

Part Second.

Directions for managing this War successfully,
with some Motives sprinkled among them.

DIRECTION FIRST.

The Christian must be armed, and the Reason why.

Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand
against the wiles of the devil. (Eph. 6:11).

This verse is a key to the former, wherein the apostle had exhorted believers to encourage and bear up their fainting spirits on the Lord, and the power of his might. Now in these words he explains himself, and shows how he would have them do this, not presumptuously [to] come into the field without that armour which God hath appointed to be worn by all his soldiers, and yet with a bravado, to trust to the power of God to save them. That soul is sure to fall short of home (heaven I mean), who hath nothing but a carnal confidence on the name of God, blown up by its ignorance of God and himself. No, he that would have his confidence duly placed on the power of God, must conscientiously use the means appointed for his defence, and not rush naked into the battle, like that fanatic spirit at Munster, who would needs go forth, and chase away the whole army then besieging that city, with no other cannon than a few words charged with the name of the Lord of hosts, which he blasphemously made bold to use, saying, In the name of the Lord of hosts depart. But himself soon perisheth, to learn others wisdom by what he paid for his folly. What foolish braving language shall ye hear drop from the lips of the most profane and ignorant among us! They trust in God, hope in his mercy, defy the devil and all his works, and such like stuff, who are yet poor naked creatures without the least piece of God's armour upon their souls. To cashier such presumption from the saints' camp, he annexeth this directory to his exhortation, 'Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.' So that the words fall into these two general parts. FIRST, A direction annexed to the former exhortation, showing how we may in a regular way come to be strong in the Lord, that is, by putting on the whole 'armour of God.' SECOND, A reason or argument strengthening this direction, 'that ye may be able to stand against the wile of the devil.'

DIRECTION I.—FIRST GENERAL PART.

[The Christian must be armed for the War, ‘Put on the whole armour of God.’]

In this part we have a direction annexed to the former exhortation, showing how we may in a regular way come to be strong in the Lord, that is, by putting on the whole ‘armour of God.’ In this observe, FIRST, The furniture he directs, and that is ‘armour.’ SECOND, The kind or quality of this armour—‘armour of God.’ THIRD, The quantity or entireness of the armour—the ‘whole’ armour of God. FOURTH, The use of this armour—‘put on’ the whole armour of God.

BRANCH FIRST.

[The furniture or ARMOUR needful
—what it is.]

To begin with the first, the furniture which every one must get that would fight Christ's battles, [and that is ‘armour.’] The question here will be, What is this armour?

FIRST. By armour is meant Christ. We read of putting on the ‘Lord Jesus,’ Rom. 13:14, where Christ is set forth under the notion of armour. The apostle doth not exhort them for rioting and drunkenness to put on sobriety and temperance, for chambering and wantonness [to] put on chastity, as the philosopher would have done, but bids, ‘put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ;’ implying thus much [that] till Christ be put on, the creature is unarmed. It is not a man's morality and philosophical virtues that will repel a temptation, sent with a full charge from Satan's cannon, though possibly it may the pistol-shot of some less solicitation; so that he is the man in armour, that is in Christ. Again,

SECOND. The graces of Christ, these are armour, as ‘the girdle of truth, the breast-plate of righteousness,’ and the rest. Hence we are bid also [to] ‘put on the new man,’ Eph. 4:24, which is made up of all the several graces, as its parts and members. And he is the unarmed soul, that is the unregenerate soul, not excluding those duties and means which God hath appointed the Christian to use for his defence. The phrase thus opened, the point is, to show that to be without Christ is to be without armour.

[The Christless and graceless soul is without armour, and there in his misery.]

OBSERVE. That a person in a Christless graceless state is naked and unarmed, and so unfit to fight Christ's battles against sin and Satan. Or thus, A soul out of Christ is naked and destitute of all armour to defend him against sin and Satan. God at first sent man forth in complete armour, ‘being created in true righteousness and holiness,’ but by a wile the devil stripped him, and therefore as soon as the first sin was completed, it is written, ‘they were naked,’ Gen. 3:7, that is, [they were] poor weak creatures, at the will of Satan, a subdued people disarmed by their proud conqueror, and unable to make head against him. Indeed it cost Satan some dispute to make the first breach, but after that he hath once the gates opened to let him in as conqueror into the heart of man, he plays rex [or king]. Behold, a troop of other sins crowd in after him, without any stroke or strife; instead of confessing their sins, they run their head in a bush, and by their good-will would not come where God is, and when they cannot fly from him, how do they prevaricate before him? They peal one of another, shifting the sin rather than suing for mercy. So quickly were their hearts hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. And this is the woeful condition of every son and daughter of Adam; naked he finds us, and slaves he makes us, till God by his effectual call delivers us from the power of Satan into the kingdom of his dear Son, which will further appear, if we consider this Christless state in a fourfold notion.

First. It is a state of alienation from God: ‘Ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise,’ &c. Eph. 2:12. Such an one hath no more to

do with any covenant-promise, than he that lives at Rome hath to do with the charter of London, which is the birthright of its own denizens, not [of] strangers. He is without God in the world; he can claim no more protection from God, than an out-lawed subject from his prince. If any mischief befalls him, the mends is in his own hands; whereas God hath his hedge of special protection about his saints, and the devil, though his spite be most at them, dares not come upon God's ground to touch any of them, without particular leave. Now what a deplored condition is that wherein a soul is left to the wide world, in the midst of legions of lusts and devils, to be rent and torn like a silly hare among a pack of hounds, and no God to call them off! Let God leave a people, though never so warlike, presently they lose their wits, cannot find their hands. A company of children or wounded men may rise up, and chase them out of their fenced cities, because God is not with them; which made Caleb and Joshua pacify the mutinous Israelites at the tidings of giants and walled cities with this, 'They are bread for us, their defence is departed from them.' How much more must that soul be as bread to Satan, that hath no defence from the Almighty? Take men of the greatest parts, natural or acquired accomplishments, who only want an union with Christ, and renewing grace from Christ. O what fools doth the devil make of them, leading them at his pleasure, some to one lust, some to another! The proudest of them all is slave to one or other, though it be to the ruining of body and soul for ever. Where lies the mystery, that men of such parts and wisdom should debase themselves to such drudgery work of hell? Even here. They are in a state of alienation from God, and no more able of themselves to break the devil's prison, than a slave to run from his chain.

Second. The Christless state is a state of ignorance, and such must needs be naked and unarmed. He that cannot see his enemy, how can he ward off the blow he sends? One seeing prophet leads a whole army of blind men whither he pleaseth. The imperfect knowledge saints have here, is Satan's advantage against them. He often takes them on the blind side. How easily then may he with a parcel of good words carry the blind soul out of his way, who knows not a step of the right! Now that the Christless state is a state of ignorance, see Eph. 5:8: 'For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord.' Ye

were darkness, not in the dark, so one that hath an eye may be. A child of light is often in the dark concerning some truth or promise, but then hath a spiritual eye, which the Christless person wants, and so is darkness. And this darkness cannot be enlightened, but by its union with Christ, which is expressed in the following phrase: 'But now are ye light in the Lord.' As the eye of the body once put out, can never be restored by the creature's art, so neither can the spiritual eye—lost by Adam's sin—be restored by the teaching of men or angels. It is one of the diseases Christ came to cure, Luke 4:18. It is true, there is a light of reason, which is imparted to every man by nature, but this light is darkness compared with the saints', as the night is dark to the day, even when the moon is in its full glory. This night-light of reason may save a person from some ditch or pond—great and broad sins—but it will never help him to escape the more secret corruptions, which the saint sees like atoms in the beams of spiritual knowledge. There is such curious work the creature is to do, which cannot be wrought by candle-light of natural knowledge. Nay more, where the common illumination of the Spirit is superadded to this light of nature, yet there is darkness compared with the sanctifying knowledge of a renewed soul, which doth both discover spiritual truths, and warm the heart at the same time with the love of truth, having like the sun a prolific and quickening virtue, which the other wants; so that the heart lies under such common illuminations, cold and dead. He hath no more strength to resist Satan, than if he knew not the command; whereas the Christian's knowledge, even when taken prisoner by a temptation, pursues and brings back the soul, as Abraham his nephew, out of the enemies' hands. This hints the third notion,

Third. The Christless state is a state of impotency: 'For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly,' Rom. 5:6. What can a disarmed people that have not sword or gun do to shake off the yoke of a conquering enemy? Such a power hath Satan over the soul [as that], Luke 11:21, he is called the strong man that keeps the soul as his palace. If he hath no disturbance from heaven, he need fear no mutiny within; he keeps all in peace there. What the Spirit of God doth in a saint, that in a manner doth Satan in a sinner. The Spirit fills his heart with love, joy, holy desires, fears; so Satan fills

the sinner's heart with pride, lust, lying. 'Why hath Satan filled thy heart?' saith Peter. And thus filled with Satan (as the drunkard with wine), he is not his own man, but Satan's slave.

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

[Use and Application.]

Use First. This takes away the wonder of Satan's great conquests in the world. When you look abroad and see his vast empire, and what a little spot of ground contains Christ's subjects, what heaps of precious souls lie prostrate under this foot of pride, and what a little regiment of saints march under Christ's banner, perhaps the strangeness of the thing may make you ask, I shell stronger than heaven?—the arms of Satan more victorious than the cross of Christ? No such matters. Consider but this one thing, and you will wonder that Christ hath any to follow him, rather than that he hath so few. Satan finds the world unarmed; when the prince of the world comes, he finds nothing to oppose; the whole soul is in a disposition to yield at first summons. And if conscience, governor for God in the creature, stands out a while, all the other powers, as will and affections, are in a discontent, like mutinous soldiers in a garrison, who never rest till they have brought over conscience to yield, or against its command set open the city gate

to the enemy, and so deliver traitorously their conscience prisoner to their lusts. But when Christ comes to demand the soul, he meets a scornful answer. 'Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of the Most High. We will not have this man to reign over us.' With one consent they vote against him, and rise up as the Philistines against Samson, whom they called the destroyer of the country. 'Ye will not come unto me,' saith Christ. O how true are poor sinners to the devil's trust! They will not deliver the castle they hold for Satan till fired over their heads. Pharaoh opposeth Moses on one hand, and Israel cry out upon him on the other. Such measure hath Christ both at Satan's hand and the sinner's. That which lessened Alexander's conquests was, [that] he overcame a people buried in barbarism, without arms and discipline of war; and that which heightened Caesar's, though not so many, he overcame a people more warlike and furnished. Satan's victories are of poor ignorant graceless souls, who have neither arms, nor hands, nor hearts to oppose. But when he assaults a saint, then he sits down before a city with gates and bars, and ever riseth with shame, unable to take the weakest hold, to pluck the weakest saint out of Christ's hands; but Christ brings souls out of his dominion with a high hand, in spite of all the force and fury of hell, which like Pharaoh and his host pursue them.

Use Second. This gives a reason why the devil hath so great a spite against the gospel. Why? Because this opens a magazine of arms and furniture for the soul. The word is that tower of David, 'Builded for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men,' Song 4:4. Hence the saints have ever had their armour, and the preaching of the gospel unlocks it. As gospel-light ascends, so Satan's shady kingdom of darkness vanisheth, Rev. 14:6; there one angel comes forth to preach the everlasting gospel, and another angel follows at his back, ver. 8, crying Victory, 'Babylon is fallen, is fallen.' The very first charge the gospel gave to the kingdom of darkness, shook the foundations thereof, and put the legions of hell to the run. The seventy whom Christ sent out, bring this speedy account of their ambassage, 'Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name;' and Christ answers, 'I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.' As if he had said, It is no news you tell me, I beheld Satan falling when I sent you: I knew the gospel would make work where it came: and therefore

no wonder Satan labors to dispossess the gospel, which disposseseth him; he knows that army is near lost, whose magazine is blown up. It is true indeed, under the very gospel the devil rageth more in such swinish sinners, as are given over of God to be possessed of that fiend, for rejecting of his grace; but he is cast out of others, who ‘before the loving-kindness of God to man appeared in the gospel,’ were commanded by him, ‘serving divers lusts and pleasures;’ but now by the light of the gospel they see their folly, and by the grace it brings are enabled to renounce him. This, this is that which torments the foul spirit, to see himself forsaken of his old friends and servants, and this new Lord to come and take his subjects from him: and therefore he labours either by persecution to drive the gospel away, or by policy to persuade a people to send it away from their coasts. And was he ever more likely to effect it among us? What a low esteem hath he brought the preaching of the gospel unto? the price is fallen half and half to what it was some years past, even among those that have been counted the greatest merchants upon the saints’ exchange. Some that have thought it worth crossing the seas, even to the Indies—almost as far as others fetch their gold—to enjoy the gospel, are loathe now to cross the street to hear it, at so cheap a rate; and some that come, who formerly trembled at it, make it most of their errand to mock at, or quarrel wit it. Nay, it is come to such a pass, that the Word is so heavy a charge to the squeamish stomachs of many professors, that it comes up again presently, and abundance of choler with it, against the preacher, especially if it fall foul of the sins and errors of the times, the very naming of which is enough to offend, though the nation be sinking under their weight. What reproaches are the faithful ministers of the gospel laden withal! I call heaven and earth to witness, whether ever they suffered a hotter persecution of the tongue, than in this apostatizing age. A new generation of professors are started up, that will not know them to be the ministers of Christ, though those before them (as well in grace as time, [and] more able to derive their spiritual pedigree than themselves), have to their death owned them for their spiritual fathers. And must not the ark needs shake, when they that carry it are thus struck at, both in their person and office? What are these men doing? Alas, they know not. ‘Father, forgive them.’ They are cutting off their right hand with their left; they are

making themselves and the nation naked, by despising the gospel, and those that bring it.

Use Third. Consider your deplored estate, [you] who are wholly naked and unarmed. Can you pity the beggar at your door (when you see such in a winter day, shivering with naked backs, exposed to the fury of the cold), and not pity your own far more dismal soul-nakedness, by which thou liest open to heaven's wrath and hell's malice? Shall their nakedness cover them with shame, fill them with fear of perishing, which makes them with pitiful moans knock and cry for relief, as it is reported of Russia, where their poor, through extreme necessity, have this desperate manner of begging in their streets: ‘Give me and cut me, give me and kill me.’ And canst thou let Satan come and cut thy throat in thy bed of sloth, rather than accept of clothes to cover, yea, armour to defend thee?—I mean Christ and his grace, which in the gospel is tendered to you. Do not lightly believe your own flattering hearts, if they shall tell you, You are provided of these already. I am afraid many a gaudy professor will be found as naked in regard of Christ, and truth of grace, as drunkards and swearers themselves. Such there are, who content themselves with a Christ in profession, in gifts, and in duties, but seek not a Christ in solid grace, and so perish. Those indeed are an ornament to the Christian, as the scarf and feather to the soldier, but these quench not the bullet in battle; it is Christ and his grace [that] doth that. Therefore labour to be sound rather than brave Christians. Grace embellished with gifts, is more beautiful, but these without grace are only the richer spoil for Satan.

BRANCH SECOND.

[The kind or quality of armour needful
—ARMOUR OF GOD.]

The subject of this branch is the quality or kind of that armour, the Christian is here directed to provide. It is not any trash will serve the turn; better none than not armour of proof, and none [is] such ‘but the armour of God.’ In a twofold respect it must be of God. FIRST, In institution and appointment. SECOND, In constitution.

[The armour we use against Satan
must be DIVINE IN THE INSTITUTION,
and only as God appoints.]

OBSERVE FIRST. The Christian's armour which he wears must be of divine institution and appointment. The soldier comes into the field with no arms but what his general commands. It is not left to every one's fancy to bring what weapons he please; this will breed confusion. The Christian soldier is bound up to God's order; though the army be on earth, yet the council of war sits in heaven; this duty ye shall do; these means ye shall use. And [those who] do more, or use other, than God commands, though with some seeming success against sin, shall surely be called to account for this boldness. The discipline of war among men is strict in this case. Some have suffered death by a council of war even when they have beaten the enemy, because out of their place, or beside their order. God is very precise in this point; he will say to such as invent ways to worship him of their own, coin means to mortify corruption, obtain comfort in their own mint: 'Who hath required this at your hands?' This is truly to be 'righteous over-much,' as Solomon speaks, when he will pretend to correct God's law, and add supplements of our own to his rule. Who will pay that man his wages that is not set on work by God? God tells Israel the false prophets shall do them no good, because they come not of his errand, Jer. 23:32; so neither will those ways and means help, which are not of God's appointing. God's thoughts are not as man's, nor his ways as ours, which he useth to attain his ends by. If man had been to set forth the Israelitish army, now to march out of Egypt, surely this wisdom would have directed rather to have plundered the Egyptians of their horses and arms, as more necessary for such an expedition, than to borrow their jewels and ear-rings. But God will have them come out naked and on foot, and Moses keeps close to his order; yea, when any horses were taken in battle, because God commanded that they should be houghed, they obeyed, though to their seeming disadvantage. It was God's war they waged, and therefore but reasonable they should be under his command. They encamped and marched by his order, as the ark moved or rested. They fight by his command. The number is appointed by him—the means and weapons they should use—all are prescribed by God, as in the assault of Jericho.

And what is the gospel of all this—for surely God hath an eye in that our marching to heaven, and our fighting with these cursed spirits and lusts that stand in our way—but that we should fight lawfully, using those means which we have from his mouth in his Word? This reproveth two sorts:

Reproveth First, Those that fight Satan in armour that hath no divine institution.

1. The Papist. Look into his armour, and hardly a piece will be found armour of God. They fight in the pope's armour. His authority is the shop wherein their weapons are forged. It were a kind of penance to your patience, to repeat all the several pieces of armour with which they load silly souls—too heavy indeed for the broadest shoulders among them to bear—yea, more than the wiser sort of them mean to use. Their masses, matins, vigils, pilgrimages, Lent-fasts, whippings, vows of chastity, poverty, with a world of such trash!—where is a word of God for these? Who hath required these things at their hands? A thousand woes will one day fall upon those impostors, who have stripped the people of their true armour of God, and put these reeds and bulrushes in their hands. This may justify us in the sight of God and men for our departure from them who will force us to venture the life of our souls in such paper-armour, when God hath provided better.

2. The Carnal Protestant, who fights in fleshly armour, II Cor. 10:3. The apostle speaks there of 'warring after the flesh,' that is, with weapons or means which man's carnal wisdom prompts to, and not God's commands, and [which] so are weak. How few are clad with other in the day of battle!

(1.) When Satan tempts to sin, if he hath not presently a peaceable entrance, yet the resistance commonly made is carnal; the strength carnal they rest on, their own, not God's; the motive's carnal, as the fear of man more than of God; [as to which] one saith, 'How shall I do this and sin against God?' Many in their hearts say, How shall I do this and anger man, displease my master, provoke my parents, and lose the good opinion of my minister? Herod feared John, and did many things. Had he feared God, he would have labored to have done everything. The like may be said of all other motives, which have their spring in the creature, not in God; they are armour which will not out-stand shot. If thy strength lie in a creature-lock, it may be soon cut off; if in God it will hold, as his

command: It is written. I cannot do it, but I must set my foot on the law of my Maker, or on the love of Christ. I cannot come at my lust, but I must go over my bleeding Savior, and therefore away, foul tempter, I hate thee and thy motion. This foundation is rock, and will stand; but if it be some carnal respect that balanceth thee, another more weighty may be found of the same kind, which will cast the scales another way. She that likes not the man because of his dress only, may soon be gained when he comes in another habit. Satan can change his suit, and then thy mouth will be stopped when thy carnal argument is taken off.

(2.) When the Word or conscience rebukes for sin, what is the armour that men commonly cover their guilty souls withal? Truly no other than carnal. If they cannot evade the charge that these bring, then they labor to mitigate it, by extenuating the fact. It is true, they will say, I did (I confess) commit such a fault, but I was drawn in. 'The woman gave me, and I did eat,' was Adam's fig-leaf armour. It is but once or twice, and I hope that breaks no such squares. Was this such a great business? I know jolly Christians will do as much as this comes to. I thank God, I cannot be charged with whore or thief. This is the armour that must keep off the blow. But if conscience will not be thus taken off, then they labor to divert their thoughts, by striking up the loud music of carnal delights, that the noise of one may drown the other; or with Cain, they will go from the presence of the Lord, and come no more at those ordinances which make their head ache, and hinder the rest of their raving consciences. If yet the ghost haunts them, then they labor to pacify it with some good work or other, which they set against their bad; their alms and charity in their old age, must expiate the oppression and violence of their former days; as if this little frankincense were enough to air and take away the plague of God's curse, which is in their ill-gotten goods. Thus poor creatures catch at any sorry covering, which will not so much as hide their shame, much less choke the bullet of God's wrath, when God shall fire upon them. There must be armour of God's appointing. Adam was naked for all his fig-leaves, while God taught him to make 'coats of skins,' Gen. 3:21, covertly (as some think) shadowing out Christ the true Lamb of God, whose righteousness alone was appointed by him to cover our shame, and arm our naked souls from the sight and stroke of his justice.

Reproveth Second. Those who use the armor of God, but not as God hath appointed; which appears in three sorts.

1. When a person useth a duty appointed by God, not as armor of defence, but as a cover for sin. Who would think him an enemy that wears Christ's colors in his hat, and marcheth after Christ in his exercise of all the duties of his worship? Such a one may pass all the courts of guard, without so much as being bid [to] stand. All take him for a friend. And yet some such there are, who are fighting against Christ all the while. The hypocrite is the man; he learns his postures, gets the Word, hath his tongue tipped with Scripture language, and walks in the habit of a Christian, merely on a design to drive his trade the more closely, like some highwayman in our days, who rob in the habit of soldiers, that they may be the less suspected. This is desperate wickedness indeed, to take up God's arms and use them in the devil's service; of all sinners such shall find least mercy, false friends shall speed worse than open enemies.

2. They use not the armour of God, as God hath appointed, who put a carnal confidence therein. We must not confide in the armour of God, but in the God of this armour, because all our weapons are only 'mighty through God,' II Cor. 10:4. The ark was the means of the Jews safety, but [being] carnally applauded and gloried in, hastened their overthrow: so duties and ordinances, gifts and graces in their place, are means for the soul's defence. Satan trembles as much as the Philistines at the ark, to see a soul diligent in the use of duty and exercise of grace; but when the creature confides in them, this is dangerous. As some, when they have prayed, think they please God for all day, though they take little heed to their steps. Other have so good an opinion of their faith, sincerity, knowledge, that you may as soon make them believe they are dogs, as that they may ever be taken in such error or sinful practice. Others, when assisted in duty, are prone to stroke their own head with a bene fecisti Bernarde, and so promise themselves to speed, because they have done their errand so well. What speak such passages in the hearts of men, but a carnal confidence in their armour to their ruin? Many souls, we may safely say, do not only perish praying, repenting, and believing after a sort, but they perish by their praying and repenting, &c., while they carnally trust in these. As it falls out sometimes, that the soldier in

battle loseth his life by means of his own armour, [because] it is so heavy he cannot flee with it, and so close buckled to him that he cannot get it off, to flee for his life without it. If we be saved, we must come naked to Christ for all our duties; we will not flee to Christ while confiding in them. Some are so locked into them, that they cannot come without them, and so in a day of temptation are trampled under the feet of God's wrath and Satan's fury. The poor publican throws down his arms, that is, all confidence in himself, cries for quarter at the hands of mercy, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' He comes off with his life—he went away justified; but the Pharisee, laden with his righteousness, and conceited of it, stands to it, and is lost.

3. They do not use the armour of God as such, who in the performing of divine duties, eye not God through them, and this makes them all weak and ineffectual. Then the Word is mighty, when read as the Word of God; then the gospel preached, powerful to convince the conscience, and revive the drooping spirit, when heard as the appointment of the great God, and not the exercise of a mean creature. Now it will appear in three things, whether we eye divine appointment in the means.

(1.) When we engage in a duty, and look not up to God for his blessing. Didst thou eye God's appointment in the means, thou wouldest say, Soul, if there come any good of thy present service it must drop from heaven, for it is God's appointment, not man's. And can I profit whether God will or no, or think to find, and bring away, any soul-enriching treasure from his ordinance, without his leave? Had I not best look up to him, by whose blessing I live more than by my bread?

(2.) It appears we look not at God's appointment, when we have low thoughts of the means. What is Jordan that I should wash in it? What is this preaching that I should attend on it, where I hear nothing but I knew before? what these beggarly elements of water, and bread, and wine! Are not these the reasonings of a soul that forgets who appoints them? Didst thou remember who commands, thou wouldest not question what the command is. What though it be clay, let Christ use it and it shall open the eyes, though in itself more like to put them out. Hadst thou thy eye on God, thou wouldest silence thy carnal reason with this, It is God sends me to such a

duty; whatsoever he saith unto me I will do it, though he should send me, as Christ to them, to draw wine out of pots filled with water.

(3.) When a soul leaves off a duty, because he hath not in it what he expected from it. Oh, saith the soul, I see it is vain to follow the means as I have done; still Satan foils me, I will even give over. Dost thou remember, soul, it is God's appointment? Surely then thou wouldest persevere in the midst of discouragements. He that bids thee pray without ceasing; he that bids thee hear, bids thee wait at the posts of wisdom. Thou wouldest reason thus, God hath set me on duty, and here I will stand, till God takes me off and bids me leave praying.

[The armour we use against Satan
must be divine BY CONSTITUTION.]

OBSERVE SECOND. The Christian's armour must be of God in regard of its make and constitution. My meaning is, it is not only that God must appoint the weapons and arms the Christian useth for his defence: but he must also be the efficient of them, he must work in them and for them. Prayer is an appointment of God, yet this is not armour of proof, except it be a prayer of God flowing from his Spirit, Jude 20. Hope, that is the helmet the saint by command is to wear, but this hope must be God's creature; 'who hath begotten us to a lively hope,' 1 Pet. 1:3. Faith, that is another principal piece in the Christian's furniture, but it must be faith of God's elect, Titus 1:1. He is to take righteousness and holiness for his breast-plate, but it must be true holiness: 'Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness,' Eph. 4:24. Thus you see that it is not armour as armour, but as armour of God, that makes the soul impregnable. That which is born of God overcometh the world—a faith born of God, a hope born of God. But the spurious adulterous brood of duties and graces, being begot of mortal seed, cannot be immortal.

Must the soul's armour be of God's make? Be exhorted then to look narrowly whether the armour ye wear be the workmanship of God or no. There is abundance of false ware put off now-a-days; little good armour worn by the multitude of professors. It is Satan's after-game he plays, if he cannot please the sinner with his naked state of profaneness, to put him

off with something like grace, some flighty stuff, that shall neither do him good, nor Satan hurt. Thus many [are] like children, that cry for a knife or dagger, and are pleased as well with a bone knife and wooden dagger, as with the best of all. So they have some armour, it matters not what. Pray they must, but little care how it be performed. Believe in God? yes, they hope they are not infidels. But what [the armour] is, how they came by it, or whether it will hold in an evil day, this never was put to the question in their hearts. Thus thousands perish with a vain conceit [that] they are armed against Satan, death, and judgment, when they are miserable and naked, yea, worse on it [their conceit] than those who are more naked, those I mean who have not a rag of civility to hide their shame from the world's eye; and that in a double respect,

First. It is harder to work on such a soul savingly, because he hath a form, though not the power, and this affords him a plea. A soul purely naked, nothing like the wedding garment on, he is speechless. The drunkard hath nothing to say for himself, when you ask him why he lives so swinishly; you may come up to him, and get within him, and turn the very mouth of his conscience upon him, which will shoot into him. But come to deal with one who prays and hears, one that is a pretender to faith and hope in God; here is a man in glittering armour, he hath his weapon in his hand, with which he will keep the preacher, and the word he chargeth him with, at arm's length. Who can say I am not a saint? What duty do I neglect? Here is a breastwork he lies under, which makes him not so fair a mark either to the observation or reproof of another; his chief defect being within, where man's eye comes not. Again, it is harder to work on him, because he hath been tampered with already, and miscarried in the essay. How comes such a one to be acquainted with such duties—to make such a profession? Was it ever thus? No, the word hath been at work upon him, his conscience hath scared him from his trade of wickedness, into a form of profession, but, taking in short of Christ, for want of a thorough change, it is harder to remove him than the other. He is like a lock whose wards have been troubled; which makes it harder to turn the key than if never pottered with. It is better dealing with a wild ragged colt, never backed, than one that in breaking hath took a wrong stroke; [with] a bone quite out of joint than false set. In a word, such a one hath more to deny than a

profane person. The one hath but his lusts, his whores, his swill, and dross, but the other hath his duties, his seeming graces. O how hard it is to persuade such a one to light, and hold Christ's stirrup, while he and his duties are made Christ's footstool.

Second. Such an one is in deepest condemnation. None sink so far into hell as those that come nearest heaven, because they fall from the greatest height. As it aggravates the torments of the damned souls in this respect above devils, [because] they had a cord of mercy thrown out to them, which devils had not so, by how much God by his Spirit waits on, pleads with, and by both gains on [one] soul more than others, by so much such a one, if he perish, will find hell the hotter. These add to his sin, and the remembrance of his sin in hell thus accented will add to his torment. None will have such a sad parting from Christ as those who went half-way with him and then left him.

Therefore, I beseech you, look to your armour. David would not fight in armour he had not tried, though it was a king's. Perhaps some thought him too nice. What! is not the king's armour good enough for David? Thus many will say, Art thou so curious and precise? Such a great man doth thus and thus, and hopes to come to heaven at last, and darest not thou venture thy soul in this armour? No, Christian, follow not the example of the greatest on earth; it is thy own soul thou venturtest in battle, therefore thou canst not be too choice of thy armour. Bring thy heart to the Word, as the only touch-stone of thy grace and furniture; the Word, I told you, is the tower of David, from whence thy armour must be fetched; if thou canst find this tower stamp on it, then it is of God, else, not. Try it therefore by this one scripture-stamp. Those weapons are mighty which God gives his saints to fight his battles withal. 'For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God,' II Cor. 10:4. The sword of the Spirit hath its point and edge, whereby it makes its way into the heart and conscience, through the impenitency of the one and stupidity of the other (wherewith Satan, as with buff and coat of mail, arms the sinner against God) and there cuts and slashes, kills and mortifies lust in its own castle, where Satan thinks himself impregnable. The breastplate which is of God, doth not bend and break at every pat of temptation, but is of such a divine temperament, that it repels Satan's motions with scorn on Satan's teeth.

Should such an one as I sin, as Nehemiah in another case; and such are all the rest.

Now try whether your weapons be mighty or weak; what can you do or suffer more for God than an hypocrite that is clad in fleshly armour? I will tell you what the world saith, and if you be Christians, clear yourselves, and wipe off that dirt which they throw upon your glittering armour. They say, These professors indeed have God more in their talk than we; but when they come down into their shops, relations and worldly employment, then the best of them all is but like one of us. They can throw the tables of God's commandments out of their hands as well as we; [can] come from a sermon, and be as covetous and gripping, as peevish and passionate, as the worst. They show as little love to Christ as others, when it is matter of cost, as to relieve a poor saint or maintain the gospel; you may get more from a stranger, an enemy, than from a professing brother. O Christians, either vindicate the name of Christ, whose ensign you seem to march after, or throw away your seeming armour, by which you have drawn the eyes of the world upon you. If you will not, Christ himself will cashier you, and that with shame enough ere long. Never call that the armour of God which defends thee not against the power of Satan.

Take, therefore, the several pieces of your armour and try them, as the soldier before he fights will set his helmet or head-piece as a mark, at which he lets fly a brace of bullets, and as he finds them so will wear them or leave them. But be sure thou shootest scripture-bullets. Thou boastest of a breast-plate of righteousness. Ask thy soul, Didst thou ever in thy life perform a duty to please God, and not to accommodate thyself? Thou hast prayed often against thy sin, a great noise of the pieces have been heard coming from thee by others, as if there were some hot fight between thee and thy corruption, but canst thou indeed show one sin thou hast slain by all thy praying? Joseph was alive, though his coat was brought bloody to Jacob; and so may thy sin be, for all thy mortified look in duty, and outcry thou makest against them. If thou wouldst thus try every piece, thy credulous heart would not so easily be cheated with Satan's false ware.

Objection. But is all armour that is of God thus mighty? We read of weak grace, little faith; how can this then be a trial of our armour whether of God or not?

Answer. I answer, the weakness of grace is in respect of stronger grace, but the weak grace is strong and mighty in comparison of counterfeit grace. Now, I do not bid thee try the truth of thy grace by such a power as is peculiar to stronger grace, but by that power which will distinguish it from false. True grace, when weakest, is stronger than false when strongest. There is a principle of divine life in it which the other hath not. Now life, as it gives excellency—a flea or a fly by reason of its life, is more excellent than the sun in all his glory—so it give strength. The slow motion of a living man, though so feeble that he cannot go a furlong in a single day, yet coming from life, imports more strength than is in a ship, which though it sails swiftly, hath its motion from without. Thus possibly an hypocrite may exceed the true Christian in the bulk and outside of a duty, yet because his strength is not from life, but from some wind and tide abroad that carries him, and the Christian's is from an inward principle, therefore the Christian's weakness is stronger than the hypocrite in his greatest enlargements. I shall name but two acts of grace whereby the Christian, when weakest, exceeds the hypocrite in all his best array. You will say, then grace is a weak stay indeed, when the Christian is persuaded to commit a sin, a great sin, such a one as possibly a carnal person would not have it said of him for a great matter. So low may the tide of grace fall, yet true grace at such an ebb will appear of greater strength and force than the other.

1. This principle of grace will never leave till the soul weeps bitterly with Peter, that it hath offended so good a God. Speak, O ye hypocrites can ye show one tear that ever you shed in earnest for a wrong done to God? Possibly you may weep to see the bed of sorrow which your sins are making for you in hell, but ye never loved God so well as to mourn for the injury ye have done the name of God. It is a good gloss Augustine hath upon Esau's tears Heb. 12:16, 17. —Flevet quod perdidit, non quod vendidit—he wept that he lost the blessing, not that he sold it. Thus we see an excellency of the saint's sorrow above the hypocrite's. The Christian by his sorrow shows himself a conqueror of that sin which even now overcame him; while the hypocrite by his pride shows himself a slave to a worse lust than that he resists. While the Christian commits a sin he hates; whereas the other loves it while he forbears it.

2. When true grace is under the foot of a temptation, yet then it will stir up in the heart a vehement desire of revenge. [It is] like a prisoner in his enemies' hand, who is thinking and plotting how to get out, and what he will do when out, waiting and longing every minute for his delivery, that he again may take up arms. 'O Lord God, remember me,' saith Samson, 'I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes. Judges 16:28. Thus prays the gracious soul, that God would but spare him a little, and strengthen him but once before he dies, that he may be avenged on his pride, unbelief, and those sins whereby he hath most dishonoured God. But a false heart is so far from studying revenge, that he rather swells like the sea against the law which banks his lust in, and is angry with God who hath made sin such a leap, that he must hazard his soul if he will have it.

BRANCH THIRD.

[The entireness of our armour.
It must be THE WHOLE armour of God.]

In this branch observe the quantity or entireness of the saints' furniture or armour, 'the whole armour of God.' The Christian's armour must be complete, and that in a threefold respect.

FIRST. He must be armed in every part cap-à-pie, soul and body, the powers of the one, and the senses of the other, not any part left naked. A dart may fly in at a little hole, like that which brought a message of death to Ahab, through the joints of his harness, and Satan is such an archer as can shoot at a penny breadth. If all the man be armed, and only the eye left without, Satan can soon shoot his fireballs of lust in at that loophole, which shall set the whole house on flame. Eve looked but on the tree, and a poisonous dart struck her to the heart. If the eye be shut, and the ear be open to corrupt communication, Satan will soon wriggle in at this hole. If all the outward senses [of a man] be guarded, and the heart not kept with all diligence, he will soon by his own thoughts be betrayed into Satan's hands. Our enemies are on every side, and so must our armour be, 'on the right hand and on the left,' II Cor. 6:7. The apostle calls sin ἀμαρτίαν εὐπερίστατον, an enemy that surrounds

us, Heb. 12:1. If there be any part of the line unguarded or weakly provided, there Satan falls on; [as] we see the enemy often enter the city at one side, while he is beat back on the other, for want of care to keep the whole line. Satan divides his temptations into several squadrons, one he employs to assault here, another to storm there. We read of fleshly wickedness and spiritual wickedness; while thou repellest Satan tempting thee to fleshly wickedness, he may be entering thy city at the other gate of spiritual wickedness. Perhaps thou hast kept thy integrity in the practical part of thy life; but what armour hast thou to defend thy head, thy judgment? If he surprise thee here, corrupting that with some error, then thou wilt not long hold out in thy practice. He that could not get thee to profane the Sabbath among sensualists and atheists, will under the disguise of such a corrupt principle as Christian liberty prevail. Thus we see what need we have of universal armour, in regard of every part.

SECOND. The Christian must be in complete armour, in regard of the several pieces and weapons, that make up the whole armour of God. Indeed there is a concatenation of graces; they hang together like links in a chain, stones in an arch, members in the body. Prick one vein, and the blood of the whole body may run out at the sluice; neglect one duty, and no other will do us as good.

The apostle Peter, in his second epistle, ch. 1:5-7, presseth the Christians to a joint endeavour to increase the whole body of grace; indeed, that is health when the whole body thrives. 'Add,' saith he, 'to your faith virtue.' Faith is the file-leading grace. Well, hast thou faith, add virtue. True faith is of a working stirring nature, without good works it is dead or dying. Fides pinguescit operibus—'faith fattens or becomes strong on works,' Luther. It is kept in plight and heart by a holy life, as the flesh which plasters over the frame of man's body, though it receives its heat from the vitals within, yet helps to preserve the very life of those vitals. Thus good works and gracious actions have their life from faith, [and] yet are necessary helps to preserve the life of faith; thus we see sometimes the child nursing the parents that bare it, and therein [he] performs but his duty.

Thou are fruitful in good works, yet thou art not out of the devil's shoot, except thou addest to thy virtue, knowledge. This is the candle without which faith

cannot see to do its work. Art thou going to give an alms? If it be not oculata charitas, if charity hath not this eye of knowledge to direct when, how, what, and to whom thou art to give, thou mayest at once wrong God, the person thou relievest, and thyself. Art thou humbling thyself for thy sin? For want of knowledge in the tenor of the gospel, Satan may play upon thy ignorance, and either persuade thee thou art not humbled enough, when, God knows, thou art almost quackled¹ with thy tears, and even carried down by the impetuous torrent of thy sorrow into despair, or else showing thee thy blubbered face, may flatter thee into a carnal confidence of thy humiliation.

Perhaps thou seest the name of God dishonoured in the place where thou livest, and thy spirit is stirred within thee, as Paul's at Athens; now if knowledge sits not in the saddle to rein and bridle in thy zeal, thou wilt be soon carried over hedge and ditch, till thou fallest into some precipice or other by thy irregular acting. Neither is knowledge enough, except thou beest armed with temperance, which here, I conceive, is that grace, whereby the Christian, as master of his own house, so orders his affections, like servants, to reason and faith, that they do not regularly move, or inordinately lash out into desires of, cares for, or joy in the creature comforts of this life, without which Satan will be too hard for thee. The historian tells us, that in one of the famous battles between the English and French, that which lost the French the day was a shower of English arrows, which did so gall their horse, as put the whole army into disorder, [for] their horse knowing no ranks, did tread down their own men. The affections are but as the horse to the rider, on which knowledge should be mounted; if Satan's barbed arrows light on them, so that thy desires of the creature prove unruly, and justle with thy desires of Christ, [if] thy care to keep thy credit or estate put thy care to keep a good conscience to disorder, and thy carnal joy in wife and child trample down or get before thy joy in the Lord, judge on which side victory is like to fall.

Well, suppose thou marchest provided thus far in goodly array towards heaven, while thou art swimming in prosperity, must thou not also prepare for foul

way and weather—I mean in an afflicted estate? Satan will line the hedges with a thousand temptations, when thou comest into the narrow lanes of adversity, where thou canst not run from this sort of temptation, as in the campaign of prosperity. Possibly, thou that didst escape the snare of an alluring world, mayest be dismounted by the same when it frowns; though temperance kept thee from being drunk with sweet wines of those pleasures, yet for want of patience thou mayest be drunk with the wine of astonishment, which is in affliction's hands; therefore, saith the apostle, 'to temperance, add patience.' Either possess thyself in patience, or else some raving devil of discontent will possess thee. An impatient soul in affliction is a bedlam in chains, yea, too like the devil in his chains, [who] rageth against God, while he is fettered by him.

Well, hast thou patience?—an excellent grace indeed, but not enough. Thou must be a pious man as well as patient. Therefore, saith the apostle, 'to patience, add godliness.' There is an atheistical patience, and there is a godly Christian patience. Satan numbs the conscience of one, and [so] no wonder he complains not, that feels not; but the Spirit of Christ sweetly calms the other, not by taking away the sense of pain, but by overcoming it with the sense of his love. Now godliness comprehends the whole worship of God, inward and outward. If thou beest never so exact in thy morals, and not a worshipper of God, then thou art an atheist. If thou dost worship God, and that devoutly, but not by Scripture rule, thou art but an idolater. If according to the rule, but not in spirit and truth, then thou art an hypocrite, and so fallest into the devil's mouth. Or if thou dost give God one piece of his worship, and deniest another, still Satan comes to his market. 'He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination,' Prov. 28:9.

Yet, Christian, all thy armour is not on. Thy godliness indeed would suffice, wert thou to live in a world by thyself, or hadst nothing to do but immediate communion with God. But, Christian, thou must not always dwell on this mount of immediate worship, and [since] when thou descendest, thou hast many brethren and servants of thy Father, who live with thee in the same family, thou must deport thyself becomingly, or else thy Father will be angry. Thou hast brethren, heirs of the same promise with thee, therefore you must add to godliness 'brotherly-kindness.' If Satan

1. Quackle is an old word meaning to choke or suffocate.—ED.

can set you at odds, he gives a deep wound to your godliness. You will hardly join hearts in a duty, that cannot join hands in love. In the family there are not only brethren, but servants, a multitude of profane carnal ones, who though they never had the names of sons and daughters, yet retain to God's family. And thy heavenly Father will have thee walk unblameably, yea winningly, to those that are without, which thou mayest do, thou must add to brotherly-kindness, 'charity;' by which grace thou shalt be willing to do good to the worst of men. When they curse thee, thou must pray for them, yea, pray for no less than a Christ, a heaven, for them. 'Father, forgive them,' said Christ, while they were raking in his side for his heart-blood. And truly, I am persuaded this last piece of armour hath given Satan great advantage in these our times, we are so afraid our charity should be too broad. Whereas in this sense, if it be not wide as the world, it is too strait for the command which bids us 'do good to all.' May not we ministers be charged with the want of this, when the strain of our preaching is solely directed to the saints, and no pains taken in rescuing poor captive souls, yet uncalled, out of the devil's clutches? He may haul them to hell without disturbance, while we are comforting the saints, and preaching their privileges; but in the meantime, let the ignorant be ignorant still, and the profane profane still, for want of a compassionate charity to their souls, which would excite us to the reproofing and exhorting of them, that they might also be brought into the way of life, as well as the saints encouraged, who are walking therein. We are stewards to provide bread for the Lord's house. The greatest part of our hearers cannot, must not, have the children's bread, and shall we therefore give them no portion at all? Christ's charity pitied the multitude, to whom in his public preaching he made special application, as in that famous sermon, most part of which is spent in rousing up the sleepy consciences of the hypocritical Pharisees, by those thunderclaps of woes and curses so often denounced against them, Matt. 23. Again, how great advantage hath Satan from the want of this charity in our families? Is it not observed how little care is taken by professing governors of such societies for the instructing their youth? Nay, it is a principle which some have drunk in, that it is not their duty. O where is their charity in the meantime, when they can see Satan come within their own walls, and let them

drive a child, a servant, in their ignorance and profaneness, to hell, and not so much as sally out upon this enemy by a word of reproof or instruction, to rescue these silly souls out of the murderer's hand? We must leave them to their liberty forsooth, and that is as fair play as we can give the devil. Give but corrupt nature enough of this rope, and it will soon strangle the very principles of God and religion in their tender years.

THIRD. The entireness of the saint's armour may be taken not only for every part and piece of the saint's furniture, but for the completeness and perfection of every piece. As the Christian is to endeavour after every grace, so is he to press after the advance and increase of every grace, even to perfection itself. As he is to add to his faith virtue, so he is to add faith to faith—he is ever to be completing of his grace. It is that which is frequently pressed upon believers. 'Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect,' Matt. 5:48. 'And purify yourselves, as God is pure.' There we have an exact copy set, not as if we could equalize that purity and perfection which is in God, but to make us strive the more, when we shall see how infinitely short we fall of our copy, when we write the fairest hand; so 'Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing,' James 1:3, 4, or [be] wanting in nothing. Thou who makest a hard shift to carry a little burden with thy little patience, wouldst sink under a greater, therefore there is need that patience should be ever perfecting, lest at last we meet a burden too heavy for our weak shoulders. Take a few reasons why the Christian should thus be completing of his grace.

First. Because grace is subject to decays, and therefore ever needs completing. [It is] as in an army, especially [one] which often engageth in battle; their arms are battered and broken, one man hath his helmet bent, another his sword gaped, a third his pistol unfix'd, and therefore recruits are ever necessary. In one temptation the Christian hath his helmet of hope beaten off his head, in another his patience hard put to it. The Christian had need have an armourer's shop at hand to make up his loss, and that speedily, for Satan is most like to fall on when the Christian is least prepared to receive the charge. 'Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to sift you;' he knew they were at that time weakly provided—(Christ their captain now to be taken from the head of their troop; discontents among themselves, striving who

should be greatest; and their recruits of stronger grace, which the Spirit was to bring, not yet come). Now he hath a design to surprise them; and therefore Christ, carefully to prevent him, promiseth speedily to despatch his Spirit for their supply, Acts 1:4, and in the meantime sends them to Jerusalem, to stand as it were in a body in their joint supplications upon their guard, while he comes to their relief; showing us in the weakness of our grace what to do, and whither to go for supply.

Second. Because Satan is completing his skill and wrath. It is not for nought that he is called the old serpent—subtle by nature, but more by experience, wrathful by nature, yet every day more and more enraged; like a bull, the longer he is baited, the more fury he shows. And therefore we who are to grapple with him, now his time is so short, had need come well appointed into the field.

Third. It is the end of all God's dispensations, to complete his saints in their graces and comforts. Wherefore doth he lop and prune by afflictions, but to purge, that they may bring forth more fruit, that is, fuller and fairer? John 15:2. Tribulation works patience, Rom. 5:3; it is God's appointment for that end. It works, that is, it increaseth the saints. Patience enrageth indeed the wicked, but meekens the saints. It is his design in the gospel; he preacheth to carry on his saints from 'faith to faith,' Rom. 1:17, and accordingly he hath furnished his church with instruments, and those with gifts, 'For the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ,' Eph. 4:12. Wherefore doth the scaffold stand, and the workman on it, if the building go not up? For us not to advance under such means is to make void the counsel of God. Therefore the apostle blames the Christian Jews for their non-proficiency in the school of Christ: 'When for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God,' Heb. 5:12.

[Use and Application.]

Use. O how few are there endeavour thus to promote in their spiritual state, and labour to perfect what is yet lacking in their knowledge, patience, and the rest.

1. Tell some of adding faith to faith, one degree of grace to another, and you shall find they have more

mind to join house to house, and lay field to field. Their souls are athirst, ever gaping for more. But of what? not of Christ or of heaven. It is earth. Earth they never think they have enough of, till death comes and stops their mouth with a shovel-full, digged out of their own grave. What a tormenting life must they needs have, who are always crying for more weight, and yet cannot press their covetous desires to death? O sirs, the only way—if men would believe it—to quench this thirst to the creature, were to enkindle another after Christ and heaven. Get but a large heart vehemently thirsting after these, and the other will die alone, as the feverish thirst doth when nature comes to her temper.

2. Others labour not thus to perfect grace, because they have a conceit they are perfect already, and upon this fancy throw away praying, hearing, and all other ordinances, as strings for those babes in grace to be carried by, who are not arrived to their high attainments. O what fools does pride make men! Truly heaven were no such desirable place, if we should be no more perfect than thus—a sort of people that are too high for this world, and too low for another. The way by which God cures this frenzy of pride, we have in these days seen to be something like that of Nebuchadnezzar; to give them the heart of a beast, I mean, for a time, to suffer them to fall into beastly practices, by which he shows them how far they are from that perfection they dreamed of so vainly.

3. Others who have true grace, and desire the advancement of it, yet are discouraged in their endeavour for more, from too deep a sense of their present penury. Bid some such labour to get more power over corruption, more faith on, and love to God, that they may be able to do the will of God cheerfully, and suffer it in the greatest afflictions patiently, yea, thankfully, and they will never believe, that they whose faith is so weak, love so chill, and stock so little in hand, should ever attain to anything like such a pitch. You may as well persuade a beggar with one poor penny in his purse, that if he shall go and trade with that, he shall come to be lord-Mayor of London before he die. But why, poor hearts, should you thus despise the day of small things? Do you not see a little grain of mustard-seed spread into a tree, and weak grace compared to it, for its growth at last as well as littleness at first? Darest thou say thou hast no grace at all? If thou hast but any, though the least that

ever any had to begin with, I dare tell thee, that he hath done more for thee in that, than he should in making that which is now so weak, as perfect as the saint's grace is now in heaven. (1.) He hath done more, considering it as an act of power. There is a greater gulf between no grace and grace, than between weak grace and strong, between a chaos and nothing, than between a chaos and this beautiful frame of heaven and earth. The first day's work of both creations is the greatest. (2.) Consider it as an act of grace. It is greater mercy to give the first grace of conversion, than to crown that with glory. It is more grace and condescension in a prince to marry a poor damsel, than having married her, to clothe her like a princess; he was free to do the first or not, but his relation to her pleads strongly for the other. God might have chosen whether he would have given thee grace or no, but having done this, thy relation to him, and his covenant also, do oblige him to add more and more, till he hath fitted thee as a bride for himself in glory.

BRANCH FOURTH.

[The use of our spiritual armour
—PUT ON the whole armour of God.]

The fourth and last branch in the saints' furniture is, the use they are to make thereof², 'put on the whole armour of God.' Briefly, what is this duty, put on? These being saints, many of them at least, whom he writes to, it is not only putting on by conversation, what some of them might not yet have, but also, he means they should exercise what they have. It is one thing to have armour in the house, and another thing to have it buckled on; to have grace in the principle, and grace in the act. So that our instruction will be,

[Our armour or grace must be
kept in exercise.]

DOCTRINE. It is not enough to have grace, but this grace must be kept in exercise. The Christian's armour is made to be worn; no laying down, or putting

off our armour, till we have done our warfare, and finished our course. Our armour and our garment of flesh go off together; then, indeed, will be no need of watch and ward; shield or helmet. Those military duties and field-graces—as I may call faith, hope, and the rest—shall be honourably discharged. In heaven we shall appear, not in armour, but in robes of glory. But here these are to be worn night and day; we must walk, work, and sleep in them, or else we are not true soldiers of Christ. This Paul professeth to endeavour. 'Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men,' Acts 24:16. Here we have this holy man at his arms, training and exercising himself in his postures, like some soldier by himself handling his pike, and inuring himself before the battle. Now the reason of this is,

First. Christ commands us to have our armour on, our grace in exercise. 'Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning,' Luke 12:35. Christ speaks either in a martial phrase, as to soldiers, or in a domestic, as to servants. If as to soldiers, then let your loins be girded and your lights burning, that is, we should be ready for a march, having our armour on—for the belt goes over all—and our match lighted, ready to give fire at the first alarm of temptation. If as to servants, which seems more natural, then he bids us, as our master that is gone abroad, not through sloth or sleep [to] put off our clothes, and put out our lights; but [to] stand ready to open when he shall come, though at midnight. It is not fit the Master should stand at the door knocking, and the servant within sleeping. Indeed there is no duty the Christian hath in charge, but implies this daily exercise: 'pray' he must—but how?—'without ceasing;' 'rejoice'—but when?—'evermore;' 'give thanks' —for what? 'in everything,' I Thes. 5:16-18. The shield of faith, and helmet of hope, we must hold them to the end, I Pet. 1:13. The sum of all which is, that we should walk in the constant exercise of these duties and graces. Where the soldier is placed, there he stands, and must neither stir nor sleep till he be brought off. When Christ comes, that soul shall only have his blessing whom he finds so doing.

Second. Satan's advantage is great when grace is not in exercise. When the devil found Christ so ready to receive his charge, and repel his temptation, he soon had enough. It is sad 'he departed for a season,' Luke 4:13; as if in his shameful retreat he had com-

2. ἐνδοσασύθε τὴν πανοπλίαν τοῦ θεοῦ.

forted himself with hopes of surprising Christ unawares, at another season more advantageous to his design; and we find him coming again, in the most likely time indeed to have attained his end, had his enemy been man, and not God. Now if this bold fiend did thus watch and observe Christ from time to time, doth it not behove thee to look about thee, lest he take thy grace at one time or other napping? what he hath missed now by thy watchfulness, he may gain anon by thy negligence. Indeed he hopes thou wilt be tired out with continual duty. Surely, saith Satan, when he sees the Christian up and fervent in duty, this will not hold long. When he finds him tender of conscience, and scrupulous of occasion to sin, [he saith,] This is but for a while, ere long I shall have him unbend his bow, and unbuckle his armour, and then have at him. Satan knows what orders thou keepest in thy house and closet, and though he hath not a key to thy heart, yet he can stand in the next room to it, and lightly hear what is whispered there. He hunts the Christian by the scent of his own feet, and if once he doth but smell which way thy heart inclines, he knows how to take the hint; if but one door be unbolted, one work unmanned, one grace off its carriage, here is advantage enough.

Third. Because it is so awky³ a business, and hard a work, to recover the activity once lost, and to revive a duty in disuse. ‘I have put off my coat,’ saith the spouse, Song 5:3. She had given way to a lazy temper, was laid upon her bed of sloth, and how hard is it to raise her! Her Beloved is at the door, beseeching her by all the names of love which might bring her to remembrance the near relation between them; [the crieth], ‘My sister, my love, my dove, open to me,’ and yet she riseth not. He tells her ‘his locks are filled with the drops of the night,’ yet she stirs not. What is the matter? Her coat was off, and she is loath to put it on. She had given way to her sloth, and now she knows not how to shake it off; she could have been glad to have her Beloved’s company, if himself would have opened the door; and he desired as much hers, if she would rise to let him in, and upon these terms they part. The longer a soul hath neglected a duty, the more ado there is to get it taken up; partly, through

shame, the soul having played the truant, now knows not how to look God in the face; and partly, from the difficulty of the work, being double to what another finds that walks in the exercise of his grace. Here is all out of order. It requires more time and pains for him to tune his instrument, than for another to play the lesson. He goes to duty as to a new work, as a scholar that hath not looked on his book some while; his lesson is almost out of his head, whereas another that was even now but conning it over, hath it⁴ [at his finger ends]. Perhaps it is an affliction thou art called to bear, and thy patience [is] unexercised. Little or no thoughts thou hast had for such a time—while thou wert frisking in a full pasture—and now thou kickest and flingest, even as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, Jer. 31:18; whereas another goes meekly and patiently under the like cross, because he had been stirring up his patience, and fitting the yoke to his neck. You know what a confusion there is in a town at some sudden alarm in the dead of the night, the enemy at the gates, and they asleep within. O what a cry is there heard! One wants his clothes, another his sword, a third knows not what to do for powder. Thus in a fright they run up and down, which would not be if the enemy did find them upon their guard, orderly waiting for his approach. Such a hubbub there is in a soul that keeps not his armour on; this piece and that will be to seek when he should use it.

Fourth. We must keep grace in exercise in respect of others our fellow-soldiers. Paul had this in his eye when he was exercising himself to keep a good conscience, that he might not be a scandal to others. The cowardice of one may make others run. The ignorance of one soldier that hath not skill to handle his arms, may do mischief to his fellow-soldiers about him. Some have shot their friends for their enemies. The unwise walking of one professor makes many others fare the worse. But say thou dost not fall so far as to become a scandal, yet thou canst not be so helpful to thy fellow-brethren as thou shouldst. God commanded the Reubenites and Gadites to go before their brethren ready armed, until the land was conquered. Thus, Christian, thou art to be helpful to thy fellow-brethren, who have not, it may be, that settlement of peace in their spirit as thyself, not that mea-

3. Awky conveys the meaning of being odd or out of order.

4. Ad unguem.

sure of grace or comfort. Thou art to help such weak ones, and go before them, as it were, armed for their defence; now if thy grace be not exercised, thou art so far unserviceable to thy weak brother. Perhaps thou art a master, or a parent, who hast a family under thy wing. They fare as thou thrivest; if thy heart be in a holy frame, they fare the better in the duties thou performest; if thy heart be dead and down, they are losers by the hand. So that as the nurse eats the more for the babe's sake she suckles, so shouldst thou for their sake who are under thy tuition, be more careful to exercise thy own grace, and cherish it.

Objection. O but, may some say, this is hard work indeed, our armour never off, our grace always in exercise. Did God ever mean religion should be such a toilsome business as this world make it?

Answer First. Thou speakest like one of the foolish world, and shovest thyself a mere stranger to the Christian's life that speakest thus. A burden to exercise grace! Why, it is no burden to exercise the acts of nature, to eat, to drink, to walk, all are delightful to us in our right temper. [But] if any of these be otherwise, nature is oppressed, as, if stuffed, then [it is] difficult to breathe; if sick, then the meat [is] offensive we eat. So take a saint in his right temper, [and] it is his joy to be employed in the exercise of his grace in this or that duty: 'I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord,' Ps. 122:1. His heart leaped at the motion. When any occasion diverts him from communion with God, though he likes it never so well, yet it is unwelcome and unpleasing to him. As [for] you, who are used to be in your shops from morning to night, how tedious is it to be abroad some days, though among good friends, because you are not where your work and calling lies! A Christian in duty is one in his calling—as it were in his shop, where he should be, and therefore far from being tedious. Religion is [so] burdensome to none, as to those who are infrequent in the exercise of it. Use makes heavy things light. We hardly feel the weight of our clothes, because fitted to us, and worn daily by us, whereas the same weight on our shoulder troubles us. Thus the grievousness of religious duties to carnal ones, is taken away in the saints, partly by the fitness of them to the saints' principles, as also by their daily exercise in them. The disciples, when newly entered into the ways of Christ, could not pray much or fast long; the bottles were new,

and that wine too strong, but by the time they had walked a few years, they grew mighty in both. Dost thou complain that [the] heaven-way is rugged? Be the oftener walking in it, and that will make it smooth.

Answer Second. Were this constant exercise of grace more troublesome to the flesh, which is the only complainer, the sweet advantage that accrues by this to the Christian, will abundantly recompense all his labour and pains.

1. The exercise of thy grace will increase thy grace. 'The hand of the diligent maketh rich.' The provident man counts that lost which might have been got; not only when his money is stole out of his chest, but when it lies there unimproved. Such a commodity, saith the tradesman, if I had bought with that money in my bags, would have brought me in so much gain, which is now lost. So the Christian may say, My dawning knowledge, had I followed on to know the Lord, might have spread to broad day. 'I have more understanding,' saith David, 'than all my teachers.' How came he by it? He will tell you in the next words—'for thy testimonies are my meditation,' Ps. 119:99. He was more in the exercise of duty and grace. The best wits are not always the greatest scholars, because their study is not suitable to their parts; neither always proves he the richest man that sets up with the greatest stock. A little grace well husbanded by daily exercise will increase, when greater [grace] neglected shall decay.

2. As exercise increaseth, so it evidenceth grace. Would a man know whether he be lame or no, let him rise; he will sooner be satisfied by one turn in a room, than by a long dispute, and he sitting still. Wouldst thou know whether thou lovest God? Be frequent in exhorting acts of love; the more the fire is blown up, the sooner it is seen, and so of all other graces. Sometimes the soul is questioning whether it hath any patience, any faith, till God comes and puts him into an afflicted estate, where he must either exercise this grace or perish. Then it [the soul] appears like one that thinks he cannot swim, yet being thrown into the river, then uniting all his strength, he makes a shift to swim to land, and sees what he can do. How oft have we heard Christians say, I thought I could never have endured such a pain, trusted God in such a strait? But now God hath taught me what he can do for me, what he hath wrought in me. And this thou mightest have known before, if thou wouldst have oftener

stirred up and exercised thy grace.

3. Exercise of grace doth invite God to communicate himself to such a soul. God sets the Christian at work, and then meets him in it. Up and doing, and the Lord be with you. He sets a soul reading as the eunuch, and then joins to his chariot a praying, and then comes the messenger from heaven—‘O Daniel, greatly beloved.’ The spouse, who lost her beloved on her bed, finds him as she comes from the sermon. ‘It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth,’ Song 3:4.

[Use and Application.]

Use First. This falls heavy on their heads, who are so far from exercising grace, that they walk in the exercise of their lusts. Their hearts are like a glass house, the fire is never out, the shop-windows never shut, they are always at work, hammering some wicked project or other upon the anvil of their hearts. There are some who give full scope to their lusts; when their wicked hearts will, they shall have; they cocker⁵ their lusts as some their children, [and] deny them nothing; as it is recorded of David to Adonijah, [they] do not so much as say to their souls, Why doest thou so? why art thou so proud, so covetous, profane? They spend their days in making provision for these guests; as at some inns, the house never cools, but as one guest goes out another comes in—as one lust is served, another is calling for attendance; as some exercise grace more than others, so there are greater traders in sin, that set more at work than others, and return more wrath in a day than others in a month. Happy are such, in comparison of these, who are chained up by God's restraint upon their outward man or inward, that they cannot drive on so furiously as those who, by health of body, power and greatness in place, riches and treasures in their coffers, numbness and dedolency⁶ in their consciences, are hurried on to fill up the measure of their sins. We read of the Assyrian, that he ‘enlarged his heart as hell,’ stretching out his

desires as men do their bags that are thracked⁷ full with money to hold more, Hab. 2:5. Thus the adulterer, as if his body were not quick enough to execute the commands of his lust, stirs it up by sending forth his amorous glances, which come home laden with adultery, blows up his fire with unchaste sonnets and belly-cheer, proper fuel for the devil's kitchen; and the malicious man, who that he may lose no time from his lust, is a tearing his neighbour in pieces as he lies on his bed, [and] cannot sleep unless some such bloody sacrifice be offered to his ravening lust. O how may this shame the saints! How oft is your zeal so hot that you cannot sleep till your hearts have been in heaven, as you are on your beds, and there pacified with the sight of your dear Saviour, and some embraces of love from him!

Use Second. It reproves those who flout and mock at the saints, while exercising their graces. None jeered as the saint in his calling. Men may work in their shops, and every one follows his calling as diligently as they please; and no wonder made of this by those that pass by in the streets; but let the Christian be seen at work for God, in the exercise of any duty or grace, and he is hooted at, despised, yea, hated. Few so bad indeed, but seem to like religion in the notion; they commend a sermon of holiness like a discourse of God or Christ in the pulpit, but when these are really set before their eyes, as they sparkle in a saint's conversation, they are very contemptible and hateful to them. This living and walking holiness bites, and though they like the preacher's art in painting forth the same in his discourse, yet now they run from them, and spit at them. This exercise of grace offends the profane heart, and stirs up the enmity that lies within; as Michal, she could not but flout David to see him dancing before the ark. He that commanded the preacher for making a learned discourse of zeal, will rail on a saint expressing an act of zeal in his place and calling; now grace comes too near him. A naughty heart must stand some distance from holiness, that the beams thereof may not beat too strongly on his conscience, and so he likes it. Thus the Pharisees the prophets of old; these were holy men in their account, and they can lavish out their money on their tombs, in honour of them; but Christ, who

5. Cocker means to coddle or pamper; indulge.—SDB

6. Dedolency, absence of, or want of compunction.

7. To Thrack means generally to load or burden.

was more worth than all of them, he is scorned and hated. What is the mystery of this? The reason was, these prophets are off the stage, and Christ on. *Pascitur in vivis livor, post fata quiescit*—envy feeds on the living, but after death it ceases.

Use Third. Try by this whether you have grace or no. Dost thou walk in the exercise of thy grace? He that hath clothes, surely will wear them, and not be seen naked. Men talk of their faith, repentance, love to God; these are precious graces, but why do they not let us see these walking abroad in their daily conversation? Surely if such guests were in thy soul, they would look out sometimes at the window, and be seen abroad in this duty and that holy action. Grace is of a stirring nature, and not such a dead thing, like an image, which you may lock up in a chest, and none shall know what God you worship. No, grace will show itself; it will walk with you into all places and companies; it will buy with you, and sell for you; it will have a hand in all your enterprises; it will comfort you when you are sincere and faithful for God, and it will complain and chide you when you are otherwise. Go to, stop its mouth, and Heaven will hear its voice, it will groan, mourn and strive, even as a living man when you would smother him. I will as soon believe a man to be alive, that lies peaceably as he is nailed up in his coffin, without strife or bustle, as that thou hast grace, and never exercise it in any act of spiritual life. What! man, hast thou grace, and carried as peaceably as a fool to the stocks by thy lust? Why hangest thou there nailed to thy lust? If thou hast grace, come down and we will believe it; but if thou beest such a tame slave as to sit still under the command of lust, thou deceivest thyself. Hast thou grace, and show none of it in the condition thou art placed in? May be thou art rich; dost thou show thy humility towards those that are beneath thee? dost thou show a heavenly mind, breathing after heaven more than earth? It may be thy heart is puffed with thy estate, that thou lookest on the pooras creatures of some lower species than thyself, and disdainest them, and as for heaven thou thinkest not of it. Like that wicked prince that said, He would lose his part in paradise rather than in Paris. Art thou poor? why dost [thou] not exercise grace in that condition? Art thou contented, diligent? May be instead of contention thou repinest, canst not see a fair lace on thy rich brother's cloth, but grudgingst it; instead of concurring with providence by diligence to

supply thy wants, thou art ready to break through the hedge into thy neighbour's fat pasture; thus serving thy own turn by a sin, rather than waiting for God's blessing on thy honest diligence. If so, be not angry we call thee by thy right name, or at least question whether we may style thee Christian, whose carriage is so cross to that sacred name, which is too holy to be written on a rotten post.

Use Fourth. Be exhorted, O ye saints of God, to walk in the exercise of grace. It is the minister's duty, with the continual breath of exhortation, and if need be, reproof, to keep this heavenly fire clean on the saints' altar. Peter saw it necessary to have the bellows always in his hands, 'I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth,' II Peter 1:12. That shall not take him off; as long as he is in this tabernacle, he saith he will stir them up, and be putting them in remembrance, ver. 13. There is a sleepy disease we are subject to in this life; Christ though he had roused up his disciples twice, yet takes them napping the third time. Either exercise thy grace, or Satan will act hy corruption; as one bucket goes down the other riseth; there is a body of sin within, which likely a malignant party watcheth for such a time to step into the saddle, and it is easier to keep them down than to pull them down. Thy time is short, and thy way long, thou hadst best put on, lest thou meanest to be overtaken with the night before thou gettest within sight of thy Father's house. How uncomfortable it is for a traveller in heaven's road, above all other, to go potching in the dark, many can with aching hearts tell thee. And what hast thou here to mind like this? Are they worldly cares and pleasures? Is it wisdom to lay out so much cost on thy tenement, which thou art leaving, and forget what thou must carry with thee? Before the fruit of these be ripe which thou art now planting, thyself may be rotting in the grave. 'Time is short,'⁸ saith the apostle, I Cor. 7:29. The world is near its port, and therefore God hath contracted the sails of man's life; but a while, and there will not be a point to choose whether we had wives or not, riches or not; but there will be a vast difference between those that had grace and those that had not; yea, between those that did drive a quick

0. ὁ καιρος συνησταλμηνος

trade in the exercise thereof, and those that were more remiss. The one shall have an ‘abundant entrance into glory,’ II Pet. 1:2; while the other shall suffer loss in much of his lading, which shall be cast overboard, as merchandise that will bear no price in that heavenly country. Yea, while thou art here others shall fare the better by thy lively graces. Thy cheerfulness and activity in thy heavenly course will help others that travel with thee; he is dull indeed that will not put on, when he sees so much metal for God in thee who leadest the way. Yea, thy grace will give a check to the sins of others, who never stand in such awe, as when grace comes forth and sits like a ruler in the gate, to be seen of all that pass by. The swearer knows not [that] such majesty is present, when the Christian is mealy-mouthed, and so goes on and fears no colours, whose grace, had it but her dagger of zeal ready, and courage to draw it forth in a wise reproof, would make sin quit the place, and with shame run into its hole: ‘The

young men saw me, and hid themselves: and the aged arose, and stood up. The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth,’ Job 29:8, 9. And doth not God deserve the best service thou canst do him in thy generation? Did he give thee grace to lay it up in a dead stock, and none to be the better? or can you say that he is wanting to you in his love and mercy? Are they not ever in exercise for your good? Is the eye of providence ever shut? No, he slumbers not that keeps thee. Is it one moment off thee? No, ‘the eye of the Lord is upon the righteous;’ he hath fixed it for ever, and with infinite delight pleaseth himself in the object. When was his ear shut, or his hand, either from receiving thy cries, or supplying thy wants? Nay, doth not thy condition take up the thoughts of God? And are they any other than thoughts of peace which he entertains? A few drops of this oil will keep the wheel in motion.