world. 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 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,' said the apostle 'mind themselves' (Phil. 2:21). That is—all comparatively, in respect of the dearth of others who let fall their private interests, and drown all self-seeking, in the glory of God and the public good.

Remedy* (1).** The first remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, ***That self-seeking is a sin which will put men upon a plethora of sins, upon sins not only against the law of God, the rules of the gospel—but which are against the very laws of nature—which are so much darkened by the fall of man. It puts the Pharisees upon opposing Christ, and Judas upon betraying Christ, and Pilate upon condemning Christ. It puts Gehazi upon lying, and Balaam upon cursing, and Saul and Absalom upon plotting David's ruin. It puts Pharaoh and Haman upon contriving ways to destroy those Jews whom 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!

Self-love is the root of the hatred of others, 2 Tim. 3:2. First, lovers of themselves, and then fierce, etc. The naturalists observe, that those beasts which are most cruel to others are most loving to their own.

Remedy* (2).** 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. It makes a man become a servant to the creature, yes, often to the worst of creatures; yes, 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. Self-seeking will make a man say anything, do anything, and be anything, to please the lusts of others, in order 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 and Nehemiah's time. Self-seekers are the basest of all people. 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 (Rom. 1:25). These are the prime and ultimate objects of their desires.

Remedy* (3).** 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. 'Destruction is certain for you who buy up property so others have no place to live. Your homes are built on great estates so you can be alone in the land.' (Is. 5:8). So Habakkuk 2:6, 9-12: 'How terrible it will be for you who get rich by unjust means! You believe your wealth will buy security, putting your families beyond the reach of danger. But by the murders you committed, you have shamed your name and forfeited your lives. The very stones in the walls of your houses cry out against you, and the beams in the ceilings echo the complaint. How terrible it will be for you who build cities with money gained by murder and corruption!' 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 answer, 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: 'Destruction is certain for the unjust judges, for those who issue unfair laws. They deprive the poor, the widows, and the orphans of justice. Yes, they rob widows and fatherless children!' (Is. 10:1, 2). So Amos: 'Woe unto them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria. You push away every thought of coming disaster, but your actions only bring the day of judgment closer. How terrible it will be for you who sprawl on ivory beds surrounded with luxury, eating the meat of tender lambs and choice calves. You sing idle songs to the sound of the harp.' (Amos 6:1, 3-6). So Micah: 'How terrible it will be for you who lie awake at night, thinking up evil plans. You rise at dawn and hurry to carry out any of the wicked schemes you have power to accomplish. When you want a certain piece of land, you find a way to seize it. When you want someone's house, you take it by fraud and violence. No one's family or inheritance is safe with you around!' (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 comforts 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.

Remedy* (4).** 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 clothing—but God changed his clothing into a leprous skin. Haman sought himself, and lost himself. The princes and residents 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.

Adam seeks himself—and loses himself, paradise, and that blessed image that God had stamped upon him. Lot seeks himself (Gen. 13:10, 11) and loses himself and his goods. Peter seeks to save himself and miserably loses himself. Hezekiah in the business of the ambassadors, seeks himself, and lost himself and his life too, had not God saved him by a miracle.

Remedy* (5).** 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, Leave me alone so I may destroy them and erase their name from under heaven. Then I will make a mighty nation of your descendants, a nation larger and more powerful than they are.' (Deut. 9:14). Oh! but this offer would not take with Moses, he being a man of brave public spirit. He is hot in his desires and prayers that the people might be spared and pardoned; says he, 'Please pardon the sins of this people because of your magnificent, unfailing love, just as you have forgiven them ever since they left Egypt. Then the Lord said, "I will pardon them as you have requested.' (Num. 14:19-20). Ah! should God make such an offer to many, I am afraid they would prefer their own advantage above the public good; they would not care what became of the people, so that they and theirs might be made great and glorious in the world; they would not care about others, so that 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. 'I would like to mention that for the entire twelve years that I was governor of Judah—from the twentieth until the thirty-second year of the reign of King Artaxerxes—neither I nor my officials drew on our official food allowance. This was quite a contrast to the former governors who had laid heavy burdens on the people, demanding a daily ration of food and wine, besides a pound of silver. Even their assistants took advantage of the people. But because of my fear of God, I did not act that way. I devoted myself to working on the wall and refused to acquire any land. And I required all my officials to spend time working on the wall. I asked for nothing, even though I regularly fed 150 Jewish officials at my table, besides all the visitors from other lands! The provisions required at my expense for each day were one ox, six fat sheep, and a large number of domestic fowl. And every ten days we needed a large supply of all kinds of wine. Yet I refused to claim the governor's food allowance because the people were already having a difficult time. Remember, O my God, all that I have done for these people, and bless me for it.' (Neh. 5:14-19). Likewise Daniel was a man of a brave public spirit: 'Then the other administrators and princes began searching for some fault in the way Daniel was handling his affairs, but they couldn't find anything to criticize. He was faithful and honest and always responsible. So they concluded, Our only chance of finding grounds for accusing Daniel will be in connection with the requirements of his religion.' (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 until 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 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 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 naked before him who judges the world in righteousness and judgment.

Remedy* (6).** The sixth remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, ***That self is a great hindrance 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 so 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 which 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 allow others to enter, that are ready to take the kingdom by violence, as you may see in the scribes and Pharisees. Oh! but a gracious spirit is acted quite other ways, as you may see in that sweet scripture (Cant. 7:13), 'At our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which I have laid up for you, O beloved.' All the church has and is, is only for him. Let others bear fruit to themselves, and lay up for themselves, gracious spirits will work 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 experiences, 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.

Self-seekers, with Esau, prefers bowl of pottage above their birthright, and with the men of Shechem, esteem the bramble above the vine, the olive, and the fig-tree; yes they esteem empty things above a full Christ, and base things above a glorious Christ. The saints' motto is, 'For you, Lord, for you; not unto us, Lord.'

DEVICE 2. By engaging them against the people of God, against those who 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. So he engaged Haman against the Jews—and so brought him to hang upon that gallows that he had made for Mordecai (Esther 7). So he engaged those princes against Daniel—which was the utter ruin of them and their relations (Dan. 6). So in Revelation 20:7-9, "When the thousand years end, Satan will be let out of his prison. He will go out to deceive the nations from every corner of the earth, which are called Gog and Magog. He will gather them together for battle—a mighty host, as numberless as sand along the shore. And I saw them as they went up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded God's people and the beloved city. But fire from heaven came down on the attacking armies and consumed them."

Remedy* (1).** 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 who have opposed and engaged against the saints, as is evident in Saul, Pharaoh, and Haman 'He reproved kings for their sakes, saying, Touch not my anointed, and do my prophets no harm' (Psalm 105:15). When men of Balaam spirits 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 broke 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 who 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' (Exod. 15:9). In the things wherein they have spoken and done proudly, justice has been above them. History abounds in many instances of this kind.

Remedy* (2).** The second remedy against this device of Satan is, ***To dwell some time every morning upon the 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 you people, and you shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all you of far countries: gird yourselves, and you shall be broken in pieces. Take counsel together, and it shall come to nothing; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God is with us.' 'Fear not, you worm Jacob, and you men of Israel: I will help you, says the Lord, and your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. Behold, I will make you a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: you shall thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shall make the hills as chaff. You shall fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them, and you shall rejoice in the Lord, and shall glory in the Holy One of Israel.' 'No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against you in judgment, you shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, says the Lord.' 'Now also many nations are gathered together against you 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 sheaves into the floor. Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion: I will make your horn iron, and I will make your hoof brass, and you shall beat in pieces many people, and I will consecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth.' '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.' (Is. 8:9, 41:14, 15, and 54:17. Micah 4:11-13; Zech. 12:2, 3.)

Remedy* (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 between 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 (Eph. 5:32). 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 between the graft and the stock, which are made one by grafting. 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 do you persecute you me?' (Acts 9:4); and 'in all their afflictions he was afflicted' (Is. 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).

Remedy* (4).** 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 ash-heap 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 between God's wrath and you, you had been cut off from the land of the living, and had had your portion with those whose names are written in the dust. Many a nation, many a family, is surrounded with blessings for the Josephs' sakes who live therein, and are preserved from many calamities and miseries for the Moses', the Daniels', the Noahs', and the Jobs', sakes, who dwell among them. That is a sweet word (Prov. 10:25), 'As the whirlwind passes, 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.'

'He could have what he would of God', said one concerning Luther. Prayer is the gate of heaven, a key to let us into paradise. 'When the danger is over, the saint is forgotten', is a French proverb and that which many saints in England have found by experience.

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 likely to perish for lack 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 among the enemies, and abundance of water upon the Romans, whereby their thirst was quenched, and the enemies overthrown without any fight.

Mary, Queen of Scots, was accustomed to say, 'That she feared Knox's prayers more than an army of ten thousand men.'

I shall close up this last remedy with those sweet words of the psalmist: 'God is well known in Judah; his name is great in Israel. Jerusalem is where he lives; Mount Zion is his home. There he breaks the arrows of the enemy, the shields and swords and weapons of his foes.' (Psalm 76:1-3).

II. DEVICE AGAINST THE LEARNED AND THE WISE

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**; and sometimes by drawing them to rest upon their parts and abilities; and sometimes by causing them to make light and slight of those who lack their parts and abilities, though they excel them in grace and holiness; 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. The truth of this you may see in the learned scribes and Pharisees. (John 5:44; 1 Kings 22:22-25; 1 Cor. 1:18-29.)

***Remedy* (1).** 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 have you,' says the apostle, 'that you have not received? And if you have received it, why do you boast as though you had not received it?' (1 Cor. 4:7). 'Whatever you are, you owe to him who made you; and whatever you have, you owe to him who redeemed you' (*Bernard*).

There are those who 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 the axe, '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. My gifts are not so much mine as yours: 'Of your own have we offered unto you,' said that princely prophet (1 Chron. 29:14).

Remedy* (2).** The second remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, ***That men's learning and trusting to their own wits, parts, and abilities, have been their utter overthrow and ruin*;* as you may see in Ahithophel, and those princes that engaged against Daniel, and in the scribes and Pharisees. God loves to confute men in their confidences. He who stands upon his parts and abilities, does but stand upon a quicksand that will certainly fail him. There is nothing in the world which provokes God more to withdraw from the soul than this; and how can the soul stand, when his strength is departed from him? Everything which a man leans upon—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 (Cant. 8:5). He who 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 your heart, and lean not to your own understanding' (Prov. 3:5).

Remedy* (3).** 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, yes, 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, and 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 unblameable walking before God. 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 gold, in jewels and in pearls, than he? And is it not madness and folly with a witness, in those who have greater parts and abilities than others, to slight them upon that account, when that those very people 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!

Judas and the scribes and Pharisees had great parts—but no grace. The disciples had grace—but weak parts. (Luke 11:1; 24:19-28.)

It was the sad complaint of Augustine in his time: 'The unlearned,' says 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 who lack their parts, and who 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 lowest 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 Cor. 9:22). 'Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not? Wherefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh while the world stands, lest I make my brother to offend' (1 Cor. 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 who 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 appearance in them, in these latter days, will be so full of spiritual beauty and glory, as that they will darken that which you are too apt to count and call your glory. The Spirit of the Lord will not allow his choicest jewel grace to be always buried under the straw and stubble of parts and gifts (Is. 60:13-17).

Remedy* (4).** 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 who lack them, as to engage them against those people, 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 (Zech. 11:17). This is matter of humiliation and lamentation. Many precious discerning saints 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 that they may be more serviceable to the honor of Christ, and the faith of the saints, than formerly they have been.

Becanus says, that the tree of knowledge bears many leaves, and little fruit. Ah! that it were not so with many in these days.

III. DEVICE AGAINST THE SAINTS

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 cold, and then to divide, and then to be bitter and jealous, and then 'to bite and devour one another**' (Gal. 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. (If we knock, we break. Dissolution is the daughter of dissension.)

Remedy* (1).** 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.

Flavius Vespasian, the emperor, was more ready to conceal the vices of his friends than their virtues. Can you think seriously of this, Christians, that a heathen should excel you, and not blush?

Erasmus tells of one who collected all the lame and defective verses in Homer's works—but passed over all that was excellent. Ah! this is the practice of many professors—that they are careful and skillful to collect all the weaknesses of others, and to pass over all those things which are excellent in them. The Corinthians did eye more the incestuous person's sin than his sorrow, which was likely 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 sickness, 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 who 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! (Not race of place—but grace truly sets forth a man.)

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 Asaph'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,' not a word of his impatience (James 5:11). He who drew Alexander while he had a scar upon his face, drew him with his finger upon the scar. God puts his fingers 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.*

Sin is Satan's work, grace is God's work; and is it not most fit that the child should eye most and mind most, his father's work?

Remedy* (2).** The second remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, ***That love and union makes most for your own safety and security. We shall be invincible if we are 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.

There was a temple of Concord among the heathens; and shall it not be found among Christians, that are temples of the Holy Spirit?

And this did that Scythian king in Plutarch's book 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 broke between you, you will easily be broken in pieces.'

Pancirollus says, 'that the most precious pearl among the Romans was called *unio,* union.'

Pliny writes of a stone in the island of Scyros, that if it be whole, though a large and heavy one, it swims above water—but being broken, it sinks. (No doubt a volcanic, porous product.) So long as saints keep whole, nothing shall sink them; but if they break, they are in danger of sinking and drowning.

Remedy* (3).** The third remedy against this device of Satan is, ***To dwell upon those commands of God which 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 those who 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 who are easily reversed; but they are like those of the Medes, which cannot be changed. Oh! be much in pondering upon these commands of God. 'A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you 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 you love one another, as I have loved you.' 'These things I command you, that you love one another.' 'Owe no man anything—but love one another: for he who loves another, has fulfilled the law.' 'Let brotherly love continue.' 'Love one another, for love is of God, and everyone who loves is born of God, and knows God.' 'See that you love one another with a pure heart fervently.' 'Finally, be all of one mind, having compassion one for another. Love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.' 'For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.' '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.' 'Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.' Oh! dwell much upon these precious commands, that your love may be inflamed one to another. (John 15:12, 17; Rom. 13:8; Heb. 13:1; 1 John 4:7; 1 Peter 1:22, and 3:8; 1 John 3:11, 23; 4:11.)

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.

Remedy* (4).** The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is, ***To dwell more upon these choice and sweet things wherein you agree, than upon those things wherein you differ. Ah! did you but thus, how would sinful arguments be abated, and your love raised, and your spirits sweetened one to another! You agree in most things, you differ but in a few; you agree in the greatest and weightiest things, as concerning God, Christ, the Spirit, and the Scripture. You differ only in those points that have been long disputable among men of greatest piety and parts. You agree to own the Scripture, to hold to Christ the head, and to walk according to the law of the new creature.

Shall Herod and Pilate agree? Shall Turks and pagans agree? Shall bears and lions, tigers, and wolves, yes, 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?

What a sad thing was it that a heathen should say, 'No beasts are so mischievous to men, as Christians are one to another!'

***Remedy* (5).** The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, *That God delights to be styled—'the God of peace'; and Christ to be styled—'the Prince of peace, and King of peace'; and the Spirit is a Spirit of peace.* 'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace' (Gal 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, who 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. Peace is a blessing which ushers in a multitude of other blessings. Where Peace is, there is Christ, because Christ is peace. (2 Cor. 13:11; Is. 9:6).

The ancients were accustomed to paint peace in the form of a woman, with a horn of plenty in her hand. The Grecians had the statue of Peace, with Pluto, the god of riches, in her arms. Ah! peace and love among the saints, is that which will secure them and their mercies at home; yes, it will multiply their mercies; it will engage the God of mercy to crown them with the choicest mercies; and it is that that will render them most zealous, men invincible, and successful abroad. Love and peace among the saints is that which puts the counsels of their enemies to a standstill, and renders all their enterprises abortive; it is that which does most weaken their hands, wound their hopes, and kill their hearts.

Remedy* (6).** 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 be among you. (There is no fear of knowing too much—but there is much fear in practicing too little.) 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' (Prov. 16:7). Ah! how much more then would God make the children of peace to keep the peace among themselves, if their ways do 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 met him with a kiss; he has a promise from one, tears from the other, 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, until they are consumed one by another.'

Pharnaces sent a crown to Caesar at the same time he rebelled against him; but he returned the crown and this message back, 'Let him return to his obedience first.' There is no sound peace to be had with God or man—but in a way of obedience.

Remedy* (7).** 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 you, between me and you, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen—for we are brethren' (Gen.13:8). The Hebrew signifies, 'Oh! let there be no bitterness between us—for we are brethren.'

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 *good **and** pleasant.* There be some things that are good and not pleasant, as patience and discipline; and there are some things that are pleasant but not good, as carnal pleasures, and voluptuousness. And there are some things that are neither good nor pleasant, as malice, envy, and worldly sorrow; and there are some things that are both good and pleasant, as piety, charity, peace, and union among brethren. Oh! that we could see more of this among those who shall one day meet in their Father's kingdom and never part. And as they are brethren, so they are all fellow-members: 'Now you are the body of Christ, and members in particular' (1 Cor. 12:27). And again: 'We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones' (Eph. 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 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 you are all fellow **sufferers** under the same enemies, the devil and the world. 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.' 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. (Rev. 12:7, 8; Heb. 2:10; Rev. 2:10; John 15:19, 20; Heb. 12:14, 13; Rom. 8. 15-17)

Remedy* (8).** 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 who 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! Our dissensions are one of the Jews' greatest stumbling-blocks. Can you think of it, and your hearts not bleed?

It was a notable saying of one, 'Take away strife, and call back peace, lest you lose a man, your friend; and the devil, an enemy, rejoice over you both.'

Remedy* (9).** The ninth remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously 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 offer 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 you reconciled to God' (2 Cor. 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 reigns? 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' It is doubled to show God's exceeding forwardness to show favor and mercy to them. (Is. 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 who had denied him, and the rest who had forsaken him: 'Go your ways, and tell his disciples and Peter, that he goes before you into Galilee: there shall you see him, as he said unto you' (Mark 16:7). Ah! souls, it is not a base, low thing—but a God-like 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. They shall both have the name and the note, the comfort and the credit, of being most like unto God, who first begin to pursue after peace with alienated mankind.

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 precept 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 can see the Lord.' The Greek signifies to follow after peace, as the persecutor does him whom he persecutes. Peace and holiness are 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,* 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 wherein one may edify another' (Rom. 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 until we become a tabletalk 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 you.' You are indeed, said Aeschines, a far better man than I, for I began the quarrel—but you 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).

Remedy* (10).** 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 of God their 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' (Phil. 3:14-16). 'I pursue as my goal the prize promised by God's heavenly call in Christ Jesus. Therefore, all who are mature should think this way. And if you think differently about anything, God will reveal this to you also. In any case, we should live up to whatever truth we have attained.' 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 99 miles 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 is 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 of God the only touchstone and judge of all people 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' (Is. 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 action—but still judge by rule, and plead, 'It is written.'

When an ignorant man cried out in contest with a holy man, 'Hear me, hear me,' the holy man answered, 'Neither hear me, nor I you—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.

Remedy* (11).** The eleventh remedy against this device of Satan is, ***To be much in self-judging. 'Judge yourselves, and you shall not be judged by the Lord' (1 Cor. 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 who differ from them. (It is storied of Nero, himself being unchaste, he did think there was no man chaste.) There are no souls in the world who are so fearful to judge others—as those who do most judge themselves; nor so careful to make a righteous judgment of men or things—as those who are most careful to judge themselves. There are none in the world who tremble to think evil of others, to speak evil of others, or to do evil to others—as those who make it their business to judge themselves. There are none who make such sweet constructions and charitable interpretations of men and things—as those who are best and most in judging themselves. In the Olympic games, the wrestlers did not put their crowns upon their own heads—but upon the heads of others. It is just so with souls that are good at self-judging.

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 harshly, falsely, and unrighteously, and that is, that you will every morning dwell a little upon these scriptures:

'Judge not, that you be not judged; for with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged; and with what measure you mete out, it shall be measured to you again' (Matt. 7:1, 2). 'Judge not according to appearance—but judge righteous judgment' (John 7:24). 'The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted him. You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way.' (Rom. 14:3, 10, 13).

'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.' 'Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.' (1 Cor. 4:5). 'Speak not evil one of another, brethren: he who speaks evil of his brother, and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law, and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law—but a judge. There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy' (James 4:11, 12). 'Who are you that judges another man's servant? to his own master he stands or falls; yes, he shall be held up, for God is able to make him stand' (Rom. 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.

Remedy* (12).** The twelfth remedy against this device of Satan is this, above all, ***Labor to be clothed with humility. Humility makes a man peaceable among brethren, fruitful in well-doing, cheerful in suffering, and constant in holy walking (1 Pet. 5:5). Humility fits for the highest services we owe to Christ, and yet will not neglect the lowest service to the lowest saint (John 13:5). Humility can feed upon the lowest dish, and yet it is maintained by the choicest delicacies, as God, Christ, and glory. Humility will make a man bless him who curses him, and pray for those who persecute him. An humble heart is an habitation for God, a scholar for Christ, a companion of 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. An 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 lowest condition, and it will preserve a man from envying other men's prosperous condition (1 Thess. 1:2, 3). Humility honors those who are strong in grace, and puts two hands under those who are weak in grace (Eph. 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, Christian! 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, willful, 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 himself; it will make a man see much glory and excellency in others, and much baseness and sinfulness in himself; 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 rejoice in every light which outshines his own, and every wind which 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 more willing 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 contention, and more love among them than now is.

Humility, said Bernard, is that which keeps all graces together.

The humble soul is like the violet, which grows low, hangs the head downwards, and hides itself with its own leaves; and were it not that the fragrant smell of his many virtues discovered him to the world, he would choose to live and die in his self-contenting secrecy.

IV. DEVICE AGAINST POOR AND IGNORANT SOULS

Fourthly, As Satan has his device to destroy gracious souls, so he has his devices to destroy *poor ignorant souls,* and that sometimes, ***By drawing them to esteem ignorance, and to neglect, slight, and despise the means of knowledge.*** 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. Ignorance unmans a man; it makes a man a beast, yes, makes him more miserable than the beast which perishes. (Ignorant ones have this advantage—they have a cooler hell.) There are none so easily nor so frequently captured in Satan's snares—as ignorant souls. They are easily drawn to dance with the devil all day, and to dream of supping with Christ at night. 'My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.' Hosea 4:6. 'You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God.' Matthew 22:29.

Remedy* (1).** The first remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, ***That an ignorant heart is an evil heart. 'Without knowledge the mind is not good' (Prov. 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' (Matt. 6:22). 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.

Remedy* (2).** 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 lack of fleshly eyes spoils the beauty of the face, so the lack 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.

Remedy* (3).** 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 who err in their hearts, and have not known my ways. Therefore I swear in my wrath, they should never enter into my rest' (Heb. 3:10, 11). 'My people are a people of no understanding; therefore he who made them will have no mercy on them' (Is. 27:11). Christ has said that he will come 'in flaming fire, to render vengeance on them that know not God' (2 Thess. 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 people shall never come into heaven. Heaven itself would be a hell to ignorant souls. They must needs err that know not God's ways, yet cannot they wander so wide as to miss of hell. 'My people are destroyed for want of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, I will reject you' (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 Catholic Church says that ignorance is the mother of devotion—but the Scripture says, it is the mother of destruction.

Remedy* (4).** 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' (Matt. 22:29). It puts men upon hating and persecuting the saints. 'They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God. They will do such things because they have not known the Father or 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 Tim. 1:13). (It seems right to note that the apostle does not allege his ignorance, for which he was responsible, as the ground of the 'mercy' shown him—but only as the source and explanation of his sin and violence. The clause, 'but I obtained mercy,' is parenthetic, and it is of importance to note this.)

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 Cor. 2:8).

Sin at 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.' 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?' 'They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens; and their tongue walks through the earth. Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon the Lord?' 'Therefore, pride is their necklace, and violence covers them like a garment. Their eyes bulge out from fatness; the imaginations of their hearts run wild. They mock, and they speak maliciously; they arrogantly threaten oppression. They set their mouths against heaven, and their tongues strut across the earth. They say—'How can God know? Does the Most High know everything?' Look at them—the wicked!' Psalm 73:6-12

Aristotle makes ignorance the mother of all the misrule in the world. They did like Oedipus, who killed his father Laius, king of Thebes, and thought he killed his enemy.

APPENDIX

I. FIVE MORE OF SATAN'S DEVICES
1. By suggesting to men the greatness and vileness of their sins [Eight Remedies]
2. By suggesting to sinners their unworthiness [Four Remedies]
3. By suggesting to sinners their want of certain preparations and qualifications [Three Remedies]
4. By suggesting to sinners that Christ Is unwilling to save them [Six Remedies]
5. By causing sinners to give more attention to the secret decrees and counsels of God than to their own duty [Two Remedies]

II. SEVEN CHARACTERS OF FALSE TEACHERS

III. SIX PROPOSITIONS CONCERNING SATAN AND HIS DEVICES
[Five reasons of the point added]

IV. CONCLUSION: TEN SPECIAL HELPS AND RULES AGAINST SATAN'S DEVICES

> "Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against **the devil's schemes**. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand." *Ephesians 6:11-13*

FIVE MORE OF SATAN'S DEVICES

Whereby he keeps 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 these devices.

DEVICE 1. *By suggesting to the soul the greatness and vileness of his sins.*

What! says Satan, do you think you shall ever obtain mercy by Christ—you who have sinned with so high a hand against Christ? you who have slighted the offers of grace? you who have grieved the Spirit of grace? you who have despised the word of grace? you who have trampled under feet the blood of the covenant by which you might have been pardoned, purged, justified, and saved? you who 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 (Jer. 3:5).

Remedy* (1).** 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 will not call out for help; my wound is deep, therefore I will not call out for balm; my disease is dangerous, therefore I will 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 will 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, who is as able and as willing to forgive pounds as pence, thousands as hundreds (Micah 7:18; Is. 43:25).

Remedy* (2).** 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 ever so wicked, yet if you will return, God will be yours, and mercy shall be yours, and pardon shall be yours (2 Chron. 30:9): 'For the Lord your God is gracious and merciful. If you return to him, he will not continue to turn his face from you.' So Jer. 3:12: 'This is what the Lord says: O Israel, my faithless people, come home to me again, for I am merciful. I will not be angry with you forever.' So Joel 2:13: 'Don't tear your clothing in your grief; instead, tear your hearts." Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful. He is not easily angered. He is filled with kindness and is eager not to punish you.' So Is. 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 pardon.' 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 greatness of your sins—but your decided persisting in sin, that will be your eternal overthrow.

Remedy* (3).** The third remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, ***That the greatest sinners have obtained mercy, and therefore you may obtain mercy. Manasseh was a notorious sinner. "**Manasseh** did what was evil in the LORD's sight, imitating the detestable practices of the pagan nations whom the Lord had driven from the land ahead of the Israelites. He rebuilt the pagan shrines his father, Hezekiah, had destroyed. He constructed altars for Baal and set up an Asherah pole, just as King Ahab of Israel had done. He also bowed before all the starry hosts and worshiped them. He even built pagan altars in the Temple of the Lord, the place where the Lord had said his name should be honored. He built these altars for all the starry hosts in both courtyards of the Lord's Temple. Manasseh even sacrificed his own son in the fire. He practiced sorcery and divination, and he consulted with mediums and spiritists. He did much that was evil in the Lord's sight, arousing his anger. Manasseh even took an Asherah pole he had made and set it up in the Temple!" (2 Kings 21:1-7). Ah! what a devil incarnate was he in his actings! 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 loving-kindness, as you may see in 2 Chron. 33.

So **Paul** was once a blasphemer, a persecutor and injurious, yet he obtained mercy (1 Tim. 1:13). So **Mary Magdalene** was a notorious strumpet, a common whore, out of whom Christ cast seven devils, yet she is pardoned by Christ, and dearly beloved of Christ (Luke 7:37, 38). So 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, both of whom 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, You have ascended on high, you have led captivity captive; you have received gifts for men; yes, 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! Yet Christ has received gifts for you, 'even for the rebellious also.' He has received the gift of pardon, the gift of righteousness, yes, all the gifts of the Spirit for you, that your heart may be made a delightful house for God to dwell in.

John Godin has a story concerning a great rebel that had made a strong party against a Roman emperor. The emperor makes proclamation, that whoever could bring the rebel dead or alive, he would be rewarded with 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 would 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, who had but a drop of mercy and compassion in him: and will not Christ do much more, who has all fullness of grace, mercy, and glory in himself? Surely his affections do yearn towards the worst of rebels. Ah! if you still but come in, you will find him ready to pardon, yes, one fully 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 (Col. 1:19; 2:3, 4).

Ephraim had committed idolatry, and was backslidden from God; he was guilty of lukewarmness and unbelief, etc., yet says God, 'Ephraim is my dear son, he is a pleasant child, my affections are troubled for him, I will have mercy,' or rather as it is in the original, 'I will have mercy, mercy upon him, says the Lord.' (Hosea, 4:17; 5:3; 6:8, 11; 12:12, 14; 13:12. Vide Jer. 31:20)

Well! says God, though Ephraim is guilty of crimson sins, yet he is a son, a dear son, a precious son, a pleasant child; though he is black with filth, and red with guilt, yet my affections are troubled for him; I will have mercy, mercy upon him. Ah sinners, if these affections 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 affections of mercy.

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

Remedy* (4).** The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is, to consider, ***That Jesus Christ has never refused the worst of sinners who are willing to receive him, to believe in him, 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): 'Everyone the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will never cast out.' Or as the original has it, 'I will not, no never 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 ever so guilty, ever so filthy, ever so rebellious, ever so leprous—yet if he will but come, I will not, no never cast him off. So much is held forth in 1 Cor. 6:9-11, 'Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were! But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.'

Ah! sinners, do not think that he who has received such notorious sinners to mercy, will reject you. 'He is the same yesterday, and today, and forever' (Heb. 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 whatever part of the world 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—I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right.'

The three tongues that were written upon the cross, Greek, Latin, and Hebrew (John 19:19, 20), to witness Christ to be the king of the Jews, do each of them in their several idioms avouch this singular axiom, that Christ is an all-sufficient Savior; and 'a threefold cord is not easily broken.' The apostle puts this out of doubt: Heb. 7:25: 'therefore he is able also to save to the uttermost, all who come unto God by him, seeing he ever lives to make intercession for them.' Now, he were not an all-sufficient Savior, if he were not able to save the worst, as well 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, until he shall say, 'Friends, be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven, your persons are justified, and your souls shall be saved.'

Remedy* (5).** 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 (Is. 53:11): 'He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.' 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; he obeyed, endured, and suffered more by day and 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 immensity of his love!** This makes heaven and earth to ring of his praise, that he loves those who are most unlovely, that he shows most favor to those who 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?

Remedy* (6).** 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 (Rom. 8:10; 1 John 1:6, 7). While you keep off from Christ, you keep off from that strength and power which is alone 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 (1 John 5:4). It is only faith in Christ that binds the strong man's hand and foot, that stops the issue of blood, that makes a man strong in resisting, and happy in conquering (Matt. 5:15-35). 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 the Savior. It is not resolving, it is not complaining, it is not mourning—but believing, which 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.

Remedy* (7).** 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 on him, to rest and lean upon him for all happiness and blessedness (Cant. 1:3). If you look upon his nature, his disposition, his names, his titles, his offices as king, priest, and prophet—you will find nothing to discourage the greatest sinners from believing in him—but many things to encourage the greatest sinners to receive him, to believe in him. (Col. 1:19; 2:3; Cant. 5:10.)

Christ is the greatest good, the choicest good, the chief 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 (Rev. 3:17, 18). Sinners, are you poor? Christ has gold to enrich you. Are you naked? Christ has royal robes, he has white clothing to clothe you. Are you blind? Christ has eye-salve to enlighten you. 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 a balm under his wings to heal you. Are you sick? He is a physician to cure you. Are you prisoners? He has laid down a ransom for you. 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 shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool' (Is. 1:18). No, then, your iniquities shall be forgotten as well as forgiven, they shall be remembered no more. God will cast them behind his back, he will throw them into the bottom of the sea! (Is. 43:25; 38:17; Micah 7:19).

Remedy* (8).** The eighth remedy against this device of Satan Is, seriously to consider, ***The absolute necessity of believing in Christ. Heaven is too holy to hold unbelievers; their lodging is prepared in hell (Rev. 21:8): 'But the fearful and unbelieving etc. shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.' 'If you believe not that I am he,' says Christ, 'you shall die in your sins' (John 8:24). **And he who dies in his sins must go to judgment and to hell in his sins.** Every unbeliever is a condemned man: 'He who believes not,' says John, 'is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And he who believes not the Son, shall not see life—but the wrath of God abides on him' (John 3:18, 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, and look up to him, and wait on him, from whom every good and perfect gift comes, and give him no rest until he has given you that jewel 'faith'—which is more worth than heaven and earth, and which will make you happy in life, joyful in death, and glorious in the day of Christ (Is. 64:7; James 1:17; Is. 62:7).

And thus much for the remedies against this first device of Satan, whereby he keeps off thousands from believing in Christ.

DEVICE 2. *By suggesting to sinners 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.

Remedy* (1).** 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? (Matt. 19:8; John 5:29). 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 (John 6:40, 47).

Remedy* (2).** The second remedy against this device of Satan is, wisely to consider, ***That none ever received Christ, embraced Christ, and 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 faint, do not 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 blessed ones who are now triumphing in heaven.

Remedy* (3).** The third remedy against this device of Satan is, ***That if the soul will keep off from Christ until it is 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 (Is. 50:11). God has laid up all worthiness in Christ, that the creature may know where to find it, and receive it. There is no way on earth to make unworthy souls worthy—but by believing in Christ (James 2:23). Believing in Christ—of slaves, it will make you worthy sons; of enemies, it will make you worthy friends. 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 (Rev. 3:4).

Remedy* (4).** The fourth 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 which puts you upon bringing of a worthiness to Christ. Oh! you would gladly bring something to Christ that might render you acceptable to him; you are reluctant to come empty-handed. The Lord cries out, 'Come, everyone who is thirsty, come to the waters; and you without money, come, buy, and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost! Why do you spend money on what is not food, and your wages on what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and you will enjoy the choicest of foods!' (Is. 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 will not come, though he sweetly invites them. Ah, sinners! what is more just than that you should perish forever—who prefer husks among swine, before the milk and wine, the sweet and precious things of the gospel, which 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. *By suggesting to sinners the lack 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 heart-sick of sin; you have not been under horrors and terrors as such and such; you must stay until you are prepared and qualified to receive the Lord Jesus.

Remedy* (1).** The first remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly 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 tax collector's booth, and there was such power went along with Christ's call, that made him to follow Christ (Matt. 9:9). We read not of any horrors or terrors that he was under before his being called by Christ. Reader! what preparations and qualifications were found in Zacchaeus, Paul, the jailor, and Lydia, before their conversion? (Luke 19:9, Acts 16:14, *seq.*). God brings in some by the sweet and still voice of the gospel, and usually such that are thus brought into Christ are the sweetest, humblest, choicest, and most fruitful 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 who are brought to Christ by the law, do not you judge and condemn those who are brought to Christ by the gospel; and you who are brought to Christ by the gospel, do not you despise those who 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 (John 3:8). Thrice happy are those souls that are brought to Christ, whether it be in a winter's night or in a summer's day.

Remedy* (2).** The second remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly ***To dwell upon these following scriptures, which clearly evidence that poor sinners who are not such and such 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 Prov. 1:20-33, and chap 8:1-11, and chap. 9:1-6; Ezek. 16:1-14; John 3:14-18, 36; Rev. 3:15-20. Here the Lord Jesus Christ stands knocking at the Laodiceans' door; he would gladly 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, tell me, what preparations or qualifications had these Laodiceans to entertain Christ? Surely none; for they were lukewarm, they were 'neither hot nor cold,' 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 not such and such prepared or qualified to entertain him.

Remedy* (3).** 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. Believing in Christ is the great thing that God presses upon sinners throughout the Scripture, as all know that know anything of Scripture.

Obj. But does not Christ say, 'Come unto me all who *labor and are heavy laden*, and I will give you rest'? (Matt. 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, it is made over to 'coming,' to 'believing.'

(2.) That all 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, 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 would 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 will 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, *heavy 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, which the world can neither give to you nor take from you.

(3.) No one scripture speaks out the whole mind of God; 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 thus and thus burdened and laden with their sins and filled with horror and terror, if they may come to Christ, they may receive and embrace the Lord Jesus Christ.

Remedy* (4).** The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is, to consider, ***That all that trouble for sin, 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. Zech. 12:10, 'They shall look on him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him.' All gospel mourning flows from believing; they shall first look, and then mourn. All who know anything about the gospel, know this, that 'whatever is not of faith is sin' (Rom. 14:33). **Until men have faith in Christ, their best services are but splendid sins!**

DEVICE 4. *By suggesting to a sinner Christ's unwillingness to save.* It is true, says Satan. Christ is able to save you—but is he willing? Surely, though he is able, yet he is not willing to save such a wretch as you are, who has trampled his blood under your feet, and who has been in open rebellion against him all your days.

Remedy* (1).** *First,* ***The great journey that he has taken, from heaven to earth, on purpose to save sinners, strongly demonstrates his willingness to save them. Matt. 9:13: 'I came not to call the righteous—but sinners to repentance.' 1 Tim. 1:15: 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.'

Secondly, 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. From the cradle to the cross, his whole life was a life of sufferings.

Thirdly, 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, strongly evidences his willingness to save sinners (2 Cor. 5:19, 20).

Fourthly, 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.

Fifthly, His complaints against such as refuse him, and who turn their backs upon him, and who will not be saved by him, strongly declares his willingness to save them (John 1:11): 'He came to his own, and his own received him not.' So in John 5:40, 'But you will not come to me, that you may have life.'

Sixthly, The joy and delight that he takes at the conversion of sinners demonstrates his willingness that they should be saved (Luke 15:7): 'I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.' God the Father rejoices at the return of his prodigal son; Christ rejoices to see the travail of his soul; the Spirit rejoices that he has another temple to dwell in; and the angels rejoice that they have another brother to delight in (Is. 53:11).

DEVICE 5. *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. No, 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.

***Remedy* (1).** The first remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, *That not all the angels in heaven, nor all the men an 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 of such that he has set his love upon to eternity.

***Remedy* (2).** 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' (Deut. 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 until he shall say, Sinner, I am your portion, I am your salvation—and nothing shall separate between you and me.

SEVEN CHARACTERISTICS OF FALSE TEACHERS

Satan labors might and main, by false teachers, which are his emissaries, to deceive, delude, and forever undo the precious souls of men (Jer. 23:13) 'I have seen folly in the prophets of Samaria; they prophesied in Baal, and caused my people Israel to err.' Micah 3:5: 'The prophets make my people to err.' They seduce them, and carry them out of the right way into by-paths and blind thickets of error, blasphemy, and wickedness, where they are lost forever. 'Beware of false prophets, for they come to you in sheep's clothing—but inwardly they are ravening wolves' (Matt. 7:15). These lick and suck the blood of souls (Phil. 3:2), 'Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers.' These kiss and kill; these cry, Peace, peace, until souls fall into everlasting flames! (Prov. 7). (Acts. 20:28-30; 2 Cor. 11:13-15; Eph. 4:14; 2 Tim. 3:4-6; Titus 1:11, 22; 2 Peter 2:18,19.)

Now the best way to deliver poor souls from being deluded and destroyed by these messengers of Satan is, to discover them in their colors, that so, being known, poor souls may shun them, and fly from them as from hell itself.

Now you may know them by these characters following:

[1.] False teachers are *men-pleasers.* Such are not true teachers; Gal. 1:10, 1 Thess. 2:1-4. They preach more to please the ear than to profit the heart (Is. 30:10): 'Who say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things: speak to us smooth things; prophesy deceits.' Jer. 5:30, 31: "A horrible and shocking thing has happened in the land: The prophets prophesy lies, the priests rule by their own authority, and my people love it this way. But what will you do in the end?" Jeremiah 5:30-31. False teachers handle holy things rather with wit and trifling, rather than with fear and reverence. False teachers are soul-murderers. They are like evil surgeons, that skin over the wound—but never heal it. Flattery undid Ahab and Herod, Nero and Alexander. False teachers are hell's greatest enrichers. Not bitter—but flattering words do all the mischief, said Valerian, the Roman emperor. Such smooth teachers are sweet soul-poisoners. "This is my warning to my people," says the Lord Almighty. 'Do not listen to these prophets when they prophesy to you, filling you with futile hopes. They are making up everything they say. They do not speak for the Lord! They keep saying to these rebels who despise my word, 'Don't worry! The Lord says you will have peace!' And to those who stubbornly follow their own evil desires, they say, 'No harm will come your way!'" (Jer. 23:16, 17).

[2.] False teachers *are notable in casting dirt, scorn, and reproach upon the persons, names, and credits of Christ's most faithful ambassadors.* Thus Korah, Dathan, and Abiram charged Moses and Aaron that they took too much upon them, seeing all the congregation was holy (Num. 16:3). You take too much state, too much power, too much honor, too much holiness upon you; for what are you more than others, that you take so much upon you? And so Ahab's false prophets fell foul on good Micaiah, paying of him with blows for lack of better reasons (1 Kings 22:10-26). Yes, Paul, that great apostle of the Gentiles, had his ministry undermined and his reputation blasted by false teachers: 'For his letters,' say they, 'are weighty and powerful—but his bodily presence is weak and his speech contemptible' (2 Cor. 10:10). They rather condemn him than admire him; they look upon him as a dunce rather than a doctor. And the same hard measure had our Lord Jesus from the scribes and Pharisees, who labored as for life to build their own credit upon the ruins of his reputation. And never did the devil drive a more full trade this way than he does in these days (Matt. 27:63). Oh! the dirt, the filth, the scorn that is thrown upon those of whom the world is not worthy! I suppose false teachers mind not that saying of Augustine: 'He who willingly takes from my good name, unwillingly adds to my reward.' The proverb is, 'A man's eye and his good name can bear no jests.'

[3.] False teachers *are venters of the devices and visions of their own heads and hearts.* Jer. 14:14: "Then the Lord said unto me—These prophets are telling lies in my name. I did not send them or tell them to speak. I did not give them any messages. They prophesy of visions and revelations they have never seen or heard. They speak foolishness made up in their own lying hearts." "This is my warning to my people," says the Lord Almighty. "Do not listen to these prophets when they prophesy to you, filling you with futile hopes. They are making up everything they say. They do not speak for the Lord!" Jeremiah 23:16.

Are there not multitudes in this nation whose visions are but golden delusions, lying vanities, brain-sick fantasies? These are Satan's great benefactors, and such as divine justice will hang up in hell as the greatest malefactors, if the physician of souls does not prevent it.

Matt. 24:4, 5; 11:14; Titus 1:10; Rom. 16:18

[4.] *False teachers easily pass over the great and weighty things both of law and gospel, and stand most upon those things that are of the least importance and concern to the souls of men.* 1 Tim. 1:5-7: 'Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith sincere; from which some having swerved, have turned aside unto vain jangling, desiring to be teachers of the law, and understand neither what they say nor whereof they affirm.' Matt. 23:23: 'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for you pay tithe of mint, and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith; these ought you to have done, and not to leave the other undone.' False teachers are nice in the lesser things of the law, and as negligent in the greater. 1 Tim. 6:3-5: 'If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing—but doting about questions and strife of words, whereof comes envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw yourself.' If such teachers are not hypocrites in grain, I know nothing (Rom. 2:22). The earth groans to bear them, and hell is fitted for them (Matt. 24:32).

Luther complained of such in his time as would strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. This age is full of such teachers, such monsters! The high priest's spirit (Matt. 23:24) lives and thrives in these days.

[5.] False teachers *cover and color their dangerous principles and soul-deceptions with very fair speeches and plausible pretenses, with high notions and golden expressions.* Many in these days are bewitched and deceived by the magnificent words, lofty strains, and stately terms of deceivers. As strumpets paint their faces, and deck and perfume their beds, the better to allure and deceive simple souls; so false teachers will put a great deal of paint and garnish upon their most dangerous principles and blasphemies, that they may the better deceive and delude poor ignorant souls. They know sugared-poison goes down sweetly; they wrap up their pernicious, soul-killing pills in gold! (Gal. 6:12; 2 Cor. 11:13-15; Rom. 16:17, 18; Matt. 16:6,11,12; 7:15.)

In the days of Hadrian the emperor, there was one Ben-Cosbi gathered a multitude of Jews together, and called himself *Ben-cocuba,* the son of a star, applying that promise to himself (Num. 24:17)—but he proved *Bar-chosaba,* the son of a lie. And so will all false teachers, for all their flourishes prove at the last the sons of lies.

[6.] False teachers *strive more to win over men to their opinions, than to better them in their lives.* Matt. 23:15: 'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, you make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves!' They busy themselves most about men's heads. Their work is not to better men's hearts, and mend their lives; and in this they are very much like their father the devil, who will spare no pains to gain proselytes.

For shame! says Epictetus to his Stoics; either live as Stoics, or leave off the name of Stoics. The application is easy.

[7.] False teachers *make merchandise of their followers* "But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them--bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. In their greed these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping." 2 Peter 2:1-3. They eye your goods more than your good; and mind more the serving of themselves, than the saving of your souls. So they may have your substance, they care not though Satan has your souls (Rev. 18:11-13). That they may the better pick your purse, they will hold forth such principles as are very indulgent to the flesh. False teachers are the great worshipers of the golden calf. "From the least to the greatest, all are greedy for gain; prophets and priests alike, all practice deceit." (Jer. 6:13).

Crates threw his money into the sea, resolving to drown it, lest it should drown him. But false teachers care not who they drown—so they may have their money.

Now, by these characters you may know them, and so shun them, and deliver your souls out of their dangerous snares.

SIX PROPOSITIONS CONCERNING SATAN AND HIS DEVICES

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.

Proposition (1). 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 which is to be charged upon their own hearts. 'And the Lord said unto the woman, What is this that you have done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat' (Gen. 3:13). Sin and shifting of sin, came into the world together. This is no small baseness of our hearts, that they will blame 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 which is in him, would draw him to sin, though he knows beforehand that 'the wages of sin is eternal death' (Rom. 6:23). 'For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornication, thefts, false witness, blasphemies' (Matt. 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 people to vanity or folly, 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 of God against them (Jude 15, 16).

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 guilt 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 the load upon him, that you should lay upon your own hearts.

We are no sooner born, than buried in a bog of wickedness (*Cicero*).

The fire is our wood, though it be the devil's flame (Nazianzen).

Prop. (2). That Satan has a great hand and stroke in most sins. It was Satan who tempted our first parents to rebellion. It was Satan who provoked David to number the people. It was Satan who put Peter upon rebuking Christ; therefore says Christ, 'Get behind me, Satan'. It was Satan who put Cain upon murdering of righteous Abel, therefore it is that he is called 'a murderer from the beginning'. It was Satan who put treason into the heart of Judas against Christ, 'And supper being ended, the devil having put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him'. It was Satan who put Ananias upon lying; Peter said, 'Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?' (Gen. 3:1-5; 1 Chron. 21:1; Matt. 16:22, 23; John 8:44, 13:2; 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 other in all the sins, though he knows that all the sins 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 yours, Lord Jesus, he is mine; his thoughts beat for me; he eats with you—but is fed by me: he takes bread from you—but money from me; he drinks wine with you, and sells your 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 which may give him advantage to triumph over men's souls forever.

***Prop.* (3). That Satan must have a double permission before he can do anything against us.**

He must have permission from God, and permission from ourselves, before he can do anything against our happiness. He must have his permission from God, as you may see in the example of Job (Job 1:11, 12; 2:3-5). Though the devil had malice enough to destroy him, yet he had not so much as power to touch him, until God gave him permission.

They could not so much as enter into the swine without permission from Christ (Luke 8:32). Satan would gladly have combated with Peter—but this he could not do without leave. 'Satan has desired to have you, to winnow you' (Luke 22:31). So Satan could never have overthrown Ahab and Saul—but by permission from God (1 Kings 22). **Ah! what a cordial, what a comfort should this be to the saints—that their greatest, subtlest, and most vigilant enemy cannot hurt nor harm them, without permission from him who is their sweetest Savior, their dearest husband, and their choicest friend.**

And as Satan must have permission from God, so he must have permission from 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 frustrated, and the evil that he tempts us to shall be put down only to his account. That is a remarkable passage in Acts 5:3, 'Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?' He does not expostulate the matter with Satan; he does not say, Satan, 'Why have you filled Ananias's heart to make him lie to the Holy Spirit?' but he expostulates the case with Ananias; Peter said, 'Ananias, why has Satan filled *your* heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?' Why have you given him an advantage to fill your heart with infidelity, hypocrisy, and obstinate audacity, to lie to the Holy Spirit? As if he had said, Satan could never have done this in you, which will now forever undo you, unless you had given him permission. 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.

Prop. (4). 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: 'Therefore take unto you,' says he, 'the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand' (Eph. 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 strongholds' (2 Cor. 10:4). You have not to do with a weak—but with a mighty enemy, and therefore you had need to look to it, that your weapons are mighty—which they cannot be, unless they are spiritual. Carnal weapons have no power 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 Almighty. 'You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a shield—but I have come to you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied' (1 Sam. 17:45).

He who 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 (Matt. 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 impurity, plead, 'It is written, be holy, as I am holy' (1 Peter 1:16); and, 'Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord' (2 Cor. 7:1). If he tempts you to distrust God's providence and fatherly care of you, plead, It is written, 'Those who fear the Lord shall lack no good thing.' (Psalm 34:9).

We read of many that, out of fortitude, could subdue nature—but were at a loss when they came to deal with a corruption or a temptation. Heraclitus's motto was, 'A Deo victoria!' It is God that gives victory; and that should be every Christian's motto.

It is written, 'The Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from those who live purely' (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 who has 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 may not depart from me' (Jer. 32:40).

It is written, 'Those who wait upon the Lord 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' (Is. 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 upon you no more; 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 depth of the sea' (Micah 7:19).

It is written, 'For a small moment have I forsaken you—but with great mercies will I gather you. In a little wrath I hid my face from you for a moment—but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on you, says the Lord, your Redeemer' (Is. 54:8, 10).

It is written, 'The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed—but my kindness shall not depart from you, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, says the Lord who has mercy on you.'

It is written, 'Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yes, they may forget, yet will not I forget you. Behold, I have engraved you upon the palms of my hands, your walls are continually before me' (Is. 49:15, 16).

If ever you would be too hard for Satan, and after all his assaults, have your bow abide in strength, then take to yourself 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' (Eph. 6:17). 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 Staupitius, a German minister, that he acknowledged himself, that before he came to understand aright the free and powerful grace of God, 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 which is set before you, and Satan will certainly fly from you (James 4:7).

Prop. (5). That we may read much of Satan's nature and disposition by the diverse names and epithets that are given him in the Scripture.

Sometimes he is called *Behemoth*, whereby the greatness and brutishness of the devil is figured (Job 40:15). 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 (1 Pet. 5:8). *Abaddon* is a destroyer (Rev. 9:11). They are *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.

Prop. (6). That God will shortly tread down Satan under the saints' feet.

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. 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 coronets of our joy.

"The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet." Romans 16:20. The Greek word signifies to break or crash a thing to pieces. Being applied to the feet—it means that crushing which is by stamping upon a thing.

FIVE REASONS OF THE POINT

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

Reason (1). 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 Christian should be like the 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 watch-tower, and hold their weapons in their hands, as the Jews did in Nehemiah's time.

The philosopher had a ball of brass in his hand; if he chanced to sleep it fell into a basin and awaked him to his studies. You are wise and know how to apply it.

Reason **(2).** ***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.

Malice cares not what it says or does, just so that it may kill or gall.

The Russians are so malicious, that they have a man hide some of his own goods in the house of him whom he hates, and then accuse him for the stealing 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.

An envious heart and plotting head, are inseparable companions.

Reason **(3). 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 over 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, traps, 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. But now he is grown into that 'old serpent,' as John speaks (Rev. 12:9). He is as old as the world, and is grown very cunning by experience.

Reason **(4).** ***In judgment to the men of the world, that they may stumble and fall, and be ensnared forever.***

Wicked men who withstand the offers of mercy, and despise the Spirit of grace; who will not open, though God knocks ever 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 22:23). 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 ever so wisely, and ever so sweetly?

Reason **(5).** ***That the excellency and power of God's grace may be more illustrated and manifested, by making his people 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; and that, notwithstanding all their power, plots, and stratagems, yet to Canaan God would bring them at last. When Paul had 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 Cor. 12:7-9).

TEN SPECIAL HELPS AND RULES 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, 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.

The first help. If you would not be taken by any of Satan's devices, then ***walk by rule of the Word of God****.* (Prov. 12:24; Gal. 6:16) He who walks by rule, walks most safely; he who walks by rule, walks most honorably; he who walks by rule, walks most sweetly. **When men throw off the Word, then God throws them off, and then Satan takes them by the hand, and leads them into snares at his pleasure.** He who thinks himself too good to be ruled by the Word, will be found too bad to be owned by God; and if God does not, or will not own him—Satan will by his stratagems overthrow him. Those who keep to the rule, shall be kept in the hour of temptation. 'Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth.' (Rev. 3:10)

The second help. As you would not be taken with any of Satan's devices, ***take heed of vexing and grieving of the Holy Spirit of God.*** The Divine Spirit is very tender; if you grieve him, he will certainly grieve and vex your precious souls (Lam. 1:16.) It is the Spirit who is best able to discover Satan's snares against us; it is only he who can point out all his plots, and discover all his methods, and enable men to escape those pits that Satan has dug for their precious souls. Ah! if you set that sweet and blessed Spirit a-mourning, who alone can secure you from Satan's depths—by whom will you be preserved? 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 is grieved, be sure the Spirit is not grieved by your enormities, nor by your refusing the cordials and comforts that he sets before you, nor by slighting and despising his gracious actings in others, nor by calling sincerity hypocrisy, and faith fancy, nor by fathering those things upon the Spirit, that are the offspring and fruits of your own hearts. (Is. 63:10; Psalm 73:23; 1 Thess. 5:19; Acts 2:13.)

The Spirit of the Lord is your counselor, your comforter, your upholder, your strengthener. It is the Spirit alone, who makes a man too great for Satan to conquer. 'Greater is he who is in you, than he who is in the world' (1 John 4:4).

The third help. 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 wisdom compared to what others have, and compared to that you might have had. There are many educated 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. It is not the most knowing Christian—but the most wise Christian, who sees, avoids, and escapes Satan's snares. 'The way of life leads upward for the wise,' says Solomon, 'that he may depart from hell beneath' (Prov. 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.

If men could but see the fair face of wisdom with mortal eyes, they would be in love with her, says Plato.

The fourth help. If you would not be taken with any of Satan's devices, then ***make immediate resistance against Satan's first motions****.* It is safe to resist, it is dangerous to dispute. Eve disputes, and falls in paradise (Gen. 3); Job resists, and conquers upon the ash-heap. He who will play with Satan's bait, will quickly be taken with Satan's hook! The promise of conquest is given to resisting, not to disputing: 'Resist the devil, and he will flee from you' (James 4:7). Ah, souls! were you better at resisting than at disputing, your temptations would be fewer, and your strength to stand would be greater than now it is.

The fifth help. 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 wickedness in high places? (Eph. 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' (Eph. 5:18); *that is,* labor for abundance of the Spirit. He who 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.

Luther says, a holy gluttony is to lay on, to feed hard, and to fetch hearty draughts, until they be even drunk with the abundance of the Spirit. Oh that there were more such holy gluttony in the world!

The sixth help. If you would not be taken in any of Satan's snares, then ***keep humble****.* An 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 who is most humble. He who has a gracious measure of humility, is neither affected with Satan's offers nor terrified with his threatenings.

I have read of one who, seeing in a vision many snares of the devil spread upon the earth, he sat down, and mourned, and said in himself, Who shall pass through these? Whereupon he heard a voice answering, *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. 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! (Psalm 25:9; Is. 57:15, James 4:6.)

The seventh help. If you would not be taken in any of Satan's snares, then ***keep a strong, close, and constant watch*** (1 Thess. 5:6). A sleepy 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 imagination, when the soul is drowsy. The soul's slothfulness is Satan's opportunity to fall upon the soul and to destroy 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?' 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.' 1 Peter 5:8. Satan is very envious of our condition, that we should enjoy that paradise out of which he is cast, and out of which he shall be forever kept!

We must effectually mind these following scriptures, wherein this duty of watchfulness is so strictly enjoined: Matt 26:40; Mark 13:33, 34, 35, 37; 1 Cor. 16:13; Col. 4:2; 1 Peter 4:7; Rev. 2:3.

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 dampen our assurances. Oh! what need then have we to be always upon our watch-tower, 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.

Hannibal never rested, whether he did conquer or was conquered. It is so with Satan. 'Learn, for shame of the devil,' said blessed Latimer, 'to watch, seeing the devil is so watchful.'

Watchfulness is nothing else but the soul running up and down, to and fro, busy everywhere. Watchfulness is the heart busied and employed with diligent observation of what comes from within us, and of 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 gun-shot, a soul upon a rock, a soul in a castle, a soul above the clouds, a soul held fast in God's 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.

The eighth help. 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, elevating and strengthening. While Samson kept up his communion with God, no enemy could stand before him—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 wickedness 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 who 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 ash-heap; 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.

The ninth help. If you would not be taken in any of Satan's snares, then ***do not engage 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 you, yet I will not!' (Matt. 26:35)—and therefore he falls sadly before a new temptation. He curses and swears, and denies him thrice—who had thrice appeared gloriously to him. **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 the snares!"

Ah, souls! remember this, that your strength to stand and overcome must not be expected from graces received in the past—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 your spiritual tastes and discoveries: you must lean more upon Christ than upon your graces, or else Satan will lead you into captivity.

"Apart from me you can do nothing." Separate from me, or apart from me, you can do nothing.

The tenth help. 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 often more out of tune than his harp. He prays, and then, in spite of the devil, cries, 'Return unto your rest, O my soul.' Prayer is the gate of heaven, a key to let us into paradise. There is nothing that renders Satan's plots fruitless like prayer; therefore says Christ: 'Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation' (Matt. 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. "But my eyes are fixed on you, O Sovereign Lord; in you I take refuge--do not give me over to death. Keep me from the snares they have laid for me, from the traps set by evildoers. Let the wicked fall into their own nets, while I pass by in safety." (Psalm 141:8-10).

"Keep me, O Lord, from the hands of the wicked; protect me from men of violence who plan to trip my feet. Proud men have hidden a snare for me; they have spread out the cords of their net and have set traps for me along my path. O Lord, I say to you, 'You are my God.' Hear, O Lord, my cry for mercy." (Psalm 140:4-6). 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 a victor, that you be not ruined by Satan's 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 that 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.

USE*.* The next use is a use of ***thankfulness to those who escape Satan's snares—that they have not been taken by him at his will.*** Ah! Christians, it stands upon you 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 do not forget all his benefits!' (Psalm 103:1, 2). God 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: "Praise be to the Lord, who has not let us be torn by their teeth. We have escaped like a bird out of the fowler's snare; the snare has been broken, and we have escaped. Our help is in the name of the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth." (Psalm 124:6-8).

Ah! Christians, remember that the greatest part of the world, yes, 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? "But as for me, I will always have hope; I will praise you more and more. My mouth will tell of your righteousness, of your salvation all day long, though I know not its measure. I will come and proclaim your mighty acts, O Sovereign Lord; I will proclaim your righteousness, yours alone. Since my youth, O God, you have taught me, and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds." (Psalm 71:14-17).

Remember this, that deliverance from Satan's snares does carry with it the clearest and the greatest evidence, that the soul and heart of God to are towards us. Many a man by a common hand of providence escapes many a snare that another 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 soul? I judge not.

USE*.* The last use of this point is, ***To encourage Christians to long to be at home with Jesus.*** 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 our employments are full of snares; and all our 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. Even our mercies are all surrounded with snares! There are snares about our tables and snares about our beds! Yes, 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 artful, that he can turn your bread 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 a roe, or a young deer upon the mountain of spices,' and to love, and look, and long for the coming of Christ (Cant. 8:14). Shall the espoused maid long for the marriage day? Shall the servant long for his freedom? Shall the captive long for his ransom? Shall the traveler for long his inn, and the mariner for his harbor? 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 (Phil. 1:23, and 2 Cor. 5:2, 4).

Augustine wished that he might have seen three things: Rome flourishing, Paul preaching, and Christ conversing with men upon the earth. Bede comes after, and, correcting this last wish, says, Yes—but let me see the King in his beauty, Christ is his heavenly kingdom.

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, "Let us go hence, let us go hence!" Ah! souls, until you are taken up into the bosom of Christ, your comforts will not be full, pure, and constant. Until then, Satan will still be thumping on you, and spreading snares to entangle you! Therefore you should always be crying out with the church, 'Come, Lord Jesus!' (Rev. 22:20).

Is not Christ the star of Jacob, that 'gives light to those who are in darkness'? Is not Christ that Prince of peace who brings the olive branch to souls that are perplexed? Is not the greatest worth and wealth in him? Are not 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 until then, Satan will still have plots and designs upon you. He acts by an untiring power, and will never let you rest until you are taken up to an everlasting rest in the bosom of Christ!

It is as easy to contain the sea in a nutshell—as to relate fully Christ's excellencies, or heaven's happiness!

"Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against **the devil's schemes**. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand." *Ephesians 6:11-13*