

## DIVISION SECOND.—THE ASSAILANTS DESCRIBED POSITIVELY.

‘But against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.’ Eph. 6:12

The apostle having shown what the saint’s enemies are not, flesh and blood, frail men, who cannot come but they are seen, who may be resisted by man’s power, or escaped by flight; now he describes the positively, ‘against principalities, against powers,’ &c. Some think [that] the apostle by these divers names and titles, intends to set forth the distinct orders, whereby the devils are subordinate one to another; so they make the devil, ver. 11, to be the head or monarch, and these, ver. 12, so many inferior orders, as among men there are princes, dukes, earls, &c., under an emperor. That there is an order among the devils cannot be denied. The Scripture speaks of a prince of devils, Matt. 9:34, and of the devil and his angels, who with him fell from their first station, called his angels, as it is probably conceived, because one above the rest (as the head of the faction), drew with him multitudes of others into his party, who with him sinned and fell. But that there should be so many distinct orders among them, as there are several branches in this description, is not probable; too weak a notion to be the foundation of a pulpit discourse. Therefore we shall take them as meant of the devil collectively—we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but [with] devils, who are principalities and powers, &c.—and not distributively, to make principalities one rank, powers another; for some of these branches cannot be meant of distinct orders, but promiscuously of all as spiritual wickedness; it being not proper to one to be spirits, or wicked, but common to all. **FIRST**, Then, the devil or whole pack of them are here described by their government in this world—principalities. **SECOND**, By their strength and puissance, called powers. **THIRD**, In their kingdom or proper territories—rulers of the darkness of this world. **FOURTH**, By their nature in its substance and degeneracy—spiritual wickedness. **FIFTH**, By the ground of the war—in the heavenly places, or about heavenly things.

### BRANCH FIRST.

[Against principalities.]

The devil or whole pack of them are here described by their government in this world—principalities. The term principalities<sup>1</sup> is here used in the abstract for the concrete; that is, such as have a principality. So, Titus 3:1, we are bid to be subject to principalities and powers, that is, princes and rulers; so the Vulgate reads it. We wrestle against princes, which some will have to express the eminency of their nature above man’s; that as the state and spirit of princes is more raised above others—great men have great spirits—as Zebah and Zalmunna to Gideon, asking who they were they slew at Tabor; ‘As thou art,’ say they, ‘so were they, each one resembled the children of a king,’ that is, for majesty and presence beseeeming a princely race; so they think, the eminent nature of angels here to be intended, who are as far above the highest prince, as he above the basest peasant. But because they are described by their nature in the fourth branch, I shall subscribe to their judgment, who take this for their principality or government, which the devil exerciseth in this lower world; and the note shall be,

[What a principality Satan hath.]

**DOCTRINE.** That Satan is a great prince. Christ himself styles him the ‘prince of this world,’ John 14:30. Princes have their thrones where they sit in state; Satan hath his—Thou dwellest where Satan hath his throne, Rev. 2:13; and that such a one, as no earthly princes may compare [with]. Few kings are enthroned in the hearts of their subjects; they rule their bodies and command their purses, but how oft in a day are they pulled out of their thrones by the wishes

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1. αρχας

of their discontented subjects. But Satan hath the heart of all his subjects. Princes have their homage and peculiar honour done to them. Satan is served upon the knee of his subjects; the wicked are said to worship the devil, Rev. 13:4. No prince expects such worship as he; no less than religious worship will serve him. Jeroboam is said to ordain priests for devils, II Chr. 11:15; and therefore he [Satan] is called not only the prince, but the god of this world, because he hath the worship of a god given him. Princes, such as are absolute, have a legislative power, nay, their own will is their law, as at this day in Turkey, where their laws are written in no other tables than in the proud sultan's breast. Thus Satan gives law to the poor sinner, who is bound and must obey, though the law be writ with his own blood, and the creature hath nothing but damnation for fulfilling the devil's lust. It is called a 'law of sin,' Rom. 8:2, because it comes with authority. Princes have their ministers of state, whom they employ for the safety and enlargement of their territories; so Satan his, who propagates his cursed designs, [and] therefore we read of 'doctrines of devils,' I Tim. 4:1<sup>2</sup>. Princes have their<sup>3</sup> secrets of government, which none knows but a few favourites in whom they confide. Thus the devil hath his mysteries of iniquity, and depths of Satan we read of, which all his subjects know not of, Rev. 2:24; these are imparted to a few favourites, such as Elymas, whom Paul calls 'full of subtlety, and child of the devil;' such, whose consciences are so debauched, that they scruple not the most horrid sins; these are his white boys. I have read of a people in America that love meat best when it is rotten and stinks. The devil is of their diet. The more corrupt and rotten the creature is in sin, the better he pleaseth his tooth. Some are more the children of the devil than others. Christ had his beloved disciple; and Satan those that lie in his very bosom, and know what is in his heart. In a word, princes have their<sup>4</sup> tribute and custom; so Satan his. Indeed he doth not so much share with the sinner in all, but is owner of all he hath; so that

the devil is the merchant, and the sinner but the broker to trade for him, who at last puts all his gains into the devil's purse. Time, strength, parts, yea, conscience and all, is spent to keep him in his throne.

[How Satan came to be such a prince.]

Question 1. But how comes Satan to this principality?

Answer. Not lawfully, though he can show a fair claim. As,

1. He obtained it by conquest; as he won his crown, so he wears it by power and policy. But conquest is a cracked title. A thief is not the honestest because able to force the traveller to deliver his purse; and a thief on the throne is no better than a private one on the road, or a pirate in a pinnace, as one boldly told Alexander. Neither doth that prove good with process of time which was evil at first. Satan indeed hath kept possession long, but a thief will be so as long as he keeps his stolen goods. He stole the heart of Adam from God at first, and doth no better to this day. Christ's conquest is good, because the ground of the war is righteous—to recover what was his own; while Satan cannot say of the meanest creature, 'It is my own.'

2. Satan may lay claim to his principality by election. It is true he came in by a wile, but now he is a prince elect, by the unanimous voice of corrupt nature. 'Ye are of your father the devil,' saith Christ, 'and his lusts ye will do.' But this also hath a flaw in it, for man by law of creation is God's subject, and cannot give away God's right; by sin he loseth his right in God as a protector, but God loseth not his right as a sovereign. Sin disabled man to keep God's law, but it doth not enfranchise or disoblige him that he need not keep it.

3. Satan may claim a deed of gift from God himself, as he was bold to do to Christ himself upon this ground, persuading him to worship him as the prince of the world. He showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world, saying, 'All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it,' Luke 4:5, 6. Here was a truth, though he spake more than the truth—as he cannot speak truth, but to gain credit to some lie at the end of it. God, indeed, hath delivered, in a

2. The text has II Cor. 11:15.

— SDB

3. *arcana imperii*.

4. *vectigalia*.

sense, this world to him, but not in his sense to do what he will with it; nor by any approbatory act given him a patent to vouch him his viceroy: not Satan by the grace of God, but by permission of God, prince of this world.

Question 2. But why doth God permit this apostate creature to exercise such a principality over the world?

Answer 1. As a righteous act of vengeance on man, for revolting from the sweet government of his rightful Lord and Maker. It is the way God punisheth rebellion: 'Because ye would not serve me in gladness, in the abundance of all things, therefore ye shall serve your enemies in hunger,' &c. Satan is a king given in God's wrath. Ham's curse is man's punishment; 'a servant of servants.' The devil is God's slave, man the devil's. Sin hath set the devil on the creature's back; and now he hurries him without mercy, as he did the swine, till he be choked with flames, if mercy interpose not.

Answer 2. God permits this his principality, in order to the glorifying of his name in the recovery of his elect from the power of this great potentate. What a glorious name will God have when he hath finished this war, wherein, at first, he found all possessed by this enemy, and not a man of all the sons of Adam to offer himself as a volunteer in this service, till made willing by the day of his power! This, this will gain God a name above every name, not only of creatures, but of those by which himself was known to his creature. The workmanship of heaven and earth gave him the name of Creator; providence of Preserver; but this of Saviour. Herein he doth both the former; preserve his creature, which else had been lost; and create a new creature—I mean the babe of grace—which, through God, shall be able to beat the devil out of the field, who was able to drive Adam, though created in his full stature, out of paradise. And may not all the other works of God empty themselves as rivers into this sea, losing their names, or rather swelling into one of redemption? Had not Satan taken God's elect prisoners, they would not have gone to heaven with such acclamations of triumph. There are three expressions of great joy in Scripture; the joy of a woman after her travail, the joy of harvest, and the joy of him that divideth the spoil. The exultation of all these is wrought upon a sad ground, many a

pain and tear it costs the travailling woman, many a fear the husbandman, perils and wounds the soldier, before they come at their joy; but at last they are paid for all, the remembrance of their past sorrows feeding their present joys. Had Christ come and entered into affinity with our nature, and returned peaceably to heaven with his spouse, finding no resistance, though that would have been admirable love, and would have afforded the joy of marriage, yet this way of carrying his saints to heaven will greaten the joy, as it adds to the nuptial song the triumph of a conqueror, who hath rescued his bride out of the hands of Satan, as he was leading her to the chambers of hell.

[How we may know whether we be under Satan as our prince, or not.]

First. Is Satan such a great prince? Try whose subject thou art. His empire is large; [there are] only a few privileged who are translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Even in Christ's own territories—[the] visible church I mean—where his name is professed and the sceptre of his gospel held forth, Satan hath his subjects. As Christ had his saints in Nero's court, so the devil his servants in the outward court of his visible church. Thou must therefore have something more to exempt thee from his government, than living within the pale, and giving an outward conformity to the ordinances of Christ; Satan will yield to this and be no loser. As a king lets his merchants trade to, yea, live in a foreign kingdom, and, while they are there, learn the language, and observe the customs of the place. This breaks not their allegiance; nor all that, thy loyalty to Satan. When a statute was made in Queen Elizabeth's reign, that all should come to church, the Papists sent to Rome to know the pope's pleasure. He returned then this answer, as it is said, 'Bid the Catholics in England give me their heart, and let the queen take the rest.' His subject thou art whom thou crownest in thy heart, and not whom thou flatterest with thy lips.

But to bring the trial to an issue, know that thou belongest to one of these, and but to one; Christ and Satan divide the whole world. Christ will bear no equal, and Satan no superior; and therefore, hold in with both thou canst not.

Now if thou sayest that Christ is thy prince,

answer to these interrogatories.

1. How came he [Christ] into the throne? Satan had once the quiet possession of thy heart; thou wast by birth, as the rest of thy neighbours, Satan's vassal; yea, hast oft vouched him in the course of thy life to be thy liege lord; how then comes this great change? Satan, surely, would not of his own accord resign his crown and sceptre to Christ; and for thyself, thou wert neither willing to renounce, nor able to resist, his power. This then must only be the fruit of Christ's victorious arms, whom God hath exalted 'to be a Prince and a Saviour,' Acts 5:31. Speak therefore, Hath Christ come to thee, as once to Abraham to Lot, when prisoner to Chedorlaomer, rescuing thee out of Satan's hands, as he was leading thee in the chains of lust to hell? Didst thou ever hear a voice from heaven in the ministry of the word calling out to thee as once to Saul, so as to lay thee at God's foot, and make thee face about for heaven; to strike thee blind in thine own apprehension, who before hadst a good opinion of thy state; to tame and meeken thee; so as now thou art willing to be led by the hand of a child after Christ? Did ever Christ come to thee, as the angel to Peter in prison, rousing thee up, and not only causing the chains of darkness and stupidity to fall off thy mind and conscience, but make thee obedient also—that the iron gate of thy will hath opened to Christ before he left thee? Then thou hast something to say for thy freedom. But if in all this I be a barbarian, and the language I speak be strange, thou knowest no such work to have passed upon thy spirit, then thou art yet in the old prison. Can there be a change of government in a nation by a conqueror that invades it, and the subjects not hear of this? One king unthroned and another crowned in thy soul, and thou hear no scuffle all this while? The regenerating Spirit is compared to the wind, John 3:8. His first attempts on the soul may be so secret that the creature knows not whence they come, or whither they tend; but, before he hath done, the sound will be heard throughout the soul, so as it cannot but see a great change in itself, and say, 'I that was blind, now see; I that was hard as ice, now relent for sin; now my heart gives; I can melt and mourn for it. I that was well enough without a Christ, yea, did wonder what others saw in him, to make much ado for him, now have changed my note with the daughters of Jerusalem;

and for, What is your Beloved? as I scornfully have asked; I have learned to ask where he is, that I might seek him with you.' O soul, canst thou say it thus with thee? Thou mayest know who has been here; no less than Christ, who, by his victorious Spirit, hath translated thee from Satan's power into his own sweet kingdom.

2. Whose law dost thou freely subject thyself unto? The laws of these princes are as contrary as their natures; the one a law of sin, Rom. 8:2; the other a law of holiness, Rom. 7:12; and therefore if sin hath not so far bereaved thee of thy wits, as not to know sin from holiness, thou mayest, except [thou] resolve to cheat thy own soul, soon be resolved. Confess therefore and give glory to God; to which of these laws doth thy soul set its seal? When Satan sends out his proclamation, and bids the sinner go, set thy foot upon such a command of God. Observe what is thy behaviour; dost thou yield thyself, as Paul phraseth it, Rom. 6:16<sup>5</sup>; 'yield yourselves,' a metaphor from princes' servants or others, who are said to present themselves before their lord, as ready and at hand to do their pleasure; by which the apostle elegantly describes the forwardness of the sinner's heart to come to Satan's foot, when knocked or called. Now doth thy soul go out thus to meet thy lust, as Aaron his brother, glad to see its face in an occasion? Thou art not brought over to sin with much ado, but thou likest the command. Transgress at Gilgal, saith God, this liketh you well, Hosea 4:5<sup>6</sup>. As a courtier, who doth not

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5. παριστάνετε εαυτους

6. Therefore shalt thou fall in the day, and the prophet also shall fall with thee in the night, and I will destroy thy mother.

— Hosea 4:5

NOTE: The above passage is the one cited by Rev. Gurnall. However, it can be plainly seen that it really has little, if anything to do with what he was referring to; and after a search of the book of Hosea, there doesn't appear to be any reference in Hosea containing the exact wording he has given here. I did locate, though, in Amos, the verses at the end of the following references that do contain "Gilgal".

(continued...)

only obey, but thank his prince that he will employ him. Needest thou be long in resolving whose thou art? Did ever any question, whether those were Jeroboam's subjects, who willingly followed his command? Hosea 5:11. Alas, for thee, thou art under the power of Satan, tied by a chain stronger than brass or iron; thou lovest thy lust. A saint may be for a time under a force; sold under sin, as the apostle bemoans; and therefore glad when deliverance comes; but thou sellest thyself to work iniquity. If Christ should come to take thee from thy lusts, thou wouldst whine after them, as Micah after his gods.

3. To whom goest thou for protection? As it belongs to the prince to protect his subjects, so princes expect their subjects should trust them with their safety. The very bramble bids, 'If in truth you anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow,' Judges 9:15. Now who hast thy confidence? Darest thou trust God with thy soul, and the affairs of it in well-doing? Good subjects follow their calling,

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6. (...continued)

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Though thou, Israel, play the harlot, yet let not Judah offend; and come not ye unto Gilgal, neither go ye up to Beth-aven, nor swear, The LORD liveth.

— Hosea 4:15

All their wickedness is in Gilgal: for there I hated them: for the wickedness of their doings I will drive them out of mine house, I will love them no more: all their princes are revolvers.

— Hosea 9:15

Is there iniquity in Gilead? surely they are vanity: they sacrifice bullocks in Gilgal; yea, their altars are as heaps in the furrows of the fields.

— Hosea 12:11

<sup>4</sup>Come to Beth-el, and transgress; at Gilgal multiply transgression; and bring your sacrifices every morning, and your tithes after three years: <sup>5</sup>And offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven, and proclaim and declare the free offerings: for this pleaseth you, O ye children of Israel, saith the Lord GOD.

— Amos 4

commit state matters to the wisdom of their prince and his council. When wronged, they appeal to their prince in his laws for right; and when they do offend their prince, they submit to the penalty of the laws, and bear his displeasure patiently, till humbling themselves they recover his favour, and do not, in a discontent, fall into open rebellion. Thus a gracious soul follows his Christian calling, committing himself to God as a faithful Creator, to be ordered by his wise providence. If he meets with violence from any, he scorns to beg aid of the devil to help him, or be his own judge to right himself; no, he acquiesceth in the counsel and comfort the Word of God gives him. If himself offends, and so comes under the lash of God's correcting hand, he doth not then take up rebellious arms against God, and refuse to receive correction; but saith, 'Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?' whereas a naughty man dares not venture his estate, life, credit, or anything he hath, with God in well-doing; he thinks he shall be undone presently, if he sits still under the shadow of God's promise for protection; and therefore he runs from God as from under an old house that would fall on his head, and lays the weight of his confidence in wicked policy, making lies his refuge. Like Israel, he trusts in perverseness; when God tells him, 'In returning and rest he shall be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be his strength;' he hath not faith to take God's word for his security in ways of obedience. And when God comes to afflict him for any disloyal carriage, instead of accepting the punishment for his sin—and so to own him for his Sovereign Lord, that may righteously punish the faults of his disobedient subjects—his heart is filled with rage against God, and instead of waiting quietly and humbly, like a good subject till God upon his repentance receives him into his favour, his wretched heart, presenting God as an enemy to him, will not suffer any such gracious and amiable thoughts of God to dwell in his bosom, but bids him look for no good at his hand: 'This evil is of the Lord; why should I wait on the Lord any longer?' Whereas a gracious heart is most encouraged to wait from this very consideration that drives the other away: 'Because it is the Lord afflicts.'

4. Whom dost thou sympathize with? He is thy prince, whose victories and losses thou layest to heart,

whether in thy own bosom or abroad in the world. What saith thy soul, when God hedgeth up thy way, and keeps thee from that sin which Satan hath been soliciting for? If on Christ's side thou wilt rejoice when thou art delivered out of a temptation, though it be by falling into an affliction. As David said of Abigail, so wilt thou here: Blessed be the ordinance, blessed be the providence which kept me from sinning against my God; but if otherwise thou wilt harbour a secret grudge against the word which stood in thy way, and be discontented, thy design took not. A naughty heart, like Amnon, pines while his lust hath vent. Again, what music doth the achievements of Christ in the world make in thy ear? When thou hearest [that] the gospel thrives, the blind see, the lame walk, the poor gospellized, doth thy spirit rejoice in that hour? If a saint, thou wilt, as God is thy Father, rejoice [that] thou hast more brethren born; as he is thy prince, that the multitude of his subjects increase. So when thou seest the plots of Christ's enemies discovered, powers defeated, canst thou go forth with the saints to meet King Jesus, and ring him out of the field with praises? or do thy bells ring backward, and such news make thee haste, like Haman, mourning to thine house, there to empty thy spirit, swollen with rancour against his saints and truth? Or if thy policy can master thy passion, so far as to make fair weather in thy countenance, and suffer thee to join with the people of God in their acclamations of joy, yet then art thou a close mourner within, and likest the work no better than Haman his office, in holding Mordecai's stirrup, who had rather have held the ladder. This speaks thee a certain enemy of Christ, how handsomely soever thou mayest carry it before men.

Second. Bless God, O ye saints, who upon the former trial, can say you are translated into the kingdom of Christ, and so delivered from the tyranny of this usurper. There are few but have some one gaudy day in a year, which they solemnize; some keep their birthday, others their marriage; some their manumission from a cruel service, others their deliverance from some imminent danger. Here is a mercy where all these meet. You may call it, as Adam did his wife, Evah, the mother of all the living; every mercy riseth up and calls this blessed. This is thy birth-day; thou wert before, but beganst to live when Christ began to

live in thee. The father of the prodigal dated his son's life from his return: 'This my son was dead, and is alive.' Is it thy marriage day: 'I have married you to one husband, even Christ Jesus,' saith Paul to the Corinthians. Perhaps thou hast enjoyed this thy husband's sweet company many a day, and had a numerous offspring of joys and comforts by thy fellowship with him, the thought of which cannot but endear him to thee, and make the day of thy espousals delightful to thy memory. It is thy manumission; then were thy indentures cancelled, wherein thou wert bound to sin and Satan. When the Son made thee free, thou becamest free indeed. Thou canst not say thou wast born free, for thy father was a slave; not that thou boughtest thy freedom with a sum. By grace ye are saved. Heaven is settled on thee in the promise, and thou not at charge so much as for the writing's drawing. All is done at Christ's cost, with whom God indented, and to whom he gave the promise of eternal life before the world began, as a free estate to settle upon every believing soul in the day they should come to Christ, and receive him for their Prince and Saviour; so that from the hour thou didst come under Christ's shadow, all the sweet fruit that grows on this tree of life is thine. With Christ, all that both worlds have, fall to thee; all is yours, because you are Christ's.

O Christian, look upon thyself now, and bless thy God to see what a change there is made to thy state, since that black and dismal time, when thou wert slave to the prince of darkness. How couldst thou like thy old scullion's work again, or think of returning to thy house of bondage, now thou knowest the privileges of Christ's kingdom? Great princes, who from baseness and beggary have ascended to kingdoms and empires—to add to the joy of their present honour—have delighted to speak often of their base birth, to go and see the mean cottages where they were first entertained, and had their birth and breeding and the like. And it is not unuseful for the Christian to look in at the grate, to see the smoky hole where once he lay, to view the chains wherewith he was laden, and so to compare Christ's court and the devil's prison—the felicity of the one and the horror of the other—together. But when we do our best to affect our hearts with this mercy, by all the enhancing aggravations we can find out, alas, how

little a portion of it shall we know here? This is a *nimum excellens*—a surpassing excellence, which cannot be fully seen, unless it be by a glorified eye. How can it be fully known by us, where it cannot be fully enjoyed? Thou art translated into the kingdom of Christ, but thou art a great way from his court. That is kept in heaven, and that the Christian knows, but as we [know] far countries which we never saw only by map, or some rarities that are sent us as a taste of what grows there in abundance.

Third. This, Christian, calls for thy loyalty and faithful service to Christ, who hath saved thee from Satan's bondage. Say, O ye saints, to Christ, as they say to Gideon, 'Come thou and rule over us, for thou hast delivered us from the hand, not of Midian, but of Satan.' Who so able to defend thee from his wrath, as he who broke his power? who like to rule thee so tenderly, as he that could not brook another's tyranny over thee? In a word, who hath right to thee besides him, who ventured his life to redeem thee?—that being delivered from all thine enemies, thou mayest serve him without fear in holiness all the days of thy life. And were it not pity that Christ should take all this pains to lift up thy head from Satan's house of bondage, and give thee a place among those in his own house, who are admitted to minister unto him—which is the highest honour the nature of men or angels is capable of—and that thou shouldst after all this be found to have a hand in any treasonable practice against thy dear Saviour? Surely Christ may think he hath deserved better at your hands, if at none besides. Where shall a prince safely dwell, if not in the midst of his own courtiers? and those such were all taken from chains and prisons to be thus preferred, the more to oblige them in his service. Let devils and devilish men do their own work, but let not thy hand, O Christian, be upon thy dear Saviour. But this is too little, to bid thee not play the traitor. If thou hast any loyal blood running in thy veins, thy own heart will smite thee when thou rendest the least skirt of his holy law; thou canst as well carry burning coals in thy bosom, as hide any treason there against thy dear Sovereign. No, it is some noble enterprise I would have thee think upon, how thou mayest advance the name of Christ higher in thy heart, and [in the] world too, as much as in thee lies. O how kindly did God take it, that David, when peaceably set in his

throne, was casting about, not how he might entertain himself with those pleasures which usually corrupt and debauch the courts of princes in times of peace, but how he might show his zeal for God, in building a house for his worship that had reared a throne for him, II Sam. 7. And is there nothing, Christian, thou canst think on, wherein thou mayest be instrumental for God in thy generation? He is not a good subject, that is all for what he can get of his prince, but never thinks what he may do for him; nor he the true Christian, whose thoughts dwell more on his own happiness than on the honour of his God. If subjects might choose what life stands best for their own enjoyment, all would desire to live at court with their prince; but because the prince's honour is more to be valued than this, therefore, noble spirits, to do their prince service, can deny the delicacies of a court, to jeopard their lives in the field, and thank their prince too for the honour of their employment. Blessed Paul upon these terms was willing to have his day of coronation in glory prorogued<sup>7</sup>, and he to stay as companion with his brethren in tribulation here, for the furtherance of the gospel. This, indeed, makes it worth the while to live<sup>8</sup>, that we have by a fair opportunity—if hearts to husband it—in which we may give a proof of our real gratitude to our God, for his redeeming love in rescuing us out of the power of the prince of darkness, and translating us into the kingdom of his dear Son. And therefore, Christian, lose no time, but, what thou meanest to do for God, do it quickly.

Art thou a magistrate? now it will be soon seen on whose side thou art. If indeed thou hast renounced allegiance to Satan, and taken Christ for thy prince, declare thyself an enemy to all that bear the name of Satan, and march under his colours. Study well by commission, and when thou understandest the duty of thy place, fall to work zealously for God. Thou hast thy prince's sword put into thy hand. Be sure thou use it, and take heed how thou usest it, that when called to deliver it up, and thy account also, it may not be found rusty in the sheath through sloth and cowardice, besmeared with the blood of violence, not bent and gaped with partiality and injustice.

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7. Prorogued — Means to defer, postpone. — SDB

8. *operæ pretium vivere.*

Art thou a minister of the gospel? Thy employment is high, an ambassador, and that not from some petty prince, but from the great God to his rebellious subjects; a calling so honourable, that the Son of God disdained not to come in extraordinary from heaven to perform it, called therefore the ‘messenger of the covenant,’ Mal. 3:1; yea, he had to this day stayed on earth in person about it, had he not been called to reside as our ambassador and advocate in heaven with the Father; and therefore in his bodily absence he hath intrusted thee, and a few more, to carry on the treaty with sinners, which, when on earth, himself began. And what can you do more acceptable to him, than to be faithful in it, as a business on which he hath set his heart so much? As ever you would see his sweet face with joy—you that are his ambassadors—attend to your work, and labour to bring this treaty of peace to a blessed issue between and those you are sent to. And then if sinners will not come off, and seal the articles of the gospel, you shall, as Abraham said to his servant, be clear of your oath. Though Israel be not gathered, yet you shall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord.

And let not the private Christian say he is a dry tree, and can do nothing for Christ his prince, because he may not bear the magistrate's fruit or minister's. Though thou hast not a commission to punish the sins of others with the sword of justice, yet thou mayest show thy zeal in mortifying thy own with the sword of the Spirit, and mourn for theirs also; though thou mayest not condemn them on the bench, yet thou mayest, yea, oughtest, by the power of a holy life, to convince and judge them. Such a judge Lot was to the Sodomites. Though thou art not sent to preach and baptize, yet thou mayest be wonderfully helpful to them that are. The Christian's prayers whet [the] magistrates and ministers' sword also. O pray, Christian, and pray again, that Christ's territories may be enlarged. Never go to hear the Word but pray, Thy kingdom come. Loving princes take great content in the acclamations and good wishes of their subjects as they pass by. A vivat rex—long live the king—coming from a loyal breast, though poor, is more worth than a subsidy from those who deny their hearts while they part with their money. Thou servest a prince, Christian, who knows what all his subjects think of him, and he counts it his honour not to have

a multitude feignedly submit to him, but to have a people that love him and cordially like his government, who, if they were to choose their king and make their own laws they should live under every day, would desire no other than himself, nor any other laws than what they have already from his mouth. It was no doubt great content to David, that he had the hearts of his people, so as whatever the king did, pleased them all, II Sam. 3:36. And surely God took it as well, that what he did pleased David, for indeed David was content under the rule and disposeure of God as the people were under his. Witness the calmness of his spirit in the greatest affliction that ever befell him: ‘Behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him,’ II Sam. 15:26. Loyal soul! he had rather live in exile, with the good-will of God, than have his throne, if God will not say it is good for him.

## BRANCH SECOND.

[Against powers.]

Satan, in this second branch of the description, is set forth by his strength and puissance—called powers. This gives weight to the former. Were he a prince and not able to raise a force that might dread the saints, the swellingname of prince were contemptible; but he hath power answerable to his dignity, which in five particulars will appear. First. In his names. Second. His nature. Third. His number. Fourth. His order and unity. Fifth. The mighty works that are attributed to him.

The great power Satan hath not only over the elementary and sensitive part of the world,  
but over the intellectual also  
—the souls of men.

First. He hath names of great power. [He is] called ‘the strong man,’ Luke 11:21; strong that he keeps his house in peace in defiance of all the sons of Adam, none on earth being able to cope with this giant. Christ must come from heaven to destroy him and his works, or the field is lost. He is called the roaring lion, which beast commands the whole forest. If he roars, all tremble; yea, in such a manner, as

Pliny relates, that he goes amongst them, and they stand exanimated while he chooseth his prey without resistance; such a lion is Satan, who leads sinners captive at his will, II Tim. 2:26. He takes them alive, as the word is, as the fowler the bird, which, with a little scrap is enticed into the net; or as the conqueror his cowardly enemy, who has no heart to fight, but yields without contest. Such cowards the devil finds sinners [that] he no sooner appears in a motion, but they yield. They are but a very few noble spirits, and those are the children of the most High God, who dare valiantly oppose him, and in striving against sin resist to blood. He is called the 'great red dragon,' who with his tail, wicked men his instruments, sweeps down the third part of the stars of heaven; the 'prince of the power of the air,' because as a prince can muster his subjects, and draw them into the field for his service so the devil can raise<sup>9</sup> [the power of the air]. In a word, he is called 'the god of this world,' II Cor. 4:4, because sinners give him a god-like worship, fear him as the saints do God himself.

Second. The devil's nature shows his power; it is angelical. Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, Ps. 103:20. Strength is put for angels, Ps. 78:25. They did eat angels' food, the food of the mighty. In two things the power of angelical nature will appear; in its superiority, and in its spirituality.

1. Its superiority. Angels are the top of the creation; man himself is made a little lower than the angels. Now in the works of creation, the superior hath a power over the inferior; the beasts over the grass and herb, man over the beasts, and angels over man.

2. The spirituality of their nature. The weakness of man is from his flesh; his soul, made for great enterprises, but weighed down with a lump of flesh, is forced to row with a strength suitable to its weak partner. But now, the devils being angels have no such encumbrance, no fumes from a fleshly part to cloud their understanding, which is clear and piercing; no clog at their heel to retard their motion, which, for swiftness, is set out by the wind and flame of fire. Yea, being spiritual, they cannot be resisted with carnal force; fire and sword hurt not them. The

angel which appeared to Manoaah went up in the fire that consumed the sacrifice. Though such had been the dotage, and is at this day, of superstitious ones, that they think to charm the devil with their carnal exorcisms; hence the Romish relics, cross, holywater; yea, and [it existed] among the Jews themselves in corrupter times, who thought by their phylacteries and circumcision to scare away the devil, which made some of them expound that [passage] Song. 3:8, of circumcision: 'Every man hath his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night.' By sword on the thigh, they expound circumcision, which they will vainly have given as a charm against evil spirits that affright them in the night. But alas, the devil cares for none of these, no, not for an ordinance of God, when by fleshly confidence we make it a spell; he hath been often bound with these fetters and chains, as is said of him in the gospel, and the chains have been plucked asunder by him, neither could any man thus tame him. He esteems, as Job saith of the leviathan, iron as straw and brass as rotten wood. It must be a stronger than the strong man [that] must bind him, and none [is] stronger but God, the Father of spirits. The devil lost, indeed, by his fall, much of his power in relation to that holy and happy estate in which he was created, but not his natural abilities; he is an angel still, and hath an angel's power.

Third. The number of devils adds to their power. What lighter than the sand? yet number makes it weighty. What creature less than lice? yet what plague greater to the Egyptians. How formidable must devils be, who are both for nature so mighty and for number such a multitude! There are devils enough to beleague the whole earth; not a place under heaven where Satan hath not his troops; not a person without some of these cursed spirits haunting and watching him wherever he goes; yea, for some special service, he can send a legion to keep garrison in one single person, as Mark 5; and, if so many can be spared to attend one, to what a number would the muster-roll of Satan's whole army amount, if known? And now tell me if we are not like to find our march difficult to heaven—if ever we mean to go thither—that are to pass through the very quarters of this multitude, who are scattered over the face of all the earth?

When armies are disbanded, and the roads full

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9. posse cœli aërii.

of debauched soldiers, wandering up and down, it is dangerous travelling; we hear then of murderers and robberies from all quarters. These powers of hell are that party of angels, who for their mutiny and disobedience were cashiered heaven, and thrust out of that glorious host; and, ever since, they have straggled here below, endeavouring to do mischief to the children of men, especially travelling in heaven's road.

Fourth. Their unity and order makes their number formidable. We cannot say there is love among them—that heavenly fire cannot live in a devil's bosom; yet there is unity and order as to this—they are all agreed in their design against God and man: so their unity and consent is knit together by the ligaments not of love, but of hatred and policy—hatred against God and his children, which they are filled with—and policy, which tells them that if they agree not in their design, their kingdom cannot stand. And how true they are to this wicked brotherhood, our Saviour gives a fair testimony, when he saith, Satan fights not against Satan. Did you ever hear of any mutiny in the devil's army? or that any of these apostate angels did freely yield up one soul to Christ? They are many, and yet but one spirit of wickedness in them all. My name, said the devils, not our name, is legion. The devil is called the leviathan. 'The Lord with his strong sword shall punish leviathan,' Isa. 27:1, from their cleaving together, of לרה (lava), compact or joined together, used for the whale, whose strength lies in his scales, which are so knit, that he is, as it were, covered with armour. Thus these cursed spirits do accord in their machinations, and labour to bring their instruments into the same league with them; not contented with their bare obedience, but where they can obtain it do require an express oath of their servants to be true to them, as in witches.

Fifth. The mighty works that are attributed to these evil spirits in Scripture declare their power; and these either respect the elementary, sensible, or intellectual part of the world. The elementary: what dreadful effects this prince of the power of the air is able to produce on that, see in the word; he cannot indeed make the least breath of air, drop of water, or spark of fire, but he can, if let loose, as reverend Master Caryl saith on Job 1, go to God's storehouse, and make use of these in such a sort as no man can stand before him; he can hurl the sea into such a

commotion that the depths shall boil like a pot, and disturb the air into storms and tempests, as if heaven and earth would meet. Job's children were buried in the ruins of their house by a puff of his mouth, yea, he can go to God's magazine (as the former author saith) and let off the great ordinance of heaven, causing such dreadful thunder and lightning as shall not only affright, but do real execution, and that in a more dreadful way than in the ordinary course of nature. If man's art can so sublimate nature, as we see in the invention of powder, that such hath a strange force; much more able is he to draw forth its power. Again, over the sensitive world his power is great; not only the beasts, as in the herd of swine, hurried by him into the deep; but over the bodies of men also, as in Job, whose sore boils were not the breakings out of a distempered nature, but the print of Satan's fangs on his flesh, doing that suddenly, which in nature would have required more time to gather and ripen; and [over] the demoniacs in the gospel, grievously vexed and tormented by him. But this the devil counts small game.

His great spite is at the souls of men, which I call the intellectual world; his cruelty to the body is for the soul's sake. As Christ's pity to the bodies of men, when on earth, healing their diseases, was in a subserviency to the good of their souls, bribing them with those mercies suitable to their carnal desires, that they might more willingly receive mercies for their souls from that hand which was so kind to their bodies; as we give children something that pleaseth them, to persuade them to do something that pleaseth them not—go to the school, learn their book; so the devil, who is cruel as Christ as meek, and wisheth good neither to body nor soul, yet shows his cruelty to the body, but on a design against the soul—knowing well that the soul is soon discomposed by the perturbation of the other—[for] the soul cannot but lightly hear, and so have its peace and rest broken by the groans and complaints of the body, under whose very roof it dwells; and then, it is not strange, if, as for want of sleep, the tongue talk idly, so the soul should break out into some sinful carriage, which is the bottom of the devil's plot on a saint. And as for other poor silly souls, he gains little less than a god-like fear and dread of them by that power he puts forth, through divine permission, in smiting their goods,

beasts, and bodies, as among the Indians at this day. Yea, there are many among ourselves who plainly show what a throne Satan hath in their hearts upon this account; such, who, as if there were not a God in Israel, go for help and cure to his doctors—wizards I mean. And truly had Satan no other way to work his will on the souls of men, but by this vantage he takes from the body, yet, considering the degeneracy of man's state,—how low his soul is sunk beneath its primitive extraction; how the body, which was a lightsome house, is now become a prison to it; that which was its servant, is now become its master—it is no wonder he is able to do so much.

But besides this, he hath, as a spirit, a nearer way of access to the soul, and as a superior spirit, yet more [power] over man, a lower creature. And, above all, having got within the soul by man's fall, he hath now far more power than before; so that, where he meets not resistance from God, he carries all before him; as in the wicked, whom he hath so at his devotion, that he is, in a sense, said to do that in them which God doth in the saints: God works effectually in them, Gal. 2:8; I Thes. 2:13. Satan worketh effectually in the children of disobedience, Eph. 2:2, the word in the original being the same as in the former places<sup>10</sup>, —he is in a manner as efficacious with them, as the Holy Spirit with the other. His delusions [are] 'strong,' II Thes. 2:11; they return not<sup>11</sup>, [without accomplishing their object]. The Spirit enlightens; he 'blinds the minds of them which believe not,' II Cor. 4:4. The Spirit fills the saints, Eph. 5:18; 'Why hath Satan filled thine heart?' saith Peter to Ananias, Acts 5:3. The Spirit fills with knowledge and the fruits of righteousness; Satan fills with envy and all unrighteousness. The Holy Spirit fills with comfort; Satan, the wicked with terrors—as in Saul, vexed by an evil spirit, and Judas, into whom it is said he entered, and when he had satisfied his lust upon him (as Amnon on Tamar), shuts the door of mercy upon him, and makes him that was even now traitor to his Master, hangman to himself. And though saints be not the proper subjects of his power, yet they are the chief objects of his wrath; his foot stands on the wicked's

back, but he wrestles with these, and when God steps aside, he is far above their match. He hath sent the strongest among them home, trembling and crying to their God, with the blood running about their consciences. He is mighty, both as a tempter to, and for, sin; knowing the state of the Christian's affairs so well, and able to throw his fire-balls so far into the inward senses, whether they be of lust or horror, and to blow up these with such unwearied solicitations, that—if they at first meet not with some suitable dispositions in the Christian, at which, as from some loose corns of powder, they may make fire, which is most ordinary—yet, in time, he may bring over the creature, by the length of the siege, and continued volleys of such motions, to listen to a parley with them, if not a yielding to them. Thus many times he even wearies out the soul with importunity.

[Use or Application.]

Use First. Let this, O man, make the plumes of thy pride fall, whoever thou art that gloriest in thy power. Hadst thou more than thou or any of the sons of Adam ever had, yet what were all that to the power of these angels? Is it the strength of thy body thou gloriest in? Alas, what is the strength of frail flesh, to the force of their spiritual nature? Thou art no more to these, than a child to a giant, a worm to a man: they could tear up the mountains, and hurl the world into a confusion, if God would but suffer them. Is it the strength of thy parts above others? Dost thou not see what fools he makes of the wisest among men? winding them about as a sophist would do an idiot, making them believe light is dark, bitter is sweet, and sweet bitter. Were not the strength of his parts admirable, could he make a rational creature, as man is, so absurdly throw away his scarlet, and embrace dung? I mean, part with God and the glorious happiness he hath with him, in hope to mend himself by embracing sin. Yet this he did when man had his best wits about him in innocency. Is it the power of place and dignity got by war-like achievement? Grant thou wert able to subdue nations, and give laws to the whole world, yet even then, without grace from above, thou wouldst be his slave. And he himself, for all this his power, is a cursed spirit, the most miserable of all God's creatures, and the more as he hath so much

10. ενεργουντος.

11. re infecta.

power to do mischief. Had the devil lost all his angelical abilities when he fell, he had gained by his loss. Therefore tremble, O man, at any power thou hast, except thou usest it for God. Art [thou] strong in body; who hath thy strength? God, or thy lusts? Some are strong to drink, strong to sin; thy bands shall therefore be stronger, Isa. 28:22. Hast thou power, by thy place, to do God and his church service, but no heart to lay it out for them, but rather against them? Thou and the devil shall be tried at the same bar. It seems thou meanest to go to hell for something, thou wilt carry thy full lading thither. No greater plague can befall a man, than power without grace. Such great ones in the world, while here, make a brave show, like chief commanders and field-officers at the head of their regiments—the common soldiers are poor creatures to them; but when the army is beaten, and all taken prisoners, then they fling off their scarf and feather, and would be glad to pass for the meanest in the army. Happy would devils be, [happy would] princes and great ones in the world be, if then they could appear in the habit of some poor sneaks to receive their sentence as such; but then their titles and dignity, and riches, shall be read, not for their honour, but further shame and damnation.

Use Second. It shows the folly of those that think it is such an easy matter to get to heaven. If the devil be so mighty, and heaven's way so full of them, then sure it will cost hot water before we display our banners upon the walls of that new Jerusalem. Yet it is plain that many think otherwise by the provision they make for their march. If you should see a man walking forth without a cloak, or with a very thin one, you will say, 'Surely he fears no foul weather;' or one riding a long journey alone and without arms, you will conclude he expects no thieves on the road. All, if you ask them, will tell you they are on the way to heaven; but how few care for the company of the saints? as if they needed not their fellowship in their journey! Most go naked, without so much as anything like armour, [and] have not enough to gain the name of professors at large; others, it may be, will show you some vain flighty hopes on the mercy of God, without any scripture bottom for the same, and with these content themselves, which will, like a rusty unsound pistol, fly in their own face when they come to use it;

and is it any wrong to say [that] they meet with many rooks<sup>12</sup> and cheaters in their dealing, who, should they not look to themselves, would soon undo them. And are there none that thou needest fear will put a cheat on thy soul, and bereave thee of thy crown of glory if they can? Thou art blinder than the prophet's servant, if thou seest not more devils encompassing thee, than he saw men about Samaria. Thy worldly trade they will not hinder, nay, may be [will] help thee to sinful tricks in that, to hinder thee in this; but if once thou resolvest to seek out for Christ and his grace, they will oppose thee to thy face. They are under an oath, as Paul's enemies were, to take away the life of thy soul if they can; desperate creatures themselves, who know their doom is irrecoverable, and sell their own lives they will as dear as they can. Now what folly is it to betray thy soul into their hands, when Christ stands by to be thy convoy? Out of him thou art a lost creature; thou canst not defend thyself alone against Satan, nor with Satan against God. Close with Christ, and thou art delivered from one of thy enemies, and him the most formidable, God, I mean; yea, he is become thy friend, who will stick close to thee in thy conflict with the other.

Use Third. To the saints; be not ye dismayed at this report which the Scripture makes of Satan's power. Let them fear him who fear not God. What are these mountains of power and pride, before thee, O Christian, who servest a God that can make a worm thrash a mountain? The greatest hurt he can do thee, is by nourishing this false fear of him in thy bosom. It is observed, Bernard saith, of some beasts in the forest<sup>13</sup>, [that] though they are too hard for the lion in fight, yet [they] tremble when he roars. Thus the Christian, when he comes to the pinch indeed, is able through Christ to trample Satan under his feet, yet before the conflict, stands trembling at the thought of him. Labour therefore to get a right understanding of Satan's power, and then this lion will not appear so fierce, as you paint him in your melancholy fancy. Three considerations will relieve you when at any time you are beset with the fears of his

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12. A rook—a swindling fellow, a defrauder.

13. *Plerusque superant leonem ferientem, quæ non sustinent rugientem.*

power.

Consider 1. It is a derived power. He hath it not in himself, but by patent from another, and that no other but God. All powers are of him, whether on earth or in hell. (1.) This truth subscribed in faith, would first secure thee, Christian, that Satan's power shall never hurt thee. Would thy Father give him a sword to mischief thee his child? 'I have created the smith,' saith God, 'that bloweth the coals,' 'I have created the waster to destroy,' and therefore he assures them that no weapon formed against them shall prosper,' Isa. 54:16, 17. If God provides his enemies' arms, they shall, I warrant you, be such as will do them little service. When Pilate thought to scare Christ, with what he could do towards the saving or taking away of his life, he replies, that he could do nothing 'except it were given him from above,' John 19:11, as if he had said, 'Do your worst, I know who sealed your commission.' (2.) This considered, would meeken and quiet the soul, when troubled by Satan within, or his instruments without. It is Satan buffets, man persecutes me, but it is God who gives them both power. The Lord, saith David, bids him curse. The Lord, saith Job, hath given, and the Lord hath taken. This kept the king's peace in both their bosoms. O Christian, look not on the jailor that whips thee; may be he is cruel, but read the warrant, [see] who wrote that, and at the bottom thou shalt find thy Father's hand.

Consider 2. [It is a limited power.] Satan's power is limited, and that two ways—he cannot do what he will, and he shall not do what he can.

(1.) He cannot do what he will. His desires are boundless, they walk not only to and fro here below, but in heaven itself, where he is pulling down his once fellow-angels, knocking down the carved work of that glorious temple, as with axes and hammers, yea, unthroning God and setting himself in his place. (a) This fool saith in his heart, 'There is no God;' but he cannot do this, nor many other things, which his cankered malice stirs him up to wish; he is but a creature, and so hath the length of his tedder, to which he is staked, and cannot exceed. And if God be safe, then thou also, for thy life 'is hid with Christ in God.' 'If I live,' saith Christ, 'ye shall live also.' You are engraven on the table of his heart; if he plucks one away, he must the other also. (b) Again, as he cannot

hurt the being of God, so he cannot pry into the bosom of God. He knows not man's, much less the thoughts of God. The astrologers nor their master could bring back Nebuchadnezzar's dream. As men have their closets for their own privacy, where none can enter in but with their key; so God keeps the heart as his withdrawing room, shut to all besides himself; and therefore when he takes upon him to foretell events, if God teach him not his lesson, nor second causes help him, he is beside his book. So to save his credit [he] delivers them dubiously, that his text may bear a gloss suitable to the effect whatever it is. And when he is bold to tell the state of a person, there is no weight to be laid on his judgment. Job was an hypocrite in his mouth, but God proved him a liar. (c) Again, he cannot hinder those purposes and counsels of God he knows. He knew Christ was to come in the flesh, and did his worst, but could not hinder his landing, though there were many devices in his heart, yet the counsel of the Lord concerning him did stand, yea, was delivered by the midwifery of Satan suggesting, and his instruments executing his lust as they thought, but fulfilling God's counsel against themselves. (d) Satan cannot ravish thy will. He cannot command thee to sin against thy will, he can motum agere—make the soul go faster<sup>14</sup>, that is on its way, as the wind carries the tide with more swiftness; but he cannot turn the stream of the heart contrary to its own course and tendency.

(2.) Satan's power is so limited that he cannot do what he can. God lets out so much of his wrath as shall praise him, and be as a stream to set his purpose of love to his saints on work, and then lets down the flood-gate by restraining the residue thereof. God ever takes him off before he can finish his work on a saint. He can, if God suffers him, rob the Christian of much of his joy, and disturb his peace by his cunning insinuations, but he is under command; he stands, like a dog, by the table, while the saints sit at his sweet feast of comfort, but dares not stir to roam<sup>15</sup> off their cheer; his Master's eye is on him. The want of this consideration loseth God his praise, and us our comfort—God having locked up our comfort in

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14. Diabolus non est jussor vitiorum sed incentor.

15. Roam off, that is, snatch away.

the performance of our duty. Did the Christian consider what Satan's power is, and who dams it up, this would always be a song of praise in his mouth. Hath Satan power to rob and burn, kill and slay, torment the body, distress the mind? whom may I thank that I am in any of these out of his hands? Doth Satan love me better than Job? or am I out of sight, or beside his walk? Is his courage cooled or his wrath appeased, that I escaped so well? No, none of these. His wrath is not against one, but all the saints; his eye is on thee, and his arm can reach thee; his spirit is not cowed, nor his stomach stayed with those millions he hath devoured, but [is] keen as ever; yea, sharper, because now he sees God ready to take away, and the end of the world drawing on so fast. It is thy God alone whom thou art beholden to for all this; his eye keepeth thee. When Satan finds this good man asleep, then he finds our God awake; therefore thou art not consumed, because he changeth not. Did his eye slumber or wander for one moment, there would need no other flood to drown thee, yea, the whole world, that what would come out of this dragon's mouth.

Consider 3. [It is a ministerial power.] Satan's power is ministerial, appointed by God for the service and benefit of the saints. It is true, as it is said of the proud Assyrian, 'he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so,' Isa. 10:7; but it is in his heart to destroy those he tempts. But no matter what he thinks; as Luther comforted himself, when told what had passed at the diet at Nuremberg against the Protestants, that 'it was decreed one way there, but otherwise in heaven;' so for the saints' comfort, the thoughts which God thinks to them are peace, while Satan's are to ruin their graces, and destruction to their souls. And his counsel shall stand in spite of the devil. The very *mittimus*<sup>16</sup> which God makes, when he commits any of his saints to the devil's prison, runs thus: 'Deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus,' 1 Cor. 5:5; so that tempted saints may say, 'We had perished if we had not

perished to our own thinking.' This leviathan, while he thinks to swallow them up, is but sent of God (as the whale to Jonah) to waft them safe to land. 'Some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white,' Dan. 11:35. This God intends when he lets his children fall into temptation. As we do with our linen, the spots they get at our feasts, are taken out by washing, rubbing, and laying them out to bleach. The saints' spots are most got in peace, plenty, and prosperity, and they never recover their whiteness to such a degree as when they come from under Satan's scouring. We do too little, not to fear Satan; we should comfort ourselves with the usefulness and subserviency of his temptations to our good. All things are yours who are Christ's. He hath given life to be yours, hath given death also. He that hath given heaven for your inheritance—Paul and Cephas, his ministers and ordinances to help you thither—hath given the world with all the afflictions of it, yea, the prince of it too, with all his wrath and power, in order to the same end. This, indeed, is love and wisdom in a riddle, but you who have the Spirit of Christ can unfold it.

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### BRANCH THIRD.

[Against the rulers of the darkness  
of this world.]

These words contain the third branch in the description of our great enemy the devil; and they hold forth the proper seat of his empire, with a threefold boundary. He is not 'Lord over all'—that is the incommunicable title of God—but a ruler of the darkness of this world, where the time, place, and subjects of his empire are stinted. **FIRST.** The time when this prince hath his rule—in this world, that is, now, not hereafter. **SECOND.** The place where he rules—in this world, that is, here below, not in heaven. **THIRD.** The subjects or persons whom he rules, not all in this lower world neither; they are wrapped up in these words—the darkness of this world.

[The time when Satan rules.]

**FIRST.** [Satan's empire is bounded by time.]

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16. A *mittimus* is a command in writing given under the hand or seal of one in authority, as a justice of the peace, requiring the commitment of an offender to prison.

The time when he rules is in this world; that is, now, not hereafter. This word world may be taken in the text for that little spot of time which, like an inconsiderable parenthesis, is clapped in on either side with vast eternity, called sometimes the present world, Titus 2:12. On this stage of time this mock king acts the part of a prince; but when Christ comes to take down his scaffold at the end of this world, then he shall be degraded, his crown taken off, his sword broke over his head, and he hissed off with scorn and shame; yea, of a prince, become a close prisoner in hell. No more, then, shall he infest the saints, no, nor rule the wicked, but he with them, and they with him, shall lie under the immediate execution of God's wrath. For this very end Christ hath his patent and commission, which he will not give up, till 'he shall have put down all rule,' I Cor. 15:24. Then, and not till then, will he deliver up his economical kingdom to his Father, 'when he shall have put down all rule;' 'for he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet,' ver. 25. Satan is cast already, his doom is past upon him, as Adam's was upon his first sin, but full execution is stayed till the end of the world. The devil knows it; it is an article in his creed, which made him trembling ask Christ why he came to torment him before his time.

Use First. This brings ill news to the wicked. Your princes cannot long sit in his throne. Sinners at present have a merry time of it, if it would hold; they rejoice, while Christ's disciples weep and mourn; they rustle in their silks, while the saint goes in his rags. Princes are not more careful to oblige their courtiers with pensions and preferments, than the devil is to gratify his followers. He hath his rewards also: 'All this will I give thee.' 'Am not I able to promote thee?' saith Balak to Balaam. Oh, it is strange—and yet not strange, considering the degeneracy of man's nature—to see how Satan carries sinners after him with this golden hook. Let him but present such a bait as honour, pelf, or pleasure, and their hearts skip after it, as a dog would after a crust. He makes them sin for a morsel of bread. Oh the naughty heart of man loves the wages of unrighteousness, which the devil promiseth, so dearly, that it fears not the dreadful wages which the great God threatens. As sometimes see a spaniel so greedy of a bone, that he will leap into the very river for it, if you throw it thither,

and by the time he comes with much ado thither, it is sunk, and he gets nothing but a mouthful of water for his pains—thus sinners will [go] after their desired pleasures, honours, and profits, swimming through the very threatenings of the Word to them. And sometimes they lose even what they gaped for there. Thus God kept Balaam, as Balak told him, 'from honour,' Num. 24:11. But however they speed here, they are sure to lose themselves everlastingly without repentance. They that are resolved they will have these things, are the men that will fall into the devil's snare, and are led into those foolish and hurtful lusts, which will drown them in destruction and perdition, I Tim. 6:9. O poor sinners! were it not wisdom, before you truck<sup>17</sup> with the devil, to inquire what title he can give you to these goodly vanities? will he settle them as a free estate upon you? can he secure your bargain, and keep you from suits of law? or is he able to put two lives into the purchase, that when you die, you may not be left destitute in another world? Alas, poor wretches! you shall ere long see what a cheat he hath put on you, from whom you are like to have nought but caveat emptor—let the buyer look to that; yea, this great prince that is so brag to tell what he will give you, must down himself; and a sad prince must needs make a sad court. O what howling will there then be of Satan and his vassals together! O but, saith the sinner, the pleasures and honour sin and Satan offer are present, and that which Christ promiseth we must stay for. This, indeed, that which takes most. Demas, saith Paul, forsook me, 'having loved this present world,' II Tim. 4:10. It is present, indeed, sinners, for you cannot say it will be yours the next moment. Your present felicity is going, and the saints', though future, is coming, never to go; and who, for a gulp of pottage and sensual enjoyments at present, would part with a reversion of such a kingdom? Except thou art of his mind, who thought he had nothing but what he had swallowed down his throat, [thou wouldst not].

Hœc habeo quœ edi, quœ excurata libido Hausit<sup>18</sup>.

17. Truck—to exchange goods, to barter.

18. I have, what I have eaten, and whatever my satiated  
(continued...)

This Cicero could say was more fit to be writ on an ox's grave than [on] a man's. Vile wretch, that think-est it is not better to deal with God for time, than [with] the devil for ready pay. Tertullian wonders at the folly of the Roman's ambition, who would endure all manner of hardship in field and fight, for no other thing but to obtain at last the honour to be consul, which he calls<sup>19</sup> 'a joy that flies away at the year's end.' But O! what desperate madness is it of sinners then, not to endure a little hardship here, but [to] entail on themselves the eternal wrath of God hereafter, for the short feast and running banquet their lusts entertain them here withal; which often is not *gaudium unius horæ*—a joy that lasts an hour.

Use Second. Let this encourage thee, O Christian, in thy conflict with Satan—the skirmish may be sharp, but it cannot be long. Let him tempt thee, and his wicked instruments trounce<sup>20</sup> thee, it is but a little while, and thou shalt be rid of both their evil neighbourhoods. The cloud while it drops is rolling over thy head, and then comes fair weather, an eternal sunshine of glory. Canst thou not watch with Christ one hour or two? keep the field a few days? If thou yield thou art undone for ever. Persevere but while [until] the battle is over, and thine enemy shall never rally more. Bid faith look through the key-hole of the promise, and tell thee what it sees there laid up for him that overcomes; bid it listen and tell thee whether it cannot hear the shout of those crowned saints, as of those that are dividing the spoil, and receiving the reward of all their services and sufferings here on earth. And dost thou stand on the other side afraid to wet thy foot with those sufferings and temptations, which, like a little splash of water, run between thee and glory?

[The place where Satan rules.]

SECOND. [Satan's empire is confined to place.]  
The place where the devil rules is in this world, that

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18. (...continued)  
desire has drunk in.

19. *Unias anni volaticum gaudium.*

20. To trounce—to punish or beat severely.

is, here below, not in heaven. He is the ruler of this lower world, not of the heavenly. The highest the devil can go is the air; [he is] called the prince thereof, as being the utmost marches of his empire; he hath nothing to do with the upper world. Heaven fears no devil, and therefore its gates stand always open. Never durst this fiend look into that holy place since he was first expelled, but [he] rangeth to and fro here below as a vagabond creature, excommunicated the presence of God, doing what mischief he can to saints on their way to heaven. But is not this matter of great joy, that Satan hath no power there, where the saints' happiness lies? What hast thou, Christian, which thou needest value, that is not there? Thy Christ is there, and if thou lovest him, thy heart also, which lives in the bosom of its Beloved. Thy friends and kindred in Christ are there, or expected, with whom thou shalt have a merry meeting in thy Father's house, notwithstanding the snare on Tabor, the plots of Satan which lie in the way. O friends, get a title to that kingdom, and you are above the flight of this kite. This made Job a happy man indeed, who, when the devil had plundered him to his skin, and worried him almost out of that too, could then even vouch Christ, in the face of death and devils, to be his Redeemer; whom he should with those eyes, that now stood full with brinish tears, behold, and that for himself as his own portion. It is sad with him indeed, who is robbed of all he is worth at once; but this can never be said of a saint. The devil took away Job's purse, as I may say, which put him into some straits, but he had a God in heaven that put him into stock again. Some spending-money thou hast at present in thy purse, in the activity of thy faith, the evidence of thy sonship, and comfort flowing from the same, enlargement in duty and the like. These Satan may for a time disturb, yea, deprive thee of, but he cannot come to the rolls, to blot thy name out of the book of life; he cannot null thy faith, make void thy relation, dry up thy comfort in the spring, though [he may] dam up the stream; nor [can he] hinder thee a happy issue of thy whole war with sin, though [he may] worst thee in a private skirmish; these all are kept in heaven, among God's own crown-jewels, who is said to keep us by his 'power through faith unto salvation.'

[The subjects over which Satan rules.]

THIRD. [The subjects of Satan's empire are stunted.] The third boundary of the devil's principality is in regard of his subjects, and they are described here to be the darkness of this world, that is, such who are in darkness. This word is used sometimes to express the desolate condition of a creature in some great distress, 'He that walketh in darkness, and hath no light,' Isa. 50:10; sometimes to express the nature of all sin; so, Eph. 5:11, sin is called the 'works of darkness;' sometimes the particular sin of ignorance; [and is] often is set out by the darkness of the night, blindness of the eye. All these I conceive may be meant, but chiefly the latter; for though Satan makes a foul stir in the soul that is in the darkness of sorrow, whether it be from outward crosses or inward desertions; yet if the creature be not in the darkness of sin at the same time, though he may disturb his peace as an enemy, yet [he] cannot be said to rule as a prince. Sin only sets Satan in the throne. So that I shall take the words in the two latter interpretations. First. [I take them] for the darkness of sin in general. Second. For the darkness of ignorance in special. And the sense will be, that the devil's rule is over those that are in a state of sin and ignorance, not over those who are sinful or ignorant. [Were it] so, he would take hold of saints as well as others; but [it is] over those who are in a state of sin, which is set out by the abstract, 'rulers of the darkness,' the more to express the fulness of the sin and ignorance that possesseth Satan's slaves. The notes [or DOCTRINES] will be two. FIRST. Every soul in a state of sin is under the rule of Satan. SECOND. Ignorance above other sins enslaves a soul to Satan; and therefore all sins are set out by that which chiefly expresseth this, namely, darkness.

[Souls in a STATE OF SIN  
are subject to Satan's rules.]

DOCTRINE FIRST. Every soul in a state of sin is under the rule of Satan; under which point these two things must be inquired. First. The reason why sin is set out by darkness. Second. How every one in such a state appears to be under the devil's rule.

First. [The reason why sin is set out by dark-

ness.]

1. Sin may be called darkness, because the spring and common cause of sin in man is darkness. The external cause [is] Satan, who is the great promoter of it; he is a cursed spirit, held in chains of darkness. The internal is the blindness and darkness of the soul. We may say when anyone sins, he doth he knows not what, as Christ said of his murderers. Did the creature know the true worth of the soul which he now sells for a song, the glorious amiable nature of God and his holy ways, the matchless love of God in Christ, the poisonous nature of sin, and all these, not by a sudden beam darted into the window at a sermon, and gone again like a flash of lightning, but by an abiding light, it would spoil the devil's market. Poor creatures would not readily take this toad into their bosom. Sin goes in a disguise, and so is welcome.

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

(1.) Sin bring darkness into the soul naturally. There is a noxious quality in sin offensive to the understanding, which is to the soul what the eye and palate are to the body; it discerns of things, and distinguisheth true from false, as the eye white from black; it trieth words, as the mouth tasteth meats. Now as there are some things bad for the sight, and others bad for the palate, vitiating it, so that it shall not know sweet from bitter; so here sin besots the creature and makes it injudicious, that he, who could see such a practice absurd and base in others before, when once he hath drunk off this enchanting cup himself—as one that hath foredone his understanding—is mad of it himself, not able to see the evil of it, or use his reason against it. Thus Saul, before he had debauched his conscience, thinks the witch worthy of death; but after he had trodden his conscience hard with other foul sins, goes to ask counsel of one himself.

(2.) Sin brings darkness into the soul judicially. Such have been threatened, whose ear God hath been trying to open and instruct, and have run out of God's school into the devil's, by rebelling against light, that they shall 'die without knowledge,' Job. 36:10, 12. What! should the candle burn waste, when the creature hath more mind to play than work?

3. Sin may be called darkness, because it runs

into darkness. Impostors bring in their damnable heresies privily, like those who sell bad ware. Loath to come to the market, where the standard tries all, [they] put it off in secret. So in moral wickedness, sinners like beasts go out in the night for their prey, loath to be seen, afraid to come where they should be found out. Nothing more terrible to sinners than [the] light of truth, because their deeds are evil, *John* 3:19. Felix was so nettled with what Paul spake, that he could not sit out the sermon, but flings away in haste, and adjourns the hearing of Paul till a convenient season, but he could never find one. The sun is not more troublesome in hot countries, than truth is to those who sit under the powerful preaching of it; and therefore as those seldom come abroad in the heat of the day, and when they must, have their devices over their heads to screen them from the sun, so sinners shun as much as may be the preaching of the Word; but if they must go, to keep in with their relations, or for other carnal advantages, they, if possible, will keep off the power of truth, either by sleeping the sermon away, or prating it away with any foolish imagination which Satan sends to bear them company and chat with them at such a time; or by choosing such a cool preacher to sit under, whose toothless discourse shall rather flatter than trouble, rather tickle their fancy than prick their consciences, and then their sore eyes can look upon the light. [They love truth flourishing, who do not love it when it is confuting<sup>21</sup>.] They dare handle and look on the sword with delight when in a rich scabbard, who would run away to see it drawn.

4. Sin may be called darkness for its uncomfortableness, and that in a threefold respect.

(1.) Darkness is uncomfortable, as it shuts out of all employment. What could the Egyptians do under the plague of darkness but sit still? and this to an active spirit is trouble enough. Thus in a state of sin man is an unserviceable creature, he can do his God no service acceptably, spoils everything he takes in hand; like one running up and down in a shop when the windows are shut, he doth nothing right. It may be writ on the grave of every sinner, who lives and

dies in that state, 'Here lies the man that never did God an hour's work in all his life.'

(2.) Darkness is uncomfortable in point of enjoyment. Be there never such rare pictures in the room, if dark, who the better? A soul in a state of sin may possess much, but he enjoys nothing; this is a sore evil, and little thought of. One thought of its state of enmity to God, would drop bitterness into every cup; all he hath smells of hellfire; and a man at a rich feast would enjoy it sure but little, if he smelt fire, ready to burn his house and himself in it.

(3.) Darkness is uncomfortable, as it fills with terrors. Fears in the night are most dreadful; a state of sin is a state of fear. Men that owe much, have no quiet, but when they are asleep, and not then neither, the cares and fears of the day sink so deep, as makes their rest troublesome and unquiet in the night. The wicked hath no peace, but when his conscience sleeps, and that sleeps but brokenly, awaking often with sick fits of terror; when he hath most prosperity, he is scared like a flock of birds in a corn-field, at every piece going off. He eats in fear, and drinks in fear; when afflicted, he expects worse behind, and knows not what this cloud may spread to, and where it may lay him, whether in hell or not, he knows not, and therefore trembles, as one in the dark, not knowing but his next step may be into the pit.

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

Second. Let us see how it appears, that such as are under a state of sin, are under the rule of Satan. Sinners are called the children of the devil, *1 John* 3:10; and who rules the child, but the father? They are slaves; who rules the slave, but the master? They are the very mansion-house of the devil; where hath a man command, but in his own house? 'I will return into my house,' *Matt.* 12:44. As if the devil had said, I have walked among the saints of God, to and fro,

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21. Florescentem amant veritatem, qui non redarguentem.

knocking at this door and that, and none will bid me welcome, I can find no rest; well, I know where I may be bold, I will even go to my own house, and there I am sure to rule the roost without control: and when he comes, he finds it empty, swept and garnished, that is all ready for his entertainment. Servants make the house trim and handsome against their master comes home, especially when he brings guests with him, as here the devil brings seven more.

Look to the sinner, there is nothing he is or hath, but the devil hath dominion over it; he rules the whole man, their minds blinding them. All the sinner's apprehensions of things are shaped by Satan; he looks on sin with the devil's spectacles, he reads the word with the devil's comment, he sees nothing in its native colours, but is under a continual delusion. The very wisdom of a wicked man is said to be devilish, James 3:15, *δαίμονιώδης*, or devil-like, because taught by the devil, and also such as the devil's is, wise only to do evil. He commands their wills, though not to force them, yet effectually to draw them. His work, saith Christ, ye will do. You are resolved on your way, the devil hath got your hearts, and him you will obey; and therefore when Christ comes to recover his throne, he finds the soul in an uproar, as Ephesus at Paul's sermon, crying him down, and Diana up. 'We will not have this man to reign over us;' 'what is the Almighty that we should serve him?' He rules over all their members; they are called weapons of unrighteousness, all at the devil's service, as all the arms of a kingdom, to defend the prince against any that shall invade—the head to plot, the hand to act, the feet swift to carry the body up and down about his service; he rules over all he hath. Let God come in a poor member, and beseech him to lend him a penny, or bestow a morsel to refresh his craving bowels, and the covetous wretch his hand of charity is withered, and he cannot stretch it forth; but let Satan call, and his purse flies open and heart also. Nabal, that could not spare a few fragments for David and his followers, this churl could make a feast like a prince, to satiate his lust of gluttony and drunkenness. He commands their time; when God calls to duty, to pray, to hear, no time all the week to be spared for that; but if the sinner hears there is a merry-meeting, a knot of good fellows at the alehouse, all is thrown aside to wait on his lord and mas-

ter. Calling left at six and sevens; yea, wife and children crying, may be starving; while the wretch is pouring out their very blood, in wasting their livelihood, at the foot of his lust. The sinner is 'in bond of iniquity,' and being bound he must obey. He is said to go after his lust, as the fool to the stocks, Prov. 7:22. The pinioned malefactor can as soon untie his own arms and legs, and so run from his keeper, as he from his lusts. They are 'servants,' and their members 'instruments of sin;' even as the workman takes up his axe and it resists not, so doth Satan dispose of them, except God saith nay.

[Application of this doctrine, 'That the soul in a state of sin in under the rule of Satan.']

See here the deplored condition of every one in a state of sin. He is under the rule of Satan and government of hell. What tongue can utter, what heart can conceive the misery of this state? It was a dismal day which Christ foretold, Matt 24, when the 'abomination of desolation' should be seen standing in the holy place; then, saith Christ, let him that is in Judea flee into the mountains. But what was that to this? they were but men, though abominable, these devils. They did but stand in the material temple, and defile and deface that: but these display their banners in the souls of men, pollute that throne which is more glorious than the material heaven itself, made for God alone to sit in. They exercised their cruelties at furthest on the bodies of men, killing and torturing them; here the precious souls of men are destroyed. When David would curse to purpose the enemies of God, he prays that Satan may be at their right hand. It is strange that sinners should no more tremble at this, who, should they see but their swine, or a beast bewitched and possessed of the devil, run headlong into the sea, would cry out as half undone: and is not one soul more worth than all these? What a plague is it to have Satan possess thy heart and spirit, hurrying thee in the fury of thy lusts to perdition? O poor man! what a sad change thou hast made? Thou who wouldst not sit under the meek and peaceful government of God, thy rightful Lord, art paid for thy rebellion against him, in the cruelty of this tyrant, who writes all his laws in the blood of his subjects. And why will you sit any longer, O sinners, under the

shadow of this bramble, from whom you can expect nothing but eternal fire to come at last and devour you? Behold, Christ is in the field, sent of God to recover his right and your liberty. His royal standard is pitched in the gospel, and proclamation made, that if any poor sinners, weary of the devil's government, and heavy laden with the miserable chains of his spiritual bondage, so as these irons of his sins enter into his very soul to afflict it with the sense of them—shall thus come and repair to Christ—he shall have protection from God's justice, the devil's wrath and sin's dominion; in a word, he shall have rest, and that glorious, Matt. 11:28.

Usually when a people have been ground with the oppression of some bloody tyrant, they are apt enough to long for a change, and to listen to any overture that gives them hope of liberty, though reached by the hand of a stranger, who may prove as bad as the other, yet bondage is so grievous, that people desire to change, as sick men their beds, though they find little ease thereby. Why then should deliverance be unwelcome to you sinners?—deliverance brought, not by a stranger whom you need fear what his design is upon you, but [by] near kinsman in blood, who cannot mean you ill, but he must first hate his own flesh; and whoever did that? To be sure not he, who though he took part of our flesh, that he might have the right of being our Redeemer, yet would have no kindred with us in the sinfulness of our nature, Heb. 2:14, 15. And it is sin that is cruel, yea, to our own flesh. What can you expect from him but pure mercy, who is himself pure? They are 'the mercies of the wicked which are cruel,' Prov. 12:10. Believe it, sirs, Christ counts it his honour, that he is a king of a willing people, and not of slaves. He comes to make you free, not to bring you into bondage, to make you kings, not vassals. None give Christ an evil word, but those who never were his subjects. Inquire but of those who have tried both Satan's service and Christ's, they are best able to resolve you what they are. You see when a soul comes over from Satan's quarters unto Christ, and has but once the experience of that sweetness which is in his service, there is no getting him back to his old drudgery; as they say of those who come out of the north, which is cold and poor, they like the warm south so well, they seldom or never go back more. What more dreadful to a

gracious soul, than to be delivered into the hands of Satan? or fall under the power of his lusts? It would choose rather to leap into a burning furnace, than be commanded by them. This is the great request a child of God makes, that he would rather whip him in his house, than turn him out of it to become a prey to Satan.

O sinners, did you know—which you cannot till you come over to Christ, and embrace him as your Lord and Saviour—what the privileges of Christ's servants are, and what gentle usage saints have at Christ's hands, you would say these are the only happy men in the world which stand continually before him. His laws are writ, not with his subjects' blood, as Satan's are, but with his own. All his commands are acts of grace, it is a favour to be employed about them. To you it is given to believe, yea, to suffer, Php. 1:29. Such an honour the saint esteems it to do anything he commands, that they count God rewards them for one piece of service, if he enables them for another. 'This I had,' saith David, 'because I kept thy precepts,' Ps. 119:56; what was the great reward he got? 'I have remembered thy name, O Lord, in the night, and have kept thy law,' ver. 55; then follows, 'This I had.' He got more strength and skill to keep the law for the future, by his obedience past, and was not well paid, think you, for his pains? There is 'fruit' even in 'holiness,' the Christian hath in hand, which he eats while he is at work, that may stay his stomach until his full reward comes, which is 'eternal life,' Rom. 6:22. Jesus Christ is a prince that loves to see his people thrive and grow rich under his government. This is he whom sinners are afraid of, that when he sets open their prison, and bids them come forth, they choose rather to bore their ears to the devil's post, than enjoy this blessed liberty. It is no wonder that some of the saints have, indeed, 'when tortured, not accepted deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection,' Heb. 11:35. But what a riddle is this, that forlorn souls bound with the chains of their lusts, and the irresistible decree of God for their damnation, if they believe not on the Lord Jesus, should, as they are driving to execution, refuse deliverance! This may set heaven and earth on wondering. Surely, dying in their sins, they cannot hope for a better resurrection than they have a death. I am afraid rather, that they do not firmly believe they shall have any resurrection,

and then no wonder they make so light of Christ's offer, who think themselves safe, when once earthed in this burrow of the grave. But let sinners know, it is not the grave can hold them, when the day of assize comes, and the Judge calls for the prisoners to the bar. The grave was never intended to be a sanctuary to defend sinners from the hand of justice, but a close prison to secure them against the day of trial, that they may be forthcoming. Then sinners shall be digged out of their burrows, and dragged out of their holes, to answer their contempt of Christ and his grace. O how will you be astonished to see him become your judge, whom you now refuse to be your king! to hear that gospel witness against you for your damnation, which at the same time shall acquit others for their salvation! What think you to do, sinners, in that day? Wilt thou cry and scream for mercy at Christ's hands? Alas, when the sentence is passed, thy face will immediately be covered; condemned prisoners are not allowed to speak: tears then are unprofitable, when no place left for repentance, either in Christ's heart or [in] thine own. Or meanest thou to apply thyself to thy old lord, in whose service thou hast undone thy soul, and cry to him, as she to Ahab, Help, O king! Alas! thine eye shall see him in the same condemnation with thyself. Hadst thou not better now renounce the devil's rule, while thou mayest be received into Christ's government?—pour out thy tears and cry now for mercy and grace when they are to be had, than to save them for another world to no purpose?

[How one born a slave to sin may be translated into the kingdom of Christ.]

Question. But possibly thou wilt say, How may I, that am a home-born slave to sin, yea, who have lived so many years under his cursed rule, get out of his dominion and power, and be translated into the kingdom of Christ?

Answer. The difficulty of this great work lies not in prevailing with Christ to receive thee for his subject, who refuseth none that in truth of heart desire to come under his shadow. It doth not stand with his design to reject any such. Do physicians use to chide their patients away? lawyers their clients? or generals discourage those who fall off from the enemy and

come to their side? surely no. When David was in the field, it is said, 'Every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them,' 1 Sam. 22:2. And so will Christ be to every one that is truly discontented with Satan's government, and upon an inward dislike thereof repairs to him. But the main business will be to take thee off from thy engagements to thy lusts and Satan; till which be done, Christ will not own thee as a subject, but look on thee as a spy. It fares with sinners as with servants. There may be fallings out between them and their masters, and high words pass between them, that you would think they would take up their pack and be gone in all haste; but the fray is soon over, and by next morning all is forgot, and their servants are as hard at their work as ever. O how oft are sinners taking their leave of their lusts, and giving warning to their old masters, [that] will repent and reform, and what not; but in a few days they have repented of their repentance, and deformed their reformings, which shows they were drunk with some passion when they thought or spake this, and no wonder they reverse all when they come to their true temper. Now because Satan has many policies by which he useth to keep his hold of sinners, I shall discover some of them, which if thou canst withstand, it will be no hard matter to bring thee out of his power and rule.

[Policies of Satan which must be withstood if we would escape from his rule.]

First. Satan doth his utmost, that sinners may not have any serious thoughts of the miserable state they are in, while under his rule; or hear anything from others which might the least unsettle their minds from his service. Consideration, he knows, is the first step to repentance. He that doth not consider his ways what they are, and whither they lead him, is not like to change them in haste. Israel stirred not, while [until] Moses came and had some discourse with them about their woeful slavery, and the gracious thoughts of God towards them; and then they began to desire to be gone. Pharaoh soon be thought him what consequence might follow upon this, and cunningly labours to prevent by doubling

their task: 'Ye are idle, ye are idle: therefore ye say, Let us go and do sacrifice to the Lord. Go therefore now, and work,' Ex. 5:17, 18. As if he had said, 'Have you so much spare time to think of gadding into the wilderness, and have you your seditious conventicles, Moses and you, to lay your plots together? I will break the knot: give them more work; scatter them all over the land to gather straw, that they may not meet to entice one another's hearts from my service.' Thus Satan is very jealous of the sinner, afraid that every Christian that speaks to him, or ordinance he hears, should inveigle him. By his good-will he should come at neither, no, nor have a thought of heaven or hell from one end of the week to the other; and that he may have as few as may be, he keeps him full-handed with work. The sinner grinds, and he is filling the hopper, that the mill may not stand still. He is with the sinner as soon as he wakes, and fills his wretched heart with some wicked thoughts, which as a morning draught may keep him from the infection of any savour of good that may be breathed on him by others in the daytime. All the day long he watched him, as the master would do his man that he fears will run away. and at night he like a careful jailor locks him up again in his chamber with more bolts and fetters upon him, not suffering him to sleep as he lies on his bed till he hath done some mischief. Ah, poor wretch! Was ever slave so looked to? As long as the devil can keep thee thus, thou art his own sure enough. The prodigal came to himself, before he came to his father. He considered with himself what a starving condition he was in, his husks were poor meat, and yet he had not enough of them neither, and how easily he might mend his commons, if he had but grace to go home and humble himself to his father. Now and not till now he goes. Resolve thus, poor sinner, to sit down and consider what thy state is, and what it might be, if thou wouldst but change the bondage of Satan for the sweet government of Jesus Christ. First ask thy soul whether the devil can, after thou hast worn out thy miserable life here in this drudgery, prefer thee to a happy state in the other world, or so much as secure thee from a state of torment and woe? If he cannot, whether there not be one Jesus Christ who is able and willing to do it? and if so, whether it be not bloody cruelty to thy precious soul to stay any longer under the shadow of this

bramble, when thou mayest make so blessed a change? A few of these thought abidingly laid home to thy soul, may—God striking in with them—shake the foundations of the devil's prison, and make thee haste as fast from him, as one out of a house on fire about his ears.

Second. Satan hath his instruments to oppose the messengers and overtures which God sends by them to bring the sinner out of Satan's rule. When Moses comes to deliver Israel out of Egyptian bondage, up start Jannes and Jambres to resist him. When Paul preacheth to the deputy, the devil hath his chaplain at court to hinder him—Elymas, one that was full of all subtlety and mischief. Some or other, to be sure, he will find, when God is parleying with a sinner, and persuading him to come over to Christ, that shall labour to clog the work. Either carnal friends—these he sends to plead his cause; or old companions in wickedness—these bestir them; one while [by] labouring to jeer him out of his new way, or, if that take not, by turning their old love into bitter wrath against him for playing the apostate and leaving him so. Or if yet he will not be stopped in his way, then he hath his daubing preachers, still like Job's messengers the last the worst, who with their soul-flattering, or rather murdering doctrine, shall go about to heal his wound 'slightly.' Now as ever you desire to get out of Satan's bondage, have a care of all these; harden thyself against the entreaties of carnal friends and relations. Resolve, that if thy children should hang about thy knees to keep thee from Christ, thou wilt throw them away; [resolve], if thy father and mother should lie prostrate at thy foot, rather than not go to Christ, to go over their very backs to him. Never can we part with their love upon such advantageous terms as these. And for thy brethren in iniquity, I hope thou dost not mean to stay while [i.e. until] thou hast their good-will; then even ask the devil's also. Heaven is but little worth if thou hast not a heart to despise a little shame, and bear a few frumps<sup>22</sup> from profane Ishmaels for thy hopes of it. Let them spit on thy face, Christ will wipe it off; let them laugh, so thou winnest. If they follow not thy example before they die, the shame will be their

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22. i.e., Taunts or mockings.

own; God himself shall spit it on their face before men and angels, and then kick them into hell. And lastly, escape but the snare of those flatterers, who use their tongues only to lick sinners' consciences whole with their soothing doctrine, and thou art fair for a Christ; ask not counsel of them; they may go about to give you ease, with which they sow up thy wounds, must be ripped open, or thou diest for it.

Third. Satan labours to while off the sinner with delays. Floating, flitting thoughts of repenting he fears not; he can give sinners leave to talk what they will do, so he can beg time, and by his art keep such thoughts from coming to a head, and ripening into a present resolution. Few are in hell but thought of repenting, but Satan so handled the matter, that they could never pitch upon the time in earnest when to do it. If ever thou meanest to get out of his clutches, fly out of his doors and run for thy life, wherever this warning finds thee; stay not, though in the midst of thy joys, with which thy lusts entertain thee. As the paper which came to Brentius—from that senator his dear friend—took him at supper with his wife and children, and bade him flee *citò, citus, citissimè*—[quickly, more quickly, as quickly as possible]—which he did, leaving his dear company and sweet cheer; so do thou, or else thou mayest repent thy stay when it is too late. A vision charged the wise men to go back another way, and not so much as see Herod, though he had charged them otherwise. O go not back, drunkard, to thy good fellows; adulterer, to thy queans<sup>23</sup>; covetous wretch, to thy usury and unlawful gain: turn another way and gratify not the devil a moment. The command saith, 'Now repent;' the imperative hath no future tense. God saith, 'To-day, while it is called to-day.' The devil saith, To-morrow. Which wilt thou obey, God or him? Thou sayest, thou meanest at last to do it, then why not now? Wilt thou stand with God a day or two, huckle with him for a penny? Heaven is not such a hard pennyworth, but thou mayest come up to his terms. And which is the morrow thou meanest? Thou hast but a day in thy life, for aught thou knowest, where then canst thou find a morrow for repentance? But

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23. Queans: — a disreputable woman; specifically a prostitute. — SDB

shouldst thou have as many days to come as Methuselah lived, yet know, sin is hereditary, and such sort of diseases grow more upon us with our years. It is with long-accustomed sinners, as with those who have sat long under a government, they rather like to be as they are, though but ill on it, than think of a change; or like those who in a journey have gone out of their way all the day, will rather take any new way, over hedge and ditch, than think of going so far and back to be set right.

Fourth. Satan labours to compromise the business, and bring it to a composition between him and Christ. When conscience will not be pacified, then Satan for quiet's sake will yield to something, as Pharaoh with Moses; after much ado he is willing they should go. 'And Pharaoh said, I will let you go, that you may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness,' Ex. 8:28. But then comes this caution, 'Only you shall not go very far away.' Thus Satan will yield; the sinner may pray, and hear the word, and make a goodly profession, so he doth not go very far, but that he may have him again at night. If God hath the matins, he looks for the vigils, and thus he is content the day should be divided. Doth conscience press a reformation and change of the sinner's course? rather than fail, he will grant that also. Yet as Pharaoh, when he yielded they should go, he meant their little ones should stay behind as a pledge for those that went, Ex. 10:11; so Satan must have some one sin that must be spared, and no matter though it be a little one. Now if every one would get out of the devil's rule, make no composition with him. Christ will be king or no king. Not a hoof must be left behind, or anything which may make an errand for thee afterwards to return. Take therefore thy everlasting farewell of every sin, as to the sincere and fixed purpose of thy heart, or thou dost nothing. Paul joins his faith and purpose together, II Tim. 3:10, not the one without the other. At the promulgation of the law in Sinai, God did, as it were, give Israel the oath of allegiance to him; then he told them what law he would rule them by, and they gave their consent; this was the espousal which God puts them in mind of, Jer. 2, in which they were solemnly married together, as king and subjects. Now mark, before God would do this, he will have them out of Egypt. They could not obey his laws and Pharaoh's idolatrous customs also, and therefore he

will have them out, before he solemnly espouseth them to be a nation peculiarly his. Thou must be a widow before Christ marry thee; he will not lie beside another's wife. O that it were come to this! then the match would soon be made between Christ and thee. Let me ask thee, poor soul, hast thou seriously considered who Christ is, and what his sweet government is? and couldst thou find in thy heart—out of an inward abhorrency of sin and Satan, and a liking to Christ—to renounce sin and Satan, and choose Christ for thy Lord? Doth thy soul say, as Rebekah, 'I will go,' if I could tell how to get to him. But alas, I am here a poor prisoner, I cannot shake off my fetters, and set myself at liberty to come unto Christ.' Well, poor soul, canst thou groan heartily under thy bondage? then for thy comfort know thy deliverance is at the door; he that heard the cry of Israel in Egypt, will hear thine also, yea, [will] come and save thee out of the hands of thy lusts. He will not act as some, who entangle thy affections by making love to thee, and then give over the suit and come at thee no more. If Christ has won thy heart, he will be true to thee, and be at all the cost to bring thee out of thy prison-house also, yea, take the pains to come for thee himself, and bring with him those wedding garments in which he will carry thee from thy prison to his Father's house with joy, where thou shalt live, not only as a subject under his law, but as a bride in the bosom of his love. And what can be added to thy happiness more? when thy prince is thy husband, and that such a prince to whom all other are vassals, even the Prince of the world himself; and yet so gracious, that his majesty hinders not his familiar converse with thee a poor creature, but adds to the condescendence thereof; therefore God chooseth to mix names of greatness and relation together, the one to sweeten the other: 'Thy Maker is thine husband, thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called,' Isa. 54:5. And to usher in those promises with titles of greatest dread and terror to the creature, that hold forth the greatest condescensions of love; how can God stoop lower than to come and dwell with a poor humble soul? which is more than if he had said, such a one should dwell with him; for a beggar to live at court is not so much as the king to dwell with him in this cottage. Yet this promise is ushered in with the most magnificent

titles: 'Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit,' Isa. 57:15; and why such titles, but to take away the fears which his saints are prone to take up from them? Will the high and lofty One, saith the humble soul, look on a poor worm? will the Holy God come near such an unclean creature? saith the contrite one. Isaiah himself cried he was undone at the sight of God, and this attribute proclaimed before him, Isa. 6. Now God prefixeth these, that the creature may know his majesty and holiness, which seems so terrible to us, are no prejudice to his love; yea, so gracious a prince is thy husband, that he delights rather his saint should call him by names of love than state. 'Thou shalt call me Ishi; and shalt call me no more Baali. Hosea 2:16, that is, my husband, not my Lord.

[Souls in A STATE OF IGNORANCE  
are subject to Satan's rule.]

**DOCTRINE SECOND.** Ignorance above other sins enslaves a soul to Satan. A knowing man may be his slave, but an ignorant one can be no other. Knowledge doth not make the heart good, but it is impossible that without knowledge it should be good. There are some sins which an ignorant person cannot commit, there are more which he cannot but commit; knowledge is the key, Luke 11:52; Christ the door, John 10. Christ opens heaven. Knowledge opens Christ. In three particulars the point will appear more fully. First. Ignorance opens a door for sin to enter. Second. As ignorance lets sin in, so it locks it up in the soul, and the soul in it. Third. as it locks it up, so it shuts all means of help out.

First. Ignorance opens the door for Satan to enter in with his troops of lusts. Where the watch is blind, the city is soon taken. An ignorant man sins, and like drunken Lot, he knows not when the tempter comes, nor when he goes; he is like a man that walks in his sleep, knows not where he is, nor what he does. 'Father, forgive them,' saith Christ, 'they know not what they do.' The apostle, 1 Cor. 15, having reproved the sensuality of some, ver. 32, who made the consideration of death, by which others are awed from sin, a provocative to sin, 'Let us eat and drink,

for to-morrow we shall die;' he gives an account of this absurd reasoning: All have not the knowledge of God. An ignorant person is a man in shape, and a beast in heart. There is no knowledge in the land, saith the prophet, *Hosea 4:1* and see what a regiment follows this blind captain, swearing, lying, killing, stealing, and what not. We read, *II Tim. 3:6*, of some 'laden with sins;' 'silly women,' and such who never 'come to the knowledge of the truth.' Here are trees full of bitter fruit, and what dung shall we find at the root, that makes them so fruitful, but ignorance?

Second. Ignorance, as it lets sin in, so it locks it up in the soul, and the soul in it. Such a one lies in Satan's inner dungeon, where no light of conviction comes. Darkness inclines to sleep; a blind man and a drowsy conscience go together. When the storm arose, the mariners who were awake fell a praying to their god, but the sleeper fears nothing. Ignorance lays the soul asleep under the hatches of stupidity. God hath planted in the beast a natural fear of that which threatens to hurt it. Go to thrust a beast into a pit, and it hangs back; nature shows its abhorrency. Man being of a nobler nature, and subject to more dangers, God hath set a double guard on him; as [he has] a natural fear of danger, so also a natural shame that covers the face at the doing of any unworthy action. Now an ignorant man hath slipped from both these his keepers; he sins and blusheth not, because he knows not his guilt; he wants that magistrate within which should put him to shame. Neither is he afraid, because he knows not his danger; and therefore he plays with his sin, as the child with the waves, that, by and by, will swallow him up. Conscience is God's alarm to call the sinner up. It doth not always ring in his ear that hath knowledge, being usually set by God to go off at some special hour, when God is speaking in an ordinance, or striking in a providence; but in an ignorant soul this is silent. The clock cannot go when the weights are taken off; conscience is only a witness to what it knows.

Third. Ignorance shuts out the means of recovery. Friends and ministers, yea, Christ himself stands without, and cannot help the creature. As such, threatenings and promises are of no use; he fears not the one, he desires not the other, because he knows neither. Heaven's way cannot be found in the dark, and therefore the first thing God doth, is to

spring in with a light, and let the creature know where he is, and what the way is to get out of his prison-house, without which all attempts to escape are in vain. There is some shimmering light in all. *Non dantur puræ tenebræ* [absolute darkness is not given], I think, is good divinity as well as philosophy. And this night-light may discover many sins, produce inward prickings of conscience [for] them, yea, stir up the creature to step aside, rather than to drown in such broad waters. There are some sins so cruel and costly, that the most prostrate soul may in time be weary of their service for low ends; but what will all this come to, if the creature be not acquainted with Christ, the true way to God, faith and repentance, the only way to Christ? Such a one, after all this bustle, instead of making an escape from Satan, will run full into his mouth another way. There are some ways which at first seem right to the traveller, yet wind about so insensibly, that when a man hath gone far, and thinks himself near home, he is carried back to the place from whence he set forth. This will befall every soul ignorant of Christ, and the way of life through him. After many years' travel, as they think, towards heaven by their good meanings, blind devotions, and reformation, when they shall expect to be within sight of heaven, they shall find themselves even where they were at first, as very slaves to Satan as ever.

[Use or Application.]

USE FIRST. This speaks to you that are parents. See what need you have of instructing your children, and training them up betimes in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Till these chains of darkness be knocked off their minds, there is no possibility of getting them out of the devil's prison. He hath no such tame slave as the ignorant soul. Such a one goes before Satan—as the silly sheep before the butcher—and knows not who he is, nor whether he carries him. And can you see the devil driving your children to the shambles, and not labour to rescue them out of his hands? Bloody parents you are, that can thus harden your bowels against your own flesh. Now the more to provoke you to your duty, take these considerations.

First. Your relation obligeth you to take care of

their precious souls. It is the soul [that] is the child, rather than the body; and therefore in Scripture put for the whole man. Abraham and Lot went forth with all the souls they had gotten in Haran, Gen. 12; so, all the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, that is, all the persons. The body is but the sheath; and if one should leave his sword with you to be kept safely for him, would you throw away the blade, and only preserve the scabbard? And yet parents do commonly judge of their care and love to their children by their providing for the outward man, by their breeding, that teaching them how to live like men, as they say, when they are dead and gone, and [to] comport themselves to their civil place and rank in the world. These things, indeed, are commendable; but is not the most weighty business of all forgotten in the meantime, while no endeavour is used that they may live as Christians, and know how to carry themselves in duty to God and man as such? And can they do this without the knowledge of the holy rule they are to walk by? I am sure David knew no means effectual without this, and therefore propounds the question, 'Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?' and he resolves it in the next words, 'by taking heed thereto according to thy word,' Ps. 119:9. And how shall they compare their way and the Word together, if not instructed? Our children are not born with Bibles in their heads or hearts. And who ought to be the instructor, if not the parent, yea, who will do it with such natural affection? As I have heard sometimes a mother say in other respects, Who can take such pains with my child, and be so careful as myself, that am its mother? Bloody parents then they are who acquaint not their children with God or his Word. What do they but put them under a necessity of perishing, if God stir not up some to show more mercy than themselves to them? Is it any wonder to hear that ship to be sunk or dashed upon the rock, which was put to sea without card or compass? No more is it, they should engulf themselves in sin and perdition, that are thrust forth into the world—which is a sea of temptation—without the knowledge of God or their duty to him. In the fear of God think of it, parents. your children have souls, and these God sets you to watch over. It will be a poor account at the last day, if you can only say, Lord, here are my children, left them rich and wealthy. The rust of that

silver you left them will witness your folly and sin, that you would do so much for that which rusts, and nothing for the enriching their minds with the knowledge of God, which would have endured for ever. Happy if you had left them less money and more knowledge.

Second. Consider it hath ever been the saints' practice to instruct and teach their children the way of God. David we find dropping instruction into his son Solomon: 'Know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind,' 1 Chr. 28:9. Though a king, he did not put it off to his chaplains, but whetted it on him with his own lips. Neither was his queen Bathsheba forgetful of her duty, her gracious counsel is upon record, Prov. 31; and that she may do it with the more seriousness and solemnity, we find her stirring up her motherly bowels, to let her son see she fetched her words deep, even from her heart: 'What, my son? and what, the son of my womb? and what, the son of my vows?' ver.2. Indeed that counsel is most like to go to the heart which comes from thence. Parents know not what impression such melting expressions of their love mingled with their instructions, leave with their children. God bids draw forth our souls to the hungry, that is more than draw forth our purse, which may be done, and the heart hard and churlish. Thus we should draw forth our souls with our instructions. What need I tell of Timothy's mother and grandmother, who acquainted him with the Scripture from his youth? And truly, I think that man calls in question his own saintship, that takes no care to acquaint his child with God, and the way that leads to him. I have known some that, though profane themselves, have been very solicitous their children should have a good education; but never knew I saint that was regardless whether his child knew God or not.

Third. It is an act of great unrighteousness not to instruct our children. We read of some who hold the truth in unrighteousness. Among others, those parents do it that lock up the knowledge of these saving truths from their children, which God hath imparted to themselves. There is a double unrighteousness in it.

1. They are unrighteous to their children, who may lay as much claim to their care of instructing them, as to their labour and industry in laying up a

temporal estate for them. If he should do unrighteously with his child, that should not endeavour to provide for his outward maintenance, or having gathered an estate, should lock it up, and deny his child necessaries, then much more he that lives in ignorance of God, whereby he renders himself incapable of providing for his child's soul, but most of all, he that having gathered a stock of knowledge, yet hides it from his child.

## 2. They are unrighteous to God.

(1.) In that they keep that talent in their own hands which was given to be paid out to their children. When God revealed himself to Abraham, he had respect to Abraham's children, and therefore we find God promising himself this at Abraham's hands, upon which he imparts his mind to him concerning his purpose of destroying Sodom, 'Shall I hide from Abraham,' saith God, 'that thing which I do? I know him that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord,' Gen. 18:17, 19. The church began at first in a family, and was preserved by the godly care of parents in instructing their children and household in the truths of God, whereby the knowledge of God was transmitted from generation to generation, and though the church is not confined to such strait limits, yet every private family is as a little nursery to the church. If the nursery be not carefully planted, the orchard will soon decay. O could you be willing, Christians, that your children, when you are laid in the dust, should be turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine, and prove a generation that do not know God? Atheism needs not be planted; you do enough to make your children such, if you do not endeavour to plant religion in their minds. The very neglect of the gardener to sow and dress his garden, gives advantage enough to the weeds to come up. This is the difference between religion and atheism, Religion doth not grow without planting, but will die even where it is planted, without watering; atheism, irreligion, and profaneness are weeds [that] will grow without setting, but they will not die without plucking up. All care and means are little enough to stub them up. And therefore you that are parents, and do not teach your children, deal the more unrighteously with God, because you neglect the best season in their whole life for planting in them the knowledge of God,

and plucking up the contrary weeds of atheism and irreligion. Young weeds come up with most ease. Simple ignorance in youth becomes wilful ignorance, yea, impudence in age; you will not instruct them when young, and they will scorn that their ministers should, when they are old.

(2.) You deal unrighteously with God, that train not up your children in the knowledge of God. Because your children, if you be Christian parents, are God's children, they stand in a federal relation to him, which the children of others do not; and shall God's children be nurtured with the devil's education? Ignorance is that which he blinds the minds of the children of disobedience withal. Shall God's children have no better breeding? The children of a Jew God made account were born to him, 'Thy sons and thy daughters whom thou hast born unto me,' Eze. 16:20. God had by the covenant which he made with that people, married them unto himself, and therefore as the wife bears her children to her husband, they are his children. So God calls the children of the Jews his, and complains of it as a horrible wickedness in them, that they should not bring them up as his, but offer them up to Moloch; they have 'slain my children,' saith God, ver. 21. And are not the children of a Christian his children, as well as the Jews' were? Hath God altered or recalled the first covenant, and cut off the entail, and darest thou slay not only thy children, but the Lord's also? And is not ignorance that bloody knife that doth it? 'My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge,' Hos. 4:6. Do you not tremble to offer them, not to Moloch but [to] the devil, whom, before, you had given up to God, when you brought them to that solemn ordinance of baptism, and there desired before God and man that they might become covenant-servants to the Lord? and hast thou bound them to him, and never teach them, either who their Lord and Master is, or what their duty is as his servants? Of thy own mouth God will condemn thee.

Fourth. Consider, you who are parents, that by not instructing your children, you entitle yourselves to all the sins they shall commit to their death. We may sin by a proxy, and make another's fact our own. 'Thou hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon,' II Sam. 12:9. So thou mayest pierce Christ, and slay him over and over with the bloody sword of

thy wicked children, if thou beest not the more careful to train them up in the fear of God. There might be something said for that heathen who, when the scholar abused him, fell upon the master and struck him. Indeed it is possible he might be in the most fault. When the child breaks the Sabbath, it is his sin, but more the father's, if he never taught him what the command of God was. And if the parent be accessory to the sin of the child, it will be hard for him to escape a partnership, yea, a precedency in the punishment. O what a sad greeting will such have of their children at the great day! will they not then accuse you to be the murderers of their precious souls, and lay their blood at your door, cursing you to your face that taught them no better? But, grant that, by the interposition of thy timely repentance, thou securest thy soul from the judgement of that day, yet God can scourge thee here for the neglect of thy duty to them. How oft do we see children become heavy crosses to such parents? It is just that they should not know their duty to thee, who didst not teach them their duty to God. Or if thou shouldst not live so long as to see this, yet sure thou canst not but go in sorrow to thy grave, to leave children behind thee that are on their way to hell. Some think that Lot's lingering so long in Sodom, was his loathness to leave his sons-in-law behind him, to perish in the flames. No doubt, good man, it was very grievous to him, and this might make him stay pleading with them, till the angel pulled him away. And certainly nothing makes holy parents more loath to be gone out of this Sodomitical world, than a desire to see their children out of the reach of that fire, before they go, that God will rain upon the heads of sinners. You know not how soon the messenger may come to pluck you hence. Do your best while you are among them to win them home to God.

USE SECOND. To the ministers of the gospel. Let this stir up your bowels of compassion towards those many ignorant souls in your respective congregations, who know not the right hand from the left. This, this is the great destroyer of the country, which ministers should come forth against with all their care and strength. More are swept to hell with this plague of spiritual darkness than [with] any other. Where the light of knowledge and conviction is, there commonly is a sense and pain that accompanies the sin-

ner when he doth evil, which forceth some, now and then, to inquire for a physician, and [to] come in the distress of their spirits to their minister or others for counsel. But the ignorant soul feels no such smart. If the minister stay till he sends for him to instruct him, he may sooner hear the bell go for him, than any messenger come for him. You must seek them out, and not expect they will come to you. These are a sort of people that are afraid more of their remedy than of their disease, and study more to hide their ignorance, than how they may have it cured, which should make us pity them the more, because they pity themselves so little. I confess, it is no small unhappiness to some of us, who have to do with a multitude, that we have neither time nor strength to make our addresses to every particular person in our congregations, and attend on them as their needs require, and yet cannot well satisfy our consciences otherwise. But let us look to it, that though we cannot do to the height of what we would, we be not found wanting in what we may. Let not the difficulty of our province make us like some, who when they see they have more work upon their hands than they can well despatch, grow sick of it, and sit down, out of a lazy despondency, and do just nothing. He that hath a great house running to ruin, and but a small purse—it is better for him to repair now a little, and then a little, than [to] let all fall down, because he cannot do it all at once. Many ministers may complain of their predecessors, that they left them their people more out of repair than their houses, and this makes the work great indeed; as the Jews did, who were to revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish, before they could build the wall; yet it went up, because the people had a mind to work, Neh. 4. O if once our hearts were but filled with zeal for God, and compassion to our people's souls, we would up and be doing, though we could but lay a brick a day, and God would be with us. May be, you who find a people rude and sottishly ignorant, like stones in the quarry, and trees unfelled, shall not bring the work to such perfection in your days as you desire; yet as David did for Solomon, thou mayest, by thy pains in teaching and instructing them, prepare materials for another who shall rear the temple. It is very ordinary for one minister to enter into the labours of another, to reap those by a work of conversion, in whom a former

minister hath cast the seed of knowledge and conviction. And when God comes to reckon with his workmen, the ploughman and the sower shall have his penny, as well as the harvest-man and reaper. O it is a blessed thing to be, as Job saith he was, 'eyes to the blind,' much more to blind souls. Such are the ministers God himself calls pastors after his own heart, that feed his people with knowledge and understanding, Jer. 3:15. But woe to those that are accessory to their people's ignorance. Now a minister may be accessory to the ignorance of his people—

First. By his own ignorance. Knowledge is so fundamental to the work and calling of a minister, that he cannot be one without it. 'Because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children. Hosea 4:6. The want of knowledge in a minister can be such a defect, as cannot be supplied by anything else. Be he never so meek, patient, bountiful, unblamable, if he hath not skill to divide the word aright, he is not cut out for a minister. Everything is good, as it is good for the end it is appointed to. A knife, though it had a haft of diamonds, yet if it will not cut, it is no knife. A bell, if not sound, is no bell. The great work of a minister is to teach others, his lips are to preserve knowledge, he should be as conversant in the things of God as others in their particular trades. Ministers are called lights. If the light then be darkness, how great is the darkness of that people like to be? I know these stars in Christ's hands are not all of the same magnitude. There is a greater glory of gifts and graces shining in some than [in] others; yet so much light is necessary to every minister, as was in the star the wise men saw at Christ's birth, to be able out of the word to direct sinners the safe and true way to Christ and salvation. O sirs, it is a sad way of getting a living by killing of men, as some unskilful physicians do; but much more to get a temporal livelihood by ruining souls through our ignorance. He is a cruel man to the poor passengers, who will undertake to be pilot, when he never so much as learned his compass.

Second. By his negligence. It is all one if the nurse hath no milk in her breasts, or having [it], draws it not forth to her child. There is a woe to the idle shepherd, Zech. 11:17; such as have mouths, but speak not; lips, but not to feed the people with

knowledge. It shall be the people's sin, if they feed not when bread is before them, but woe to us if we give them not meat in due season. O sirs, what shall we say to our Lord that trusts us, if those abilities which he hath given us as market-money to buy bread for our people, be found wrapped up in a napkin of sloth? if that time wherein we should have been teaching and instructing them, shall appear to be wasted in our pleasures, or employed about our carnal profits. That servant shall have but a sad welcome of his master when he comes home, that shall be found out of the way with the key, and the family starving in meantime for want of provision.

Third. By his unedifying preaching; when he preacheth unsound doctrine, which doth not perfect the understanding, but corrupt it. Better he did leave them in simple ignorance, than colour their minds with a false dye; or when that he preacheth is frothy and flashy, no more fit to feed their souls, than husks the prodigal's belly, which, when they know, they are little the wiser for their soul's good. Or, when his discourses are so high flown, that the poor people stand gazing, as those who have lost the sight of their preacher, and at the end of the sermon cannot tell what he would have. Or, those who preach only truths that are for the higher form of professors, who have their senses well exercised; excellent, may be, for the building up three or four eminent saints in the congregation; but in the meantime, the weak ones in the family—who should indeed chiefly be thought on, because least able to guide themselves, or carve for themselves—these are forgotten. He, sure, is an unwise builder that makes a scaffold as high as Paul's steeple, when his work is at the bottom, and he is to lay the foundation, whereas the scaffold should rise as the building goes up. So Paul advanceth in his doctrine, as his hearers do in knowledge: 'Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection,' Heb. 6:1. 'Let us;' it is well, indeed, when the people can keep pace with the preacher. To preach truths and notions above the hearer's capacity, is like a nurse that should go to feed the child with a spoon too big to go into its mouth. We may by such preaching please ourselves and some of higher attainments, but what shall poor ignorant ones do in the meantime? He is the faithful steward that considers both. The preacher is, as Paul saith of

himself, a 'debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise,' Rom. 1:14. [He is] to prepare truths suitable to the degree of his hearers. Let the wise have their portion, but let them be patient to see the weaker in the family served also.

Fourth. A minister may be accessory to the ignorance of his people, when through the scandal of his life he prejudiceth his doctrine; as a cook, who, by his nastiness, makes others afraid to eat what comes out of his foul fingers. Or he may be so, when, through his supercilious carriage, his poor people dare not come to him. He that will do any good in the minister's calling, must be as careful as the fisher, that he doth nothing to scare souls away from him, but all to allure and invite, that they may be toled<sup>24</sup> within the compass of his net.

USE THIRD. [To the ignorant.] Is the ignorant soul such a slave to Satan? Let this stir you up that are ignorant from your seats of sloth whereon, like the blind Egyptians, you sit in darkness, speedily come out of this darkness, or resolve to go down to utter darkness. The covering of Haman's face did tell him that he should not stay in the king's presence. If thou livest in ignorance, it shows thou art in God's black bill. He puts this cover before their eyes in wrath, whom he means to turn off into hell: 'If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost,' II Cor. 4:3. In one place sinners are threatened, 'they shall die without knowledge,' Job 36:12; in another place, they shall die in their sins, John 8:21. He, indeed, that dies without knowledge, dies in his sins; and what more fearful doom can the great God pass upon a creature than this? Better die in a prison, die in a ditch, than die in one's sins. If thou die in thy sins, thou shalt rise in thy sins; as thou fallest asleep in the dust, so thou awakest in the morning of the resurrection; if an ignorant Christless wretch, as such thou shalt be arraigned and judged. That God whom sinners now bid depart from them will then be worth their acquaintance—themselves being judges—but alas! then he will throw their own words in their teeth, and bid them depart from him, he desires not the knowledge of them. O sinners, you shall see at

last, God can better be without your company in heaven, than you could be without his knowledge on earth. Yet, yet it is day, draw your curtains, and behold Christ shining upon your face with gospel-light. Hear wisdom crying in the streets, and Christ piping in your window in the voice of his Spirit and messengers, 'How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you,' Prov. 1:21-23. What can you say, sinners, for your sottish ignorance? Where is your cloak for this sin? The time hath been when the word of the Lord was precious, and there was no open vision, not a Bible to be found in town or country; when the tree of knowledge was forbidden fruit, and none might taste thereof without license from the pope. Happy he that could get a leaf or two of the Testament into a corner, afraid to tell the wife of his bosom! O how sweet were these waters, when they were forced to steal them! but you have the word, or may, in your houses; you have those that open them every Sabbath in your assemblies; many of you, at least, have the offers of your ministers, to take any pains with you in private, passionately beseeching you to pity your souls, and receive instruction; yea, it is the lamentation they generally take up, [that] you will not come unto them that you may receive light. How long may a poor minister sit in his study, before any of the ignorant sort will come upon such an errand? Lawyers have their clients, and physicians their patients; these are sought after, and called up at midnight for counsel; but alas! the soul, which is more worth than raiment and body too, that is neglected, and the minister seldom thought on, till both these be sent away. Perhaps, when the physician gives them over for dead, then we must come and close up those eyes with comfort, which were never opened to see Christ in his truth, or be counted cruel, because we will not sprinkle them with this holy water, and anoint them for the kingdom of heaven, though they know not a step of the way which leads to it. Ah, poor wretches! what comfort would you have us speak to those, to whom God himself speaks terror? Is heaven ours to give to whom we please? or is it in our power to alter the laws of the Most High, and save those whom he condemns? Do you not remember

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24. To tole means to draw by degrees.

the curse that is to fall upon his head ‘that maketh the blind to wander out of the way?’ Deut. 27:18. What curse, then, would be our portion, if we should confirm such blind souls, that are quite out of the way to heaven, encouraging you to go on and expect to reach heaven at last, when, God knows, your feet stand in those paths that lead to eternal death? No, it is written, we cannot, and God will not reverse it; you may read your very names among those damned souls which Christ comes in flaming fire to take vengeance on, who, the apostle tells us, are such ‘that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ,’ II Thes. 1:8. And therefore, in the fear of God, let this provoke you, of what age or sex, rank or condition soever in the world, to labour for the saving knowledge of God in Christ, whom to know is life eternal.

Are you young? Inquire after God betimes, while your parts are fresh, and memory strong, before the throng of worldly cares divert you, or lusts of youth debauch you. The feet of those lusts which have buried millions of others in perdition, stand ready to carry you the same way, if preventing grace come not and deliver you out of their hands, by seasoning your minds with the knowledge of God. This morning’s draught may prevent thy being infected with the ill savours thou mayest receive from the corrupt examples of others. Nay, how long thy stay may be in the world thou knowest not—see whether thou canst not find graves of thy length in the burial-place; and if thou shouldst die ignorant of God and his law, what would then become of thee? The small brush and the old logs, young sinners and those that are withered with age, meet and burn together; or if thou shouldst stay a while longer here, may be because thou wilt not learn now, God will not teach thee then; or if thou shouldst in thy old age get acquaintance with God, yet it is sad to be sowing thy seed, when thou shouldst be reaping thy sheaves; learning to know God, when thou mightest be comforting thyself from the old acquaintance thou hast enjoyed with him.

Are you old and ignorant? Alas, poor creatures! your life in the socket, and this candle of the Lord not set up and lighted in your understanding! your body bowing to the dust, and nature tolling the passing bell, as it were, and you, like one going into the

dark, know not whither death will lead you or leave you. It is like the infirmities of age make you wish your bones were even laid at rest in the grave; but if you should die in this condition, your poor souls would even wish they were here again with their old burdens on their back. Aches and diseases of old age are grievous, but damned souls would thank God if he would bless them with such a heaven as to lie in these pains, to escape the torments of the other. O bethink you before you go hence! The less time you have, the more diligence you must use to gain knowledge. We need not be earnest, one would think, to bid the poor prisoner learn his book, that cannot read, when he knows he shall be hanged if he read not his neck-verse. It is not, indeed, the bare knowing the truths of the gospel saves; but the gross ignorance of them, to be sure, will damn souls.

Are you poor? It is not your poverty is your sin or misery, but your ignorance where the true treasure lies. Were you God’s poor, rich in knowledge and faith, you were happy—‘Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished,’ Ecc. 4:13—yea, so happy, that did the princes of the world understand themselves aright, they would wish themselves in your clothes, how ragged soever they are, rather than be in their own robes. There are better making for you in heaven, which you shall put on, when theirs shall be pulled off to their shame. It will not then trouble you that you were, while in the world, poor; but it will torment them they were so rich and great, and so poor to God and beggarly in their souls.

Are you rich? Labour for the knowledge of the Most High. Solomon had more of the world’s treasure than a thousand of you have, and yet we find him hard at prayer, tugging with God for knowledge, II Chr. 1:10. All these outward enjoyments are but *vaginæ bonorum* [the shells of blessings], as afflictions are *vaginæ malorum* [the shells of evils]. I am afraid that many men think themselves privileged by their worldly greatness from this duty, as if God were bound to save them because rich. Alas, sirs, there are not so many of you like to come there. I must confess, it would make one tremble to think what a small number those among the great ones that shall be saved, are summed up into, Not many great, not many rich. Why so few saved? Because so few have

saving knowledge. O the atheism, the ignorance, the sottish barbarism that is to be found even in those that the world applaud, and even worship, because of their lands and estates, who yet are not able to give any account of their faith? A poor leather-coat Christian will shame and catechize a hundred of them. If heaven were to be purchased with house and lands, then these would carry it away from the poor disciples of Jesus Christ—they have their hundreds and thousands lying by them for a purchase always, but this money is not current in heaven’s exchange. ‘This is life eternal, to know thee, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.’

Question. But how may an ignorant soul attain to knowledge?

Answer First. Be deeply affected with thy ignorance. Some are blind, as Laodicea, and know it not, Rev. 3:17. As ignorance blinds the mind, so pride is a blind before their ignorance, that they know it not. These have such a high opinion of themselves that they take it ill that any should suspect them as such. These of all men are most out of the way to knowledge; they are too good to learn of man, as they think, and too bad to be taught of God. The gate into Christ’s school is low, and these cannot stoop. The Master himself is so humble and lowly, that he will not teach a proud scholar. Therefore first become a fool in thine own eye. A wiser man than thyself hath confessed as much: ‘I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy,’ Prov. 30:2, 3. When thou art come to thyself to own and blush at the brutish ignorance of thy mind, thou art fit to be admitted into Christ’s school. If they be ashamed, then show them the pattern of the house, Eze. 43:10.

Answer Second. Be faithful with that little knowledge thou hast. Art thou convinced this is a sin, and that is a duty? Follow the light close, you know not what this little may grow to. We use to set up our children with a little stock at first, and as they use it, so we add. The kingdom of God comes of small beginnings. God complains of Israel, they were brutish in their knowledge, Jer. 10:14. He doth not say, brutish in their ignorance; had they sinned because they did not know better, this would have excused à tanto [by so much], but they did that which was

brutish and unreasonable, as their worshipping graven images, notwithstanding they knew to the contrary. That man shall not excel in knowledge who prostitutes it to sin: ‘If they obey not, they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge,’ Job 36:12. A candle pent up close in a dark lantern, sweals<sup>25</sup> out apace; and so doth light shut up in the conscience, and not suffered to come forth in the conversation. Those heathens that are charged for holding ‘the truth in unrighteousness,’ Rom. 1:18, the next news you hear from them is, that they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened, ver. 21.

Answer Third. Ply the throne of grace. He is the best student in divinity that studies most upon his knees<sup>26</sup>. Knowledge is a divine gift; all light is from heaven. God is the Father of light, and prayer puts the soul under the pupilage of God. If anyone lack wisdom, let him ask it of God. This is more than naked knowledge; wisdom how to use it. Study may make one a great scholar in the Scriptures, but prayer makes a wise Christian, as it obtains sanctified knowledge, without which it is no perfect gift, but δῶρον ἄδωρον—a gift and no gift. Pray then with an humble boldness. God gives it all to ask, and that ἀπλως—candidly, liberally; not like proud man, who will rather put one to shame, who is weak for his ignorance, than take the pains to teach him. Thy petition is very pleasing to God. Remember how Solomon sped upon the like occasion, and promise thyself the same success. Christ’s school is a free school; he denies none that come to him, so they will submit to the orders of the school; and though all have not an answer in the same degree of knowledge—it is not needful that all should be Solomons in knowledge, except all were to be Solomons in place; yet the meanest disciple that Christ sends forth, shall be furnished with saving knowledge enough to fir him for his admittance into heaven’s academy. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and after bring me to glory.

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25. Sweal, sometimes written swale, means to melt and run down, as the tallow of a candle; to melt away without feeding the flame.—Imperial Dictionary. ED.

26. Bene orasse est bene studuisse.

Answer Fourth. Thou must bestow some time for thy diligent search after truth. Truth lies deep, and must be digged for. Since man was turned out of paradise, he can do nothing without labour except sin (this follows his hand indeed), but this treasure of knowledge calls for spade and mattock. We are bid ‘search the Scriptures.’ Again, it is said that ‘many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased,’ Dan. 12:4—a metaphor from merchants, who bestir themselves to get an estate, run to and fro, first in one land, then in another; wherever they hear of anything to be got, thither they post, though to the ends of the earth. Thus must the soul run from one duty to another, one while read, and anon meditate of what he hath read, then pray over his meditations, and ask counsel after all. What is the meaning of this, and how understand you that? [Not the school of Epicurus, but intercourse with him, made great men<sup>27</sup>.] There is more light got sometimes by a short conference with the preacher, than by his whole sermon. Be sure thou compass all the means for knowledge within the walk of thy endeavour. In this thy search for knowledge observe three things.

1. The end thou proposest, that it be pure and holy; not merely to know, as some do, who labour for knowledge, as many for estates, and when they have got it, look on their notions, as they on their bags of money, but have not a heart to use their knowledge for their own or others’ good; this is a sore evil. Speculative knowledge, like Rachel, is fair, but barren. Not to be known and admired by others for thy stature in knowledge above thy brethren, verily, it is too base an end to aim at, in seeking knowledge, especially such as is the knowledge of God in Christ. To see a heathen study for knowledge in philosophy, and then carry all his labour to this market, and think himself rewarded with obtaining the name for a wise man, is, though base, yet more tolerable; but for one that knows God, and what it is to enjoy him, for such a one to content himself with a blast or two of sorry man’s vain breath, this is folly with a witness. Look thou fliest higher in thy end than so. Labour for knowledge, that thou mayest fear God whom thou

knowest. Thus David, ‘Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end,’ Ps. 119:33. The Word of God is called a light unto our feet, not to our tongues, merely to talk of, but [to our] feet to walk by. Endeavour for it, not that thou mayest spread thy own name, but celebrate God’s. As David promiseth, when he understands the precepts of God, then he will talk of his wondrous works, he will trumpet the fame of them, and thereby awaken others to inquire after God.

2. When thy end is right set, then thou must be constant in thy endeavour after it. The mysteries of Christ are not learned in a day. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord, Hosea 6:3. Some are in a good mood, may be, and they will look in to the Bible, and read a chapter or two, and away they go for a week, and never practice it more, like some boys [who] if at school one day, truant all the week after; is it any wonder such thrive not in knowledge? It is a good speech of Bernard:<sup>28</sup> ‘The study of the word, and the reading of it differ as much as the friendship of such who every day converse lovingly together, doth from the acquaintance one hath with a stranger at an inn, or whom he salutes as he passeth by in the street.’ If you will get knowledge indeed, you must not only salute the word now and then, but walk with it, and enter into daily converse with it. The three men, who were indeed angels, that stood by Abraham, as he sat at his tent door, were reserved and strange, till Abraham invited them into his tent, and entertained them friendly, Gen. 18:2; and then Christ, who was one among them—as appears by the name Jehovah, given him in several verses, and also by what he promised he would do for Sarah, ver. 10, not what God would do, which if a created angel, he would—begins to discover himself to Abraham, and [to] reveal his secrets to him. That soul above others shall be acquainted with the secrets of God in his word, that doth not slightly read the word, and as it were compliment with it, at his tent-door, but desires more intimacy with it, and therefore entertains it within his soul by frequent meditating of it. David compares the word for sweetness to the honey and the honey-comb.

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27. Non schola Epicuri fecit magnos viros sed contubernium.

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28. Tantum distat studium à lectione, quantum amicitia ab hospitio socialis affectio à fortuita salutatione.

Indeed it is so full, that at first reading some sweetness will now and then drop from it, but he that doth not press it by meditation, leaves the most behind.

3. Be sure thou takest the right order and method. Arts and sciences have their rudiments, and also their more abstruse and deep notions, and sure the right end to begin at is first to learn the principles. He, we say, is not likely to make a good scholar in the university, that never was a good grammar-scholar. And they cannot be solid Christians, that are not instructed in the grounds of Christianity. The want of this is the cause why many are so unsteadfast. First of this way and then of that, blown like glasses into any shape, as false teachers please to breathe. Alas! they have no center to draw their lines from. Think it no disgrace you who have run into error, and lost yourselves in the labyrinths of deep points, which now are the great discourse of the weakest professors, to be set back to learn the first principles of the oracles of God better. Too many are, as Tertullian saith in another case,<sup>29</sup> more tender of their reputation than their salvation: who are more ashamed to be thought ignorant, than careful to have it cured.

Answer Fifth. If thou wouldst attain to divine knowledge, wait on the ministry of the word. As for those who neglect this, and come not where the word is preached, they do like that one should turn his back on the sun that he may see it. If thou wouldst know God, come where he hath appointed thee to learn. Indeed, where the means is not, God hath extraordinary ways, as a father, if [there is] no school in town, will teach his child at home, but if there be a public school, thither he sends him. God maketh manifest, saith Paul, the savour of his knowledge by us in every place, II Cor. 2:14. Let men talk of the Spirit what they please. He will at last be found a quencher of the Spirit, that is, a despiser of prophecy; they both stand close together, I Thes. 5:19,20, Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesying. But it is not enough to sit under the means. Woeful experience teacheth us this. There are some no sun will tan, they keep their old complexion under the most shining and burning light of the word preached, as ig-

norant and profane as those that never saw gospel-day; and therefore if thou wilt receive any spiritual advantage by the word, take heed how thou hearest.

1. Look thou beest a wakeful hearer. Is it any wonder he should go away from the sermon no wiser than he came, that sleeps the greatest part of it away, or hears betwixt sleeping and waking? It must be in a dream sure, if God reveals anything to his mind to him. So indeed God did to the fathers of old, but it was not as they profanely slept under an ordinance. O take heed of such irreverence. He that composeth himself to sleep, as some do, at such a time, or he that is not humbled for it, and that deeply, both of them betray the base and low esteem they have of the ordinance. Surely thou thinkest but meanly of what is delivered, if it will not keep thee awake, yea, of God himself, whose message it is. See how thou art reproved by the awful carriage of a heathen, and that a king. Ehud did but say to Eglon, I have a message from God unto thee, and he arose out of his seat, Judges 3:20. And thou clappst down on thy seat to sleep. O how darest thou put such an affront upon the great God? How oft did you fall asleep at dinner, or telling your money? And is not the word of God worth more than these? I should wonder if such sermon-sleepers do dream of anything but hell-fire. It is dangerous, you know, to fall asleep with a candle burning by our side—some have been so burned in their beds; but more dangerous to sleep while the candle of the word is shining so near us. What if you should sink down dead like Eutychus? here is no Paul to raise you as he had; and that you shall not, where is your security?

2. Thou must be an attentive hearer. He that is awake, but wanders with his eye or heart, what doth he but sleep with his eyes open? It were as good the servant should be asleep in his bed, as when up, not to mind his master's business. When God intends a soul good by the word, he draws such a one to listen and hearken heedfully to what is delivered, as we see in Lydia, who, it is said, attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul; and those, Luke 19:48, 'The people were attentive to hear him.' They did hang on him, as you shall see bees on some sweet flower, or as young birds on the bills of their dams as they feed them, that is, the soul which shall get light and life by the word. Hear ye children, and attend to

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29. Pudoris magis memores quam salutis.

know understanding, *Prov. 4:1*. Labour therefore in hearing the word to fix thy quicksilver mind, and set thyself to hear, as it is said Jehoshaphat did to pray; and that thou mayest, before thou goest, get thy heart into some deep sense of thy spiritual wants, especially of thy ignorance of the things of God, and thy deplored condition by reason of it: till the heart be touched, the mind will not be fixed. Therefore you may observe, it is said, God opened the heart of Lydia, that she attend, *Acts 16:14*. The mind goes of the will's errand; we spend our thoughts on what our hearts propose. If the heart hath no sense of its ignorance, or no desires after God, no wonder such a one listens not [to] what the preacher saith, his heart sends his mind another way. They sit before me as my people, saith God, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. They do not come out of such an intent or desire to hear for any good to their souls; then they would apply themselves wholly to the work. No, it is their covetousness that hath their hearts, and therefore as some idle servant, when he hath waited on his master [and] brought him to his pew, then he goes out to his good fellows at the alehouse, and comes no more till sermon be almost done. So do the thoughts of most when they go to the ordinance; they slip out in the street, market, or shop; you may find them anywhere but about the duty before them, and all because these have their hearts more than God and his word.

3. Thou must be a retentive hearer. Without this the work will ever be to begin again. Truths to a forgetful hearer are as a seal set on water, the impression lasts no longer than the seal is on; the sermon once done, and all is undone. Be therefore very careful to fasten what thou hearest on thy memory, which that thou mayest do,

(1.) Receive the truth in the love of it. An affectionate hearer will not be a forgetful hearer. Love helps the memory. 'Can a woman forget a child, or a maid her ornaments, or a bride her attire?' No, they love them too well. Were the truths of God thus precious to thee, thou wouldst with David think of them day and night. Even when the Christian, through weakness of memory, cannot remember the very words he hears, to repeat them, yet then he keeps the power and savour of them in his spirit. As when sugar is dissolved in wine, you cannot see it, but you

may taste it; when meat is eaten and digested it is not to be found as it was received, but the man is cheered and strengthened by it, more able to walk and work than before, by which you may know it is not lost; so you may taste the truths the Christian heard in his spirit [and] see them in his life. Perhaps if you ask him what the particulars were the minister had about faith, mortification, repentance, and the like, he cannot tell you; yet this you may find, his heart is more broken for sin, more enabled to rely on the promises, and now weaned from the world. As that good woman answered one, that coming from sermon, asked her what she remembered of the sermon; [she] said she could not recall much, but she heard that which should make her reform some things as soon as she came home.

(2.) Meditate on what thou hearest. By this David got more wisdom than his teachers. Observe what truth, what Scripture is cleared to thee in the sermon more than before, take some time in secret to converse with it, and make it thereby familiar to thy understanding. Meditation to the sermon in what the harrow is to the seed, it covers those truths, which else might have been picked or washed away. I am afraid there are many proofs turned down at a sermon, that are hardly turned up, and looked on any more, when the sermon is done; and if so, you make others believe you are greater traders for your souls, than you are indeed. It is as if one should come to a shop and lay by a great deal of rich ware, and when he hath done goes away, and never calls for it. O take heed of such doings. The hypocrite cheats himself worst at last.

(3.) Discharge thy memory of what is sinful. We wipe our table-book and deface what is there scribbled, before they can write anew. There is such a contrariety betwixt the truths of God, and all that is frothy and sinful, that one puts out the other. If you would retain the one, you must let the other go.

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#### BRANCH FOURTH.

Against spiritual wickedness.

These words are the fourth branch in the description, spiritual wickedness, and our contest or

combat with them as such [is] expressed by the adversative particle ‘against.’ In the Greek [it reads] πρὸς τὰ πνευματικὰ τῆς πονηρίας, word for word, against the spirituals of wickedness, which is, say some, ‘against wicked spirits;’ that is true, but not all. I conceive, with many interpreters, not only the spiritual nature of the devil, and the wickedness thereof, to be intended, but also, yea chiefly, the nature and kind of those sins which these wicked spirits do most usually and vigorously provoke the saints unto; and they are the spirituals of wickedness, not those gross fleshly sins, which the heard of beastly sinners, like swine, wallow in, but sin spiritualized, and this because it is not πνέυματα but πνευματικὰ, not spirits, but spirituals. The words present us with these three doctrinal conclusions. **FIRST.** The devils are spirits. **SECOND.** the devils are spirits extremely wicked. **THIRD.** These wicked spirits do chiefly annoy the saints with, and provoke them to, spiritual wickednesses.

[The spirituality of the devil’s nature.]

**DOCTRINE FIRST.** The devils are spirits. Spirit is a word of various acceptation in Scripture. Amongst others, [it is] used often to set forth the essence and nature of angels, good and evil, both which are called spirits. The holy angles, ‘Are they not all ministering spirits?’ Heb. 1:14. The evil ‘And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade him,’ 1 Kings 22:21; that spirit was a devil. How oft is the devil called the unclean spirit, foul spirit, lying spirit, &c.! Sin did not alter their substance, for then, as one saith well, that nature and substance which transgressed could not be punished.

First. The devil is a spirit; that is, his essence is immaterial and simple, not compounded, as corporal beings are, of matter and form: ‘Handle me and see,’ saith Christ to his disciples, that thought they had seen a spirit, ‘for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have,’ Luke 24:39. If they were not thus immaterial, how could they enter into bodies and possess them, as the Scripture tells us they have [done], even a legion into one man? Luke 8:30. One body cannot thus enter into another.

Second. The devils are spiritual substances, not

qualities, or evil motions, arising from us, as some have absurdly conceived. So the Sadducees, and others following them, deny any such being as angel, good or evil; but this is so fond a conceit, that to maintain it, we must both forfeit our reason and deny the Scriptures. There we find their creation related, Col. 1:16; the fall of some from their first estate, Jude 6, and the standing of others, called the elect angels; the happiness of the one [class], who behold God’s face, and their employment—sent out to attend on the saints, as servants on their master’s heirs, Heb. 1:14; the misery of the other, reserved in chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day; and their present work, which is to do mischief to the souls and bodies of men, as far as they are permitted; all which show their subsistence plain enough. But so immersed is sorry man in flesh, that he will not easily believe what he sees not with his fleshly eyes. Upon the same account we may deny the being of God himself, being invisible.

Third. They are entire spiritual substances, which have, every one, proper existence. And thus they are distinguished from the souls of men, which are made to subsist in a human body, and together with it make one perfect man; so that the soul, though, when separated from the body, it doth exist, yet hath a tendency to union with its body again.

Fourth. They are, though entire spiritual substances, yet finite, being but creatures. God only is the uncreated, infinite, and absolutely simple Spirit, yea, Father of all other spirits. Now from this spiritual nature of the devil, we may further see,

[What a dreadful enemy we have to grapple with.]

First. As spirits, they are of vast intellectual abilities. Sorry man, while in this dark prison of the body, hath not light enough to know what angelical perfections are. That they excel in knowledge all other creatures, we know because, as spirits, they come nearest by creation to the nature of God who made them. The heavens are not lift higher from the earth, than angels, by knowledge, from man while on earth. Man, by art, hath learned to take the height of the stars of heaven, but where is he that can tell how far in knowledge angels exceed man? It is true they have lost much of that knowledge they had, even all

their knowledge as holy angels; what now they know of God hath lost its savour, and they have no power to use it for their own good. What Jude saith of wicked men, may be said of them: What they know naturally, in these things they corrupt themselves. They know the holiness of God, but love him not for it, as the elect angels do, and themselves by creation did. They know the evil of sin, and love it not the less; but though they are such fools for themselves, yet [they] have subtilty too much for all the saints on earth, if we had not a God to play our game for us.

Second. As spirits, they are invisible, and their approaches also. They come, and you see not your enemy. Indeed, this makes him so little feared by the ignorant world, whereas it is his greatest advantage, if rightly weighed. O, if men have an apparition of the devil, or hear a noise in the night, they cry, 'The devil! the devil!' and are ready to run out of their wits for fear; but they carry him in their hearts, and walk all the day long in his company, and fear him not. When thy proud heart is clambering up to the pinnacle of honour in thy ambitious thoughts, who sets thee there but the devil? When thy adulterous heart is big with all manner of uncleanness and filthiness, who but Satan hath been there, begetting these brats on thy whorish spirit? When thou art raging in thy passion, throwing burning coals of wrath and fury about with thy inflamed tongue, where was it set on fire, but of hell? When thou art hurried like the swine into the precipice, and even choked with thy own drunken vomit, who but the devil rides thee?

Third. As spirits, they are immortal. Of other enemies you may hear news at last, that 'they are which sought thy life,' as the angel told Joseph of Herod. Persecuting men walk a turn or two upon the stage, and are called off by death, and there is an end of all their plots; but devils die not, they will hunt thee to thy grave, and when thou diest they will meet thee in another world, to accuse and torment thee there also.

Fourth. As spirits, they are unwearied in their motions. When the fight is over among men, the conqueror must sit down and breathe, and so loseth the chase because not able to pursue it in time. Yea, some have given over their empires, as glutted with the blood of men, and weary of the work, when they cannot have their will as they desired. Thus Dio-

cletian, because he saw he did but mow a meadow, that grew the thicker for cutting down—as Tertullian speaks of the Christians martyred—he throws away his sceptre in a pet. Charles V. did the like, some say, upon the same reason, because he could not root out the Lutherans. But the devil's spirit is never cowed, nor he weary of doing mischief, though he hath never stood still since first began his walk to and fro the world. O what would become of us, if a God were not at our back, who is infinitely more the devil's odds than he ours.

[The extreme wickedness of the devils.]

**DOCTRINE SECOND.** The devils are spirits extremely wicked; wicked in the abstract, as in the text, and called by way of eminency is sin, 'the wicked one,' Matt. 13:19. As God is called the Holy One, because none [is] holy as the Lord; so the devil, the wicked one, because he is a none-such in sin. In a few particulars let us endeavour to take the height of the devil's sin, and rather that we may judge of the degrees of sins and [of] sinners among the sons of men: the nearer God in holiness, the more holy; the liker the devil, the more wicked.

Particular First. These apostate angels are the inventors of sin—the first that sounded the trumpet of rebellion against their Maker, and led the dance to all that sin which since hath filled the world. Now, what tongue can accent this sin to its full? for such a noble creature whom God hath set on the top, as it were, of all the creation, nearest to himself, [and] from whom God had kept nothing but his own royal diadem; for this peer and favourite of the court, without any cause or solicitation from any other, to make this bold and blasphemous attempt to snatch at God's own crown, this paints the devil blacker than the thoughts of men and angels can conceive. He is called 'the father of lies,' as those who found out any art are the father of it. Jubal 'the father of all such as handle the harp and organ,' he invented music. And this is a dreadful aggravation, because they sinned without a tempter. And though man is not in such a degree capable of this aggravation, yet some men sin after the very similitude of the devil's transgression in this respect; who, as St. Paul styles them, are 'inventors of evil things,' Rom. 1:30. Indeed sin is an old

trade, found out to our hand; but as in other trades and arts, some famous men arise, who add to the inventions of others, and make trades and arts, as it were, new; so, there ever are some infamous in their generation, that make old sins new by superadding to the wickedness of others. Uncleaness is an old sin from the beginning; but the Sodomites will be filthy in a new way, and therefore it carries their name to this day. Some invent new errors; others new oaths—such as are of their own coining—hot out of the mint; they scorn to swear after the old fashion. Others [invent] new devices of persecuting, as Julian, [who] had a way by himself different from all before him; and to the end of the world every age will exceed other in the degrees of sinning. Ishmael and the mockers of the old world were but children and bunglers to the scoffers and cruel mockers of the last time. Well, take heed of showing thy wit in inventing new sins, lest thou stir up God in inventing new punishments. ‘Is not destruction to the wicked? and a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity?’ Job 31:3. Sodom sinned after a new mode, and God destroys them after a new way—sends hell from above upon them. Some have invented new opinions, monstrous errors, and God hath suited their monstrous errors with births as monstrous of their own body.

Particular Second. They were not only the inventors of sin, but are still the chief tempters to, and promoters of sin in the world. [They are] therefore called ὁ πειράζων, the tempter, and sin [is] called ‘the work of the devil,’ whoever commits it; as the house goes by the name of the master-workman, though he useth his servant’s hands to build it. O take heed of soliciting others to sin. Thou takest the devil’s office, as I may say, out of his hand. Let him do it himself if he will. Make not thyself so like him. To tempt another is worse than to sin thyself. It speaks sin to be of great growth in that man, that doth it knowingly and willingly. Herbs and flowers shed not their seed till ripe, creatures propagate not till of stature and age. What do these that tempt others, but diffuse their wicked opinions and practices, and, as it were, raise up seed to the devil, thereby to keep up the name of their infernal father in the world? This shows sin is mighty in them indeed. Many a man, though so cruel to his own soul as to be drunk or swear, yet will not like this in a child or servant.

What are they then but devils incarnate, who teach their children the devil’s catechism, to swear and lie, drink and drab<sup>30</sup>? If you meet such, be not afraid to call them, as Paul did Elymas, when he would have perverted the deputy, children of the devil, full of all subtilty and mischief, and enemies of all righteousness. O do you not know what you do when you tempt? I will tell you. You do that which you cannot undo by your own repentance. Thou poisonest one with error, initiatest another in the devil’s school—alehouse I mean; but afterwards may be, thou seest thy mistake, and recantest thy error, thy folly, and givest over thy drunken trade. Art thou sure now to rectify and convert them with thyself? Alas, poor creatures! this is out of thy power. They, may be, will say, as he—though he did it on a better account—that was solicited to turn back to Popery by him who had persuaded him to renounce the same: ‘You have given me one turn, but shall not give me another.’ And what a grief to thy spirit will it be, to see those going to hell on thy errand, and thou not able to call them back! Thou mayest cry out as Lamech, ‘I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt.’ Nay, when thou art asleep in thy grave, he whom thou seduced may have drawn in others, and thy name may be quoted to commend the opinion and practice to others; by which, as it is said, though in another sense, Abel being dead yet speaketh. Thou mayest, though dead, sin in those that are alive, generation after generation. A little spark kindled by the error of one, hath cost the pains of many ages to quench it, and when thought to be out, hath broken forth again.

Particular Third. They are not barely wicked, but maliciously wicked. The devil hath his name ὁ πονηρὸς, to denote his spiteful nature—his desire to vex and mischief others. When he draws souls to sin, it is not because he tastes any sweetness or finds any profit therein—he hath too much light to have any joy or peace in sin. He knows his doom, and trembles at the thought of it; and yet his spiteful nature makes him vehemently desire and incessantly endeavour the damnation of souls. As you shall see a mad dog run after a flock of sheep, kill one, then another, though

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30. To drab, to associate with the fallen and debauched.

—ED.

when dead [he is] not able to eat of their flesh, but kills to kill; so Satan is carried out with a boundless rage against man, especially the saints, and would not, if he could, leave one of Christ's flock alive. Such is the height of his malice against God, whom he hates with a perfect hatred; and, because he cannot reach him with a direct blow, therefore he strikes him at the second-hand through his saints; that wicked arm which reacheth not to God, is extended against these excellent on the earth—well knowing the life of God is in a manner bound up in theirs. God cannot outlive his honour, and his honour speeds as his mercy is exalted or depressed; this being the attribute God means to honour in their salvation so highly, and therefore maligned above the rest by Satan. And this is the worst that can be said of these wicked spirits, that they maliciously spite God, and in God the glory of his mercy.

[Use or Application.]

Use First. This may help us conceive more fully what the desperate wickedness of man's nature is, which is so hard to be known, because it can never be seen at once—it being a fountain whose immensity consists not in the stream of actual sin—that is visible, and may seem little—but in the spring that incessantly feeds this. But here is a glass that will give us the shape of our hearts truly like themselves. Seest thou the monstrous pitch and height of wickedness that is in the devil? All this there is in the heart of every man. There is no less wickedness potentially in the tamest sinner on earth, than in the devils themselves, and that one day thou, whoever thou art, wilt show to purpose, if God prevent thee not by his renewing grace. Thou art not yet fledged, thy wings are not grown to make thee a flying dragon; but thou art of the same brood, the seed of this serpent is in thee, and the devil begets a child like himself. Thou yet standest in a soil not so proper for the ripening of sin—which will not come to its fulness till transplanted unto hell. Thou who art here so maidenly and modest, as to blush at some sins out of shame, and [to] forbear the acting of others out of fear, when there thou shalt see thy case as desperate as the devil doth his, then thou wilt spit out thy blasphemies, with which thy nature is stuffed, with the same malice that

he doth. The Indians have a conceit, that when they die they shall be transformed into the deformed likeness of the devil; therefore in their language they have the same word for a dead man and the devil. Sin makes the wicked like him before they come there, but indeed they will come to their countenance more fully there, when those flames shall wash off that paint which here hides their complexion. The saints in heaven shall be like angels, in their alacrity, love, and constancy to serve God; and the damned like the devils, in sin as well as punishment. This one consideration might be of excellent use to unbottom a sinner, and abase him, so as never to have high thought of himself. It is easy to run down a person whose life is wicked, and convince him of the evil of his actions, and make him confess what he doth is evil, but here is the thicket we lose him in. He will say, 'It is true, I am overseen<sup>31</sup>, I do what I should not, God forgive me, but my heart is good.' Thy heart good, sinner? and so is the devil's. His nature is wicked, and thine [is] as bad as his. These pimples in thy face show the heat of thy corrupt nature within, and without gospel physic—the blood of Christ applied to thee—thou wilt die a leper. None but Christ can give thee a new heart, till which, thou wilt every day grow worse and worse. Sin is an hereditary disease that increaseth with age. A young sinner will be an old devil.

Use Second. Again, it would be of use to the saints; especially to those in whom God by his timely call forestalled the devil's market; as sometimes the Spirit of God takes sin in its quarters before it comes into the field, in the sins of youth. Now such a one not finding those daring sins committed by him that others have been left unto, may possibly not be so affected with his own sin or God's mercy. O let such a one behold here the wickedness of his heart in the glass of the devil's nature, and he will see himself as a great debtor to the mercy of God as Manasseh, or the worst of sinners—as in pardoning, so in preventing the same cursed nature with theirs, before it gave fire on God with those bloody sins which they committed. That thou didst not act such outrageous sins,

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31. Overseen, mistaken, deceived. — Imperial Dictionary. Ed.

thou art beholden to God's gracious surprise, and not to the goodness of thy nature, which hath the devil's stamp on it, [and] for which God might have crushed thee, as we do the brood of serpents before they sting, knowing what they will do in time. Who will say that Fawkes suffered unjustly, because the parliament was not blown up? It is enough that the materials for that massacre were provided, and he taken there with match and fire about him ready to lay the train. And canst thou say, when God first took hold on thee, that thou hadst not those weapons of rebellion about thee—a nature full charged with enmity against God, which in time would have made its own report of what for [the] present lay like unfired powder silent in thy bosom? O Christian, think of this, and be humbled for thy villanous nature, and say, blessed be God that sent his Spirit and grace so timely to stay thy hand—as Abigail to David—while thy nature meditated nothing but war against God and his laws.

Use Third. Again, are the devils so wickedly malicious against God himself? O sirs, take the right notion, of sin, and you will hate it. The reason why we are so easily persuaded to sin is, because we understand not the bottom of his design in drawing a creature to sin. It is with men in sinning as it is with armies in fighting. Captains beat their drums for volunteers, and promise all that list, pay and plunder; and this makes them come trowling in. But few consider what the ground of the war is, against whom, or for what. Satan enticeth to sin, and gives golden promises [of] what they shall have in his service, with which silly souls are one. But how few ask their souls, Whom do I sin against? What is the devil's design in drawing me to sin? Shall I tell thee? Dost thou think it is thy pleasure or profit he desires in thy sinning? Alas, he means nothing less, he hath greater plots in his head than so. He hath, by his apostasy, proclaimed war against God, and he brings thee, by sinning, to espouse his quarrel, and to jeopard the life of thy soul in defence of his pride and lust; which that he may do, he cares no more for the damnation of thy soul, than the great Turk doth to see a company of his slaves cut off for the carrying on of his design in a siege. And darest thou venture to go into the field upon his quarrel against God? O earth, tremble thou at the presence of the Lord. This bloody Joab sets thee where never came any off alive. O stand not

where God's bullets fly. Throw down thy arms, or thou art a dead man. Whatever others do, O ye saints, abhor the thoughts of sinning willingly; which when you do, you help the devil against God. And what more unnatural than for a child to be seen in arms against his father?

[Satan's plot to defile the Christian with  
SPIRITUAL WICKEDNESS.]

DOCTRINE THIRD. These wicked spirits do chiefly annoy the saints with, and provoke them to, spiritual wickedness. Sins may be called spiritual upon a double account; either, FIRST. From the subject wherein they are acted; or SECOND. From the object about which they are conversant.

FIRST SORT OF SPIRITUAL SINS,  
So called from the subject wherein they are acted.

FIRST. Sins may be called spiritual, from the subject wherein they are acted. When the spirit or heart is the stage whereon sin is acted, this is a spiritual sin; such are all impure thoughts, vile affections and desires. Though the object be fleshly lust, yet [they] are spiritual sins, because they are purely acts of the soul and spirit, and break not forth unto the outward man.

[They are heart sins.]

Satan labours what he can to provoke the Christian to heart sins—to stir up and foment these inward motions of sin in the Christian's bosom. Hence it is, he can go about no duty, but these—his imps, I may call them—haunt him; one motion or other darts in to interrupt him, as Paul tells us of himself, 'When he would do good, evil was present with him.' If a Christian should turn back whenever these cross the way of him, he should never go on his journey to heaven. It is the chief game the devil hath left to play against the children of God—now his field-army is broken, and his commanding power taken away which he had over them—to come out of these his holds where he lies skulking, and fall upon their rear with these suggestions. He knows his credit now is not so great with the soul as when it was his slave. Then no drudgery work was so base that it would not do at his command; but now the soul is out of his bondage, and he

must not think to command another's servant as his own. No, all he can do is to watch the fittest season—when the Christian least suspects—and then to present some sinful motion, handsomely dressed up, to the eye of the soul, that the Christian may, before he is aware, take this brat up and dandle it in his thoughts, till at last he makes it his own by embracing it; and this he knows will defile the soul; and, maybe, this boy sent in at the window, may open the door to let in a greater thief. Or if he should not so prevail, yet the guilt of these heart sins, yea, their very neighbourhood will be a sad vexation to a gracious heart, whose nature is so pure that it abhors all filthiness—so that to be haunted with such notions, is as if a living man should be chained to a stinking carcase, that wherever he goes he must draw that after him; and whose love is so dear to Christ, that it cannot bear the company of those thoughts without amazement and horror, which are so contrary and abusive to his beloved. This makes Satan so desirous to be ever raking in the unregenerate part, that as a dung-hill stirred, it may offend them both with the noisome streams which arise from it.

[Use or Application.]

Use First. Let this be for trial of thy spiritual state. What entertainment finds Satan when he comes with these spirituals of wickedness, and solicits thee to dwell on them? Canst thou dispense with the filthiness of thy spirit, so thy hands be clean? or dost thou wrestle against these heart sins as well as others? I do not ask, whether such guests come within thy door—for the worst of sins may be found, in the motions of them, not only passing by the door of a Christian, but looking in also, as holy motions may be found stirring in the bosom of wicked men—but I ask thee, whether thou canst find in thy heart to lodge these guests and bid them welcome? It is like, thou wouldst not be seen to walk in the street with such company—not lead a whore by the hand through the town—not violently break open thy neighbour's house to murder or rob him; but canst thou not under thy own roof, in the withdrawing room of thy soul, let thy thoughts hold up an unclean lust, while thy heart commits speculative folly with it? Canst thou not draw thy neighbour into thy den, and there rend him

limb from limb by thy malice, and thy heart not so much as cry Murder, murder? In a word, canst thou hide any one sin in the vance-roof<sup>32</sup> of thy heart, there to save the life of it when inquired after by the Word and Spirit, as Rahab hid the spies, and sent the king of Jericho's messengers to pursue them, as if they had been gone? Perhaps thou canst say, 'The adulterer, the murderer is not here,' thou hast sent these sins away long ago; and all this while thou hidest them in the love of thy soul. Know it, or thou shalt another day know it to thy cost, thou art stark nought. If there were a spark of the life of God or the love of Christ in thy bosom, though thou couldst not hinder such motions in thy soul, yet thou wouldst not conceal them, much less nourish them in thy bosom; when overpowered by them, thou wouldst call in help from heaven against these destroyers of thy soul.

Use Second. Show your loyalty, O ye saints, to God, by a vigorous resistance of, and wrestling against, these spirituals of wickedness.

1. Consider, Christian, heart sins are sins as well as any. 'The thought of foolishness is sin,' Prov. 24:9. Mercury is poison in the water distilled, as well as in the gross body. Uncleaness, covetousness, murder are such in the heart as well as in the outward act; every point of hell, is hell.

2. Consider, Thy spirit is the seat of the Holy Spirit. He takes up the whole heart for his lodging, and it is time for him to be gone when he sees his house let over his head. Defile not thy spirit till thou art weary of his company.

3. Consider, There may be more wickedness in a sin of the heart than of the hand and outward man; for the aggravation of these is taken from the behaviour of the heart in the act. The more of the heart and spirit [that] is let out, the more malignity is let in to any sinful act. To backslide in heart, is more than to backslide. It is the comfort of a poor soul, when tempted and troubled for his relapses, that though his foot slides back, yet his heart turns not back, but faceth heaven and Christ at the same time; so to err in the heart is worse than to have an error in the head. Therefore God aggravates Israel's sin with this, 'They do alway err in their heart,' Heb. 3:10. Their

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32. Vance-roof, the garret. — Norfolk. ED.

hearts run them upon the error; they liked idolatry, and so were soon made to believe what pleased them best. As, on the contrary, the more of the heart and spirit is in any holy service, the more real goodness there is in it, though it fall short of others in the outward expression. The widow's two mites surpassed all the rest, Christ himself being judge; so in sin, though the internal acts of sin, in thoughts and affections, seem light upon man's balance, if compared with outward acts, yet these may be so circumstantiated that they may exceed the other in God's account. Peter lays the accent of Magus' sin on the wicked thought, which his words betrayed to be in his heart, 'Pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee,' Acts 8:22. Saul's sin in sparing Agag, and saving the best of the sheep and oxen, which he was commanded to destroy, was materially a far less sin than David's adultery and murder, yet it is made equal with a greater than both, even witchcraft itself, 1 Sam. 15:23; and whence received his sin such a dye, but from the wickedness of his heart, that was worse than David's when deepest in the temptation.

4. Consider, If Satan get into thy spirit and defile it, O how hard wilt thou find it to stay there? Thou hast already sipped of his broth, and now art more likely to be overcome at last to sit down and make thy full meal of that, which by tasting hath vitiated thy palate already. It were strange, if, while thou art musing, and thy heart hot with the thought of lust, the fire should not break forth at thy lips, or worse.

[Helps against this sort of Satan's temptations.]

QUESTION. But what help have we against this sort of Satan's temptations?

ANSWER. I suppose thee a Christian, that makest this question; and if thou dost it in the plainness of thy heart it proves thee one. Who, besides, will or can desire in earnest, to be eased of these guests? Even when a carnal heart prays for deliverance from them, he would be loath his prayer should be heard. 'Not yet, Lord,' the heart of such a one cries, as Austin confessed of himself. Sin is as truly the offspring of the soul, as children are of our bodies, and it finds as much favour in our eyes; yea more, for the sinner

can slay a son to save a sin alive, Micah 6:7, and of all sins, none are made more on, than these heart sins.

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

2. Because the heart hath more scope in them than in outward acts. The proud man is staked down oft to a short state, and cannot ruffle it in the world, and appear to others in that pomp he would; but within his own bosom he can set up a stage, and his own foolish heart present himself as a great a prince as he pleaseth. The malicious can kill, in his desires, as many in a few minutes, as the angel smote in a night of Sennacherib's host. Nero thus could slay all Rome on the block at once.

3. These sins stay with the soul when the others leave it. When the sinner hath crippled his body with drunkenness and filthiness, and proves miles emeritus—cannot follow the devil's camp longer in those ways—then these cursed lusts will entertain him with stories of his old pranks and pleasures. In a word, these inward lusts of the heart, have nothing but the conscience of a Deity to quell them. Other sins put the sinner to shame before men; and, as some that believed on Christ durst not confess him openly, because they loved the praise of men, so there are sinners who are kept from vouching their lusts openly, for the same tenderness to their reputation. But here is no fear of that, if they can but forget that heaven sees them, or persuade themselves there is no danger from thence, the coast then is clear; they may be as wicked as they please. These make inward sins so hugged and embraced. If thou therefore canst find thy heart set against these, I may venture to call thee a Christian. And for thy help against them, improve the following.

First Help. Be earnest with God in prayer to move and order thy heart in its thoughts and desires. If the tongue be such an unruly thing that few can tame; O what is the heart, whence such a multitude of thoughts are flying forth as thick as bees from the hive, and sparks from the furnace! It is not in man, not in the holiest on earth to do this without divine assistance. Therefore we find David so often crying out in this respect, to order his steps in his word, to unite his heart to his fear, to incline his heart to his testimonies. As a servant, when the child he tends is

troublesome and will not be ruled by him, who no sooner speaks but all is whist with him. No doubt holy David found his heart beyond his skill or power, that makes him so oft do his errand to God. Indeed, God hath promised thus much to his children, to order their steps for them, Ps. 37:22, only he looks they should bring their hearts to him for that end. 'Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established,' Prov. 16:3, or ordered. Art thou setting thy face towards an ordinance, where thou art sure to meet Satan, who will be disturbing thee with worldly thoughts and may be worse? Let God know from thy mouth whither thou art going, and what thy fears are. Never doth the soul march in so goodly order, as when it puts itself under the conduct of God.

Second Help. Set a strong guard about thy outward senses. These are Satan's landing places, especially the eye and ear. Take heed what thou importest at them. Vain discourse seldom passeth without leaving some tincture upon the heart; as unwholesome air inclines to putrefaction things sweet in themselves, so unsavory discourse to corrupt the mind that is pure. Look thou breathest therefore in a clean air. And for thy eye, let it not wander. Wanton objects cause wanton thoughts. Job knew his eye and his thoughts were like to go together, and therefore, to secure one, he covenants with the other, Job 31:1.

Third Help. Often reflect upon thyself in a day, and observe what company is with thy heart. A careful master will ever and anon will be looking into his workhouse, and seeing what his servants are doing, and a wise Christian should do the same. We may know by the noise in the school [that] the master is not there. Much of the misrule in our bosoms ariseth from the neglect of visiting our hearts. Now, when thou art parleying with thy soul, make this threefold inquiry.

1. Inquire, Whether that which thy heart is thinking on, be good or evil. If evil and wicked, such as are proud, unclean, distrustful thoughts, show thy abhorrency of them, and chide thy soul sharply for so much as holding a conference with them, of which nought can come but dishonour to God, and mischief to thy own soul; and stir up thy heart to mourn for the evil neighbourhood of them, and by this thou

shalt give a testimony of faithfulness to God. When David mourned for Abner, 'all Israel,' it is said, 'understood that day that it was not of the king to slay Abner.' Thy mourning for them will show, that these thoughts are not so much of thee as of Satan.

2. Inquire, If thy thoughts be not broadly wicked, then inquire whether they be not empty, frothy, vain imaginations, that have no subserviency to the glory of God, thy own good or others'; and if so, leave not till thou hast made thyself apprehensive of Satan's design on thee, in them. Though such are not for thy purpose, yet they are for his; they serve his turn to keep thee from better. All the water is lost that runs beside the mill, and all thy thoughts are waste which help thee not to do God's work withal, in thy general or particular calling. The bee will not sit on a flower where no honey can be sucked, neither should the Christian. Why sittest thou here idle—thou shouldst say to thy soul—when thou hast so much to do for God and thy soul and so little time to despatch it in?

3. Inquire, If thou findest they are good for matter thy heart is busied about, then inquire whether they be good for time and manner, which being wanting they degenerate.

(1.) Are they good for the time or the season? That is good fruit which is brought forth in its season. Christ liked the work his mother would have put him upon as well as herself, John 2:4, but his time was not come. Good thoughts and meditations misplaced, are like some interpretations of Scripture—good truths but bad expositions; they fit not the place they are drawn from, nor these the time. To pray when we should hear, or be musing on the sermon when we should pray, is to rob God one way so as to pay him another.

(2.) Are they good for the manner? Thy heart may meditate a good matter, and spoil it in the doing. Thou art, may be, musing of thy sins, and affecting thy heart into a sense of them, but so, that while thou art stirring up thy sorrow, thou weakenest thy faith on the promise. That is thy sin. He is a bad chirurgeon that in opening a vein goes so deep that he cuts into an artery, and lames the arm, if [he does] not kill the man. Or thou art thinking of thy family, and providing for that; this thou oughtest to do, and wert worse than an infidel if thou neglectest; but, may be,

these thoughts are so distracting and distrustful, as if there were no promise, no providence to relieve thee. God takes this ill, because it reflect upon his care of thee. O how near doth our duty here stand to our sin! So much care, is necessary ballast to the soul; a little more sinks it under the waves of unbelief. It is like some things [which are] very wholesome, but, one degree more of hot or cold would make them poison.

#### SECOND SORT OF SPIRITUAL SINS,

So called from the object about which they are conversant.

SECOND. Sins may be called spiritual, from the object about which they are conversant; when that is spiritual and not carnal, such as idolatry, error, spiritual pride, unbelief, &c., both which Paul calls the filthiness of the spirit, and distinguisheth them from filthiness of the flesh, II Cor. 7:1.

They are such as are not only acted in the spirit, but are conversant about spiritual objects proper to the soul's nature that is a spirit, and not laid out in carnal passions of fleshly lusts, in which the soul acts as but a pander for the body, and partakes of their delights only by way of sympathy; for as the soul feels the body's pains no other way than by sympathy, so neither doth it share in the pleasures of the flesh by any proper taste it hath of them, but only, from its near neighbourhood with the body, doth sympathize with its joy. But in spiritual wickednesses that corrupt the mind, the soul moves in its own sphere, with a delight proper to itself, and there are no less of these than the other. There is hardly a fleshly lust but hath some spiritual sin analogous to it, as they say there is no species of creatures on the land but may be patterned in the sea. Thus the heart of man can produce spiritual sins answering carnal lusts. For whoredom and uncleanness of the flesh, there is idolatry, called in Scripture spiritual adultery, from which the seat of Antichrist is called spiritual Sodom; for sensual drunkenness, there is a drunkenness of the mind, intoxicating the judgment with error, a drunkenness of the heart in cares and fears; for carnal pride in beauty, riches, honour, there is a spiritual pride of gifts, graces, &c. Now Satan in an especial

manner assaults the Christian with such as these, [but] it would require a larger discourse than I can allow, to run over the several kinds of them. I shall, of many, pick out two or three.

#### FIRST SPIRITUAL WICKEDNESS—Error in Principle.

FIRST. Satan labours to corrupt the mind with erroneous principles. He was at work at the very first plantation of the gospel, sowing his darnel as soon almost as Christ his wheat. This sprung up in pernicious errors even in the apostles' times, which made them take the weeding-hook into their hands, and, in all their epistles, labour to countermine Satan in his design. Now in this his endeavour to corrupt the minds of men, especially professors, with error, Satan hath a threefold design,

First Design. He doth this in despite to God, against whom he cannot vent his malice at a higher rate, than by corrupting his truth, which God hath so highly honoured, 'For thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.' Ps. 138:2. Every creature bears the name of God, but in his word and truth therein contained it is writ at length, and therefore he is more choice of this than of all his other works; he cares not much what becomes of the world and all in it, so he keeps his word and saves his truth. Ere long we shall see the world on a light flame; 'The heavens and earth shall pass away, but the word of the Lord endureth for ever.' When God will, he can make more such worlds as this is, but he cannot make another truth, and therefore he will not lose one iota thereof. Satan, knowing this, sets all his wits on work to deface this truth, and disfigure it by unsound doctrine. The word is the glass in which we see God, and seeing him, are changed into his likeness by his Spirit. If this glass be cracked, then our conceptions we have of God will misrepresent him unto us, whereas the word in its native clearness sets him out in all his glory unto our eye.

Second Design. He endeavours to draw into this spiritual sin of error, as the most subtle and effectual means to weaken, if not destroy, the power of godliness in them. The apostle joins the spirit of power and a sound mind together, II Tim. 1:7. Indeed the power of holiness in practice depends much on the soundness of judgment. Godliness is the child of

truth, and it must be nursed, if we will have it thrive, with no other milk than of its own mother. Therefore we are exhorted to ‘desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow,’ I Peter 2:2<sup>33</sup>; if this milk be but a little dashed with error, it is not so nutritive. All error, how innocent soever it may seem, like the ivy, draws away the strength of the soul’s love from holiness. Hosea tells us whoredom and wine take away the heart, now error is spiritual adultery. Paul speaks of his espousing them to Christ. When a person receives an error, he takes a stranger into Christ’s bed, and it is the nature of adulterous love to take away the wife’s heart from her true husband, that she delights not in his company so much as [in that] of her adulterous lover. And do we not see it at this day fulfilled? Do not many show more zeal in contending for one error, than for many truths? How strangely are the hearts of many taken off from the ways of God, their love cooled to the ordinances and messengers of Christ!—and all this occasioned by some corrupt principle got into their bosoms, which controls Christ and his truth, as Hagar and her son did Sarah and her child. Indeed Christ will never enjoy true conjugal love from the soul, till, like Abraham, he turns these out of doors. Error is not so innocent a thing as many think it; it is as unwholesome food to the body—that poisons the spirits, and surfeits the whole body—which seldom passeth away without breaking out into sores. As the knowledge of Christ carries a soul above the pollutions of the world, so error entangles and betrays it to those lusts, whose hands it had escaped.

Third Design. Satan in drawing a soul into this spiritual sin hath a design to disturb the peace of the church, which is rent and shattered when this fire-ship comes among them. ‘I hear,’ saith Paul, ‘that there be divisions among you, and I partly believe it, for there must also be heresies,’ I Cor. 11:18,19—implying that divisions are the natural issue of heresy. Error cannot well agree with error, except it be against the truth; then indeed, like Pilate and Herod, they are easily made friends; but when truth seems to be overcome, and the battle is over with that, then they fall out among themselves, and there-

fore it is no wonder if it be so troublesome a neighbour to truth. O sirs, what a sweet silence and peace was there among Christians a dozen years ago. Methinks the looking back to those blessed days in this respect—though they had also another way their troubles, yet not so uncomfortable, because that storm united, this scatters the saints’ spirits—is joyous, to remember in what unity and love Christians walked. The persecutors of those times might have said, as their predecessors did of the saints in primitive times, ‘See how they love one another,’ but now, alas, they may jeer and say, See how they that loved so dearly, are ready to pluck one another’s throats out.

[Use or Application.]

[A word of exhortation to all.] The application of this shall be only in a word of exhortation to all; especially you who bear the name of Christ by a more eminent profession of him. O beware of this soul-infection, this leprosy of the head. I hope you do not think it needless, for it is the disease of the times. This plague is begun, yea, spreads apace. [There is] not a flock, [not] a congregation hardly, that hath not this scab among them. Paul was a preacher the best of us all may write after, and he presseth this home upon the saints, yea, in the constant course of his preaching it made a piece of his sermon. He sets us preacher also upon this work; ‘Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock;—for I know this, that after my departure shall grievous wolves enter;—also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things,’ Acts 20:28-30; therefore watch. And then he presents his own example, that he hardly made a sermon for several years, but this was part of it, to warn every one night and day with tears. We need not prophesy what impostors may come upon the stage when we go off. There are too many at present above-board of this gang drawing disciples after them. And if it be our duty to warn you of them, surely it is yours to watch, lest you by any of them be led into temptation in this hour thereof, wherein Satan is let loose in so great a measure to deceive the nation. May you not as easily be soured with this leaven, as the disciples whom Christ bids beware? Are you privileged above those

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33. ἄδολον γάλα.

famous churches of Galatia and Corinth, many of which were bewitched with false teachers, and in a manner turned to another gospel? Is Satan grown orthodox, or have his instruments lost their cunning, who hunt for souls? In a word, is there not a sympathy between thy corrupt heart and error? Hast thou not a disposition, which, like the fomes of the earth, makes it natural for these weeds to grow in thy soil? Seest thou not many prostrated by this enemy, who sat upon the mountain of their faith, and thought it should never have been removed? Surely they would have taken it ill to have been told, 'you are the men and women that will decry Sabbaths, which now ye count holy; you will turn Pelagians, who now defy the name; you will despise prophecy itself, who now seem so much to honour the prophets; you will throw family duties out of doors, who dare not now go out of doors till you have prayed there.' Yet these, and more than these, are come to pass; and doth it not behove thee, Christian, to take heed lest thou fallest also? And that thou mayest not,

1. Exhortation. Make it thy chief care to get a thorough change of thy heart. If once the root of the matter be in thee, and thou beest bottomed by a lively faith on Christ, thou art then safe, I do not say wholly free from all error; but this I am sure, free from engulfing thy soul in damning error. 'They went out from us,' saith St. John, 'but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us,' I John 2:19. As if he had said, They had some outward profession, and common work of the Spirit with us, which they have either lost or carried over to the devil's quarters, but they never had the unction of the sanctifying Spirit. By this, ver. 20, he distinguisheth them, and comforts the sincere ones, who possibly might fear their own fall by their departure: 'But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.' It is one thing to know a truth, and another thing to know it by unction. An hypocrite may do the former, the saint only the latter. It is this unction which gives the soul the savour of the knowledge of Christ; those are the fit prey for impostors, who are enlightened, but not enlivened. O, it is good to have the heart established with grace! This, as an anchor, will keep us from being set adrift, and carried about with divers and strange doctrines, as the apostle teacheth us, Heb. 13:9.

2. Exhortation. Ply the work of mortification. Crucify the flesh daily. Heresy, though a spiritual sin, [is] yet by the apostle reckoned among the deeds of the flesh, Gal. 5:20, because it is occasioned by fleshly motives, and nourished by carnal food and fleshly fuel. Never [have] any turned heretic, but flesh was at the bottom; either they served their belly or a lust of pride—it was the way to court, or secured their estates and saved their lives, as sometimes the reward of truth is fire and fagot. Some pad or other is in the straw when least seen; and therefore it is no wonder that heresies should end in the flesh, which in a manner sprang from it. The rheum in the head ascends in fumes from the stomach, and returns thither, or unto the lungs, which at last fret and ulcerate. Carnal affections first send up their fumes to the understanding, clouding that, yea, bribing it to receive such and such principles for truths; which [when] embraced, fall down into the life, corrupting that with the ulcer of profaneness. So that, Christian, if once thou canst take off thy engagements to the flesh, and become a free man, so as not to give thy vote to gratify thy carnal fears or hopes, thou wilt then be a sure friend to truth.

3. Exhortation. Wait conscionably on the ministry of the word. Satan commonly stops the ear from hearing sound doctrine, before he opens it to embrace corrupt. This is the method of souls [in] apostatizing from truth: 'They shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables,' II Tim. 4:3,4. Satan, like a cunning thief, draws the soul out of the road into some lane or corner, and there robs him of the truth. By rejecting of one ordinance, we deprive ourselves of the blessing of all others. Say not that thou prayest to be led into truth; God will not hear thy prayer if thou turnest thine ear from hearing the law. He that loves his child, when he sees him play the truant, will whip him to school. If God loves a soul, he will bring him back to the word with shame and sorrow.

4. Exhortation. When thou hearest any unusual doctrine, though never so pleasing, make not up the match hastily with it. Have some better testimony of it, before you open your heart to it. The apostle indeed bids us entertain strangers, for some have entertained angels unawares Heb. 13:2; but he would not have us carried about with strange doctrine, ver. 9,

[though] by this I am sure some have entertained devils. I confess, it is not enough to reject a doctrine, because strange to us, but ground we have, to wait and inquire. Paul marvelled that the Galatians were so soon removed from him, who had called them unto the grace of Christ, unto another gospel. They might sure have stayed till they had acquainted Paul with it, and asked his judgment. What, no sooner an impostor come into the country, and open his pack, but buy all his ware at first sight! O friends, were it not more wisdom to pray such new notions over and over again, to search the Word, and our hearts by it, yea, not to trust our own hearts, but [to] call in counsel from others? If your minister have not such credit with you, get the most holy, humble, and established Christians you can find. Error is like fish, which must be eaten new or it will stink. When those dangerous errors sprung up first in New England, O how unsettled were the churches! what an outcry was made, as if some mine of gold had been discovered! But in a while, when those error came to their complexion, and it was perceived whither they were bound—to destroy churches, ordinances, and power of godliness—then such as feared God, who had stepped aside, returned back with shame and sorrow.

#### SECOND SPIRITUAL WICKEDNESS—Spiritual pride.

SECOND. The second spiritual wickedness which Satan provokes unto, especially the saint, is spiritual pride. This was the sin made him, of a blessed angel, a cursed devil; and as it was his personal sin, so he chiefly labours to derive it to the sons of man: and he so far prevailed on our first parents, that ever since, this sin hath and doth claim a kind of regency in the heart, making use of both bad and good to draw her chariot.

First. It maketh use of evil. Pride enters into the labours of other sins; they do but work to make her brave, as subjects to uphold the state and grandeur of their prince. Thus you shall see some drudge and droil, cheat, cozen, oppress; and what mean they? O it is to get an estate to maintain pride. Others fawn and flatter, lie, dissemble; and for what? to help pride up some mount of honour.

Second. It maketh use of that which is good. It can work with God's own tools, his ordinances, by

which the Holy Spirit advanceth his kingdom of grace in the hearts of his saints. These often are prostituted to pride. A man may be very zealous in prayer, and painful in preaching and all the while pride is the master whom he serves, though in God's livery. It can take sanctuary in the holiest actions, and hide itself under the skirt of virtue itself. Thus while a man is exercising his charity, pride may be the idol in secret for which he lavisheth out his gold so freely. It is hard starving this sin, because there is nothing almost but it can live on—nothing so base that a proud heart will not be lift up with, and nothing so sacred but it will profane; [it will] even dare to drink in the bowls of the sanctuary, nay, rather than starve, it will feed on the carcasses of other sins. 'That sin is with great difficulty avoided which springs from a victory of our vices.'<sup>34</sup> This minion pride will stir up the soul to resist, yea, in a manner kill, some sins, that she may boastingly show the head of them, and blow the creature up with the conceit of himself above others. As the Pharisee, who through pride bragged that he was not as the publican—so that pride, if not looked to, will have to do everywhere, and hath a large sphere it moves in. Nothing indeed (without divine assistance) the creature hath or doth, but will soon become a prey to this devourer. But I am not to handle it in this latitude.

Pride is either conversant about carnal objects, as pride of beauty, strength, riches, and such like, or about spiritual. The latter we shall speak a little to. I confess for the former, possibly a saint may be caught in them—no sin [is] to be slighted—yet not so commonly, for ordinary pride is of those perfections which are suitable, if not proper, to the state and calling we are in. Thus the musician; he is proud of the skill he hath in his art, by which he excels others of his rank. The scholar, though he can play perhaps as well, yet is not proud of that, but looks on it as beneath him; no, he is proud of his learning and choice notions: and so of others.

Now the life of a Christian, as a Christian, is superior to the life of a man as a man; and therefore [he] doth not value himself by these which are be-

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34. Difficilè valdè vitatur peccatum, quod ex victoriâ vitiorum nascitur.

neath him, but in higher and more raised perfections, which suit a Christian's calling. As a natural man is proud of perfections suitable to his natural state, as honour, beauty; so the Christian is prone chiefly to be puffed up with perfections suitable to his life. I shall name three: **FIRST.** Pride of gifts. **SECOND.** Pride of grace. **THIRD.** Pride of privileges. These are the things which Satan chiefly labours to entangle him in.

[First kind of spiritual pride—PRIDE OF GIFTS.]

**FIRST.** By gifts, I mean those supernatural abilities, with which the Spirit of God doth enrich and endow the minds of men for edification of the body of Christ; of which gifts the apostle tells us there is great diversity, and all from the same Spirit, 1 Cor. 12:4. There is not greater variety of colours and qualities of plants and flowers, with which the earth like a carpet of needle-work is variegated for the delight and service of man, than there is of gifts, natural and spiritual, in the minds of men, to render them useful to one another, both in civil societies and Christian fellowship. The Christian, as well as man, is intended to be a sociable creature, and for the better managing of this spiritual commonwealth among Christians, God doth wisely and graciously provide, and impart, gifts suitable to the place every one stands in [relative] to his brethren, as the vessels are larger or less in the body natural, according to the place therein. Now Satan labours what he can, to taint these gifts, and fly-blow them with pride in the Christian, that so he may spoil the Christian's trade and commerce, which is mutually maintained by the gifts and graces of one another. Pride of gifts hinders the Christian's trade—at least [its] thriving by their commerce, two ways. First. Pride of gifts is the cause why we do so little good with them to others. Second. Pride of gifts is the cause why we receive so little good from the gifts of others.

First. Pride of gifts is the cause why we do so little good with them to others, and that upon a threefold account.

1. Pride diverts a man from aiming at the end. So far as pride prevails, the man prays, preaches, &c., rather to thought good by others, than to do good to others; rather to enthrone himself, than Christ, in the opinions and hearts of his hearers. Pride carries the

man aloft, to be admired for the height of his parts and notions, and will not suffer him to stoop so low as to speak of plain truths, or if he does, not plainly; he must have some fine lace, though on a plain stuff. Such a one may tickle the ear, but [is] very unlikely to do real good to the soul. Alas! it is not that he attends.

2. If this painted Jezebel of pride be perceived to look out at the window in any exercise, whether of preaching, prayer, or conference, it doth beget a disdain in the spirits of those that hear such a one, both good and bad. It is a sin very odious to a gracious heart, and oft-times makes the stomach go against the food, though good, through their abhorrency of that pride they see in the instrument. It is, indeed, their weakness, but woe to them that by their pride lead them into temptation! nay, those that are bad and may be in the same kind, like not that in another which they favour in themselves, and so prejudiced [they] return as bad as they went.

3. Pride of gifts robs us of God's blessing in the use of them. The humble man may have Satan at his right hand to oppose him; but be sure the proud man shall find God himself there to resist him, whenever he goes about any duty. God proclaims so much, and would have the proud man know wherever he meets him [that] he will oppose him. He 'resisteth the proud.' Great gifts are beautiful as Rachel, but pride makes them also barren like her. Either we must lay self aside, or God will lay us aside.

Second. Pride of gifts is the cause why we receive so little good from the gifts of others. Pride fills the soul; and a full soul will take nothing from God, much less from man, to do it good. Such a one is very dainty; it is not every sermon, though wholesome food, not every prayer, though savoury, [that] will go down. He must have a choice dish. He thinks he hath better than this of his own. And is such a one like to get good? And truly we may see it, that as the plain ploughman, that can eat of any homely food if wholesome, hath more health, and is able to do more work in a day, than many enjoy or can do in their whole life, that are nice, squeamish, and courtly in their fare; so the humble Christian that can feed on plain truths, and ordinances which have not so much of the art of man to commend them to their palate, enjoy more of God, and can do more for God, than

the nicer sort of professors, who are all to be served in a lordly dish of rare gifts. The church of Corinth was famous for gifts above other churches, 1 Cor. 1, but not in grace; none [were] so charged for weakness in that, 1 Cor. 3:2. He [Paul] calls them carnal babes in Christ, so weak as not able to digest man's meat. 'I have fed you,' saith Paul, 'with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.' Why? what is the matter? the reason lies, 'Ye are yet carnal: there is among you envying, and strife;' ver. 3, 'One saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos,' ver. 4. Pride makes them take parts, and make sides, one for this preacher, another for that, as they fancied one to excel another. And this is not the way to thrive. Pride destroys love, and love wanting edification is lost. The devil hath made foul work in the church by this engine. Zanchy tells of one in Geneva, who being desired to go hear Calvin, answered his friend, 'If Paul were to preach, I would leave Paul himself to hear Calvin<sup>35</sup>.' And will pride in the gifts of another so far transport, even to the borders of blasphemy, what work will then pride make when the gifts are a man's own?

[Use or Application.]

Use 1. [To those that have mean gifts.] Doth Satan thus stir up saints to the spiritual pride of gifts? Here is a word to you that have mean gifts, yet truth of grace—be content with thy condition. Perhaps when thou hearest others, how enlargedly they pray, how able to discourse of the truths of God, and the like, thou art ready to go into a corner, and moum to think how weak thy memory, how dull thy apprehension, how straitened thy spirit, hardly able, though in secret, to utter and express thy mind to God in prayer. O thou art ready to think those the happy men and women, and almost [to] murmur at thy condition. Well, canst thou not say, though I have no words, I hope I have faith? I cannot dispute for the truth, but I am willing to suffer for it. I cannot remember a sermon, but I never hear a word but I hate sin and love Christ more than ever. Lord, thou knowest I love thee. Truly, Christian, thou hast the

better part; thou little thinkest what a mercy may be wrapt up even in the meanness of thy gifts, or what temptations their gifts expose them to, which God, for aught I know, may in mercy deny thee. Joseph's coat made him finer than his brethren, but this caused all his trouble—this set the archers a shooting their arrows into his side. Thus, great gifts lift a saint up a little higher in the eyes of men, but it occasions many temptations which thou meetest not with that art kept low. What with envy from their brethren, malice from Satan, and pride in their own hearts, I dare say, none find so hard a work to go to heaven as such, [so] much ado to bear up against those waves and winds—while thou creepest along the shore under the wind to heaven. It is with such as with some great lord of little estate—a meaner man oft hath money in his purse, when he hath none, and can lend his lordship some at a need. Great gifts and parts are titles of honour among men, but many such may come and borrow grace and comfort of a mean-gifted brother, possibly, the preacher of his poor neighbour. O, poor Christians, do not murmur or envy them, but rather pity and pray for them, they need it more than others. His gifts are thine, thy grace is for thyself. Thou art like a merchant that hath his factor [who] goes to sea, but he hath his adventure without hazard brought home. Thou joinest with him in the prayer, hast the help of his gifts, but not the temptation of his pride.

Use 2. [To those that have great gifts.] Doth Satan labour thus to draw to pride of gifts? This speaks a word to you to whom God hath given more gifts than ordinary. Beware of pride, that is now your snare. Satan is at work; if possible he will turn your artillery against yourself. Thy safety lies in thy humility; if this lock be cut, the legions of hell are on thee. Remember whom thou wrestlest with—spiritual wickednesses—and their play is to lift up, that they may give the sorer fall. Now the more to stir up thy heart against it, I shall add some soul-humbling considerations on this pride of gifts.

1. Consideration. These spiritual gifts are not thine own; and wilt thou be proud of another's bounty? Is not God the founder, and can he not soon be the confounder of thy gifts? Thou that art proud of thy gourd, what wilt thou be when it is gone? Surely then thou wilt be peevish and angry, and truly thou takest the course to be stripped of them. Gifts

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35. Relicto Paulo Calvinum audirem.

come on other terms than grace. God gives grace as a freehold—it hath the promise of this and another world; but gifts come on liking. Though a father will not cast off his child, yet he may take away his fine coat and ornaments, if proud of them.

2. Consideration. Gifts are not merely for thyself. As the light of the sun is ministerial—it shines not for itself—so all thy gifts are for others—gifts for the edifying of the body. Suppose a man should leave a chest of money in your hands to be distributed to others, what folly is it in this man to put this into his own inventory, and applaud himself that he hath so much money? Poor soul, thou art but God’s executor, and by that time thou hast paid all the legacies, thou wilt see little left for thee to brag and boast of.

3. Consideration. Know, Christian, thou shalt be accountable for these talents. Now, with what face can a proud soul look on God? Suppose one left an executor to pay legacies, and this man should pay them, not as legacies of another, but [as] gifts of his own. Christ at his ascension gave gifts that his children should receive. Thou hast some in thy hand. Now a proud soul gives out all, not as the legacy of Christ, but as his own; he assumes all to himself. O how abominable is this, to entitle ourselves to Christ’s honour!

4. Consideration. Thy gifts commend thee not to God. Man may be taken with thy expression and notion in prayer; but these are all pared off when thy prayer comes before God. ‘O woman,’ saith Christ, ‘great is thy faith!’ not, compt<sup>36</sup> and flourishing thy language. It were good after our duties to sort the ingredients of which they are made up—what grace contributed, and what gifts, and what pride—and when all the heterogeneal stuff is severed, you shall see in what a little compass the actings of grace in our duties will lie.

5. Consideration. Consider while thou art priding in thy gifts, thou art dwindling and withering in thy grace. Such are like corn that runs up much into straw, whose ear commonly is but light and thin. Grace is too much neglected where gifts are too highly prized; we are commanded to be clothed with humil-

ity. Our garments cover the shame of our bodies, humility the beauty of the soul. And as a tender body cannot live without clothes, so neither can grace without this clothing of humility. It kills the spirit of praise; when thou shouldst bless God, thou art applauding thyself. It destroys Christian love, and stabs our fellowship with the saints to the heart; a proud man hath not room enough to walk in company, because the gifts of others he thinks stand in his way. Pride so distempers the palate, that it can relish nothing that is drawn from another’s vessel.

6. Consideration. It is the forerunner of some great sin, or some great affliction. God will not suffer such a weed as pride to grow in his garden without taking some course or other to root it up; may be he will let thee fall into some great sin, and that shall bring thee home with shame. God useth sometimes a thorn in the flesh, to prick the bladder of pride in the spirit; or at least some great affliction, the very end whereof is to ‘hide pride from man,’ Job 33:17,19. As you do with your hot mettled horses—ride them over ploughed lands to tame them, and then you can sit safely on their back. If God’s honour be in danger through thy pride, then expect a rod, and most likely the affliction shall be in that which shall be most grievous to thee, in the thing thou art proud of. Hezekiah boasted of his treasure. God sends the Chaldeans to plunder him. Jonah [is] fond of his gourd, and that is smitten. And if thy spirit be blown up with pride of gifts, thou art in danger of having them blasted, at least in the opinion of others whose breath of applause, possibly, was a means to overset thy unballasted spirit.

[Three doors whence this enemy comes forth.]

Question. But how would you direct us against this?

Answer. Arguments you have had before; I shall only therefore point to two or three doors where your enemy comes forth upon you; and surely the very sight thereof, if thou beest loyal to Christ, will stir thee up to fall upon it.

First Door. This kind of pride discovers itself in dwelling upon the thoughts of our gifts, with a secret kind of content to see our own face, till at last we fall in love with it. We read of some whose eyes are full

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36. Compt (from the Latin comptus), means neat, spruce, — Imperial Dictionary.

of the adulteress, and cannot cease from sin. A proud heart is full of himself; his own abilities cast their shadow before him. They are in his eye wherever he goes. The great subject and theme of his thoughts in what he is, and what he hath above others, applauding himself; as Bernard confesseth, that—when one would think he had little leisure for such thoughts—even in preaching; pride would be whispering in his ear, *Bene fecisti Bernarde—O well done, Bernard.* Now have a care, Christian, of chatting with such company. Run from such thoughts as from a bear. If the devil can get thee to stand on this pinnacle, while he presents thee with the glory of thy spiritual attainments and endowments, for thee to gaze on them thy weak head will soon turn round in pride; and therefore labour to keep the sense of thy own infirmities lively in thy soul, to divert the temptation. As those who are subject to some kind of fits carry about them things proper for the disease, that when the fit is coming—which is oft occasioned with a sweet perfume—they may use them for their help; sweet scents are not more dangerous for them, than anything they may applaud thee is to thy soul. Have a care, therefore, not only of wearing such thoughts in thy bosom, but also of sitting by others that bring the sweet scent of thy perfections to thee by their flattery.

Second Door. This kind of pride appears in a forwardness to expose itself to view, *1 Sam. 17:28.* David's brethren were mistaken in him indeed, but oft the pride and naughtiness of the heart breaks out at this door. Christ's carnal friends bid Christ show himself; pride loves to climb up, not as Zacchaeus, to see Christ, but to be seen himself. 'The fool,' Solomon tells us, 'hath no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover itself,' *Prov. 18:2.* Pride would be somebody, and therefore comes abroad to court the multitude; whereas humility delights in privacy. As the leaves do cover and shade the fruits, that some hand may gently lift up them, before they can see the fruit; so should a humility and holy modesty conceal the perfections of the soul, till a hand of providence by some call invites them out. There is a pride in naked gifts, as well as in naked breasts and backs. Humility is a necessary veil to all other graces, and therefore, *1. Christian, look whenever thou comest forth to public duty, that thou hast a call. It is obedience to be ready to answer when God calls thee*

forth, but it is pride to run before God speaks. *2.* When called, earnestly implore divine strength against this enemy. Shun not a duty for fear of pride—thou mayest show it in the very seeming to escape it—but go in the strength of God against it. There is more hope of overcoming it by obedience than [by] disobedience.

Third Door. This kind of pride discovers itself in envying the gifts of others, when they seem to blind our own that they are not so fair a prospect as we desire. This is a weed may grow too rank in a good soil. Aaron and Miriam could not bear Moses his honour, *Num. 12.1;* that was the business, though they pick a quarrel with him about his wife, because an Ethiopian, as appears plainly, 'Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us?' *ver. 2.* They thought Moses went away with too much of the honour, and did repine that God should use him more than themselves. And it is observable, that the lusting for flesh broke out among the mixed multitude, and baser sort of people, *Num. 11:4,5;* but this of pride and envy took fire in the bosoms of the most eminent for place and piety. O what need then have we, poor creatures, to watch our hearts when we see such precious servants of God led into temptation? 'The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy,' *James 4:5.* Our corrupt nature is ever putting on to this sin. It is as hard to keep our hearts and this sin asunder, as it is to keep two lovers from meeting together. Thatch is not more ready to be fired with every flash of lightning, than the heart to be kindled at every shining forth of any excelling gift or grace in another. It was of the first windows that corrupt nature looked out at—a sin that shed the first blood. Cain's envy hatched Abel's murder. Now if ever thou meanest to get the mastery of this sin,

*1. Call in help from heaven.* No sooner hath the apostle set forth how big and teeming full the heart of man is with envy, but he shows where a fountain of grace is, infinitely exceeding that of lust: 'The Spirit within us lusteth to envy, but he giveth more grace,' *James 4:5,6.* And therefore sit not down tamely under this sin: it is not unconquerable. God can give thee more grace than thou hast sin—more humility than thou hast pride. Be but so humble as cordially to beg this grace, and thou shalt not be so proud as wickedly to envy his gifts or grace in others.

2. Make this sin as black and ugly as thou canst possibly to thy thought, that when it is presented to thee, thou mayest abhor it the more. Indeed there needs no more than its own face—wouldst thou look wisely on it—to make thee out of love with it. For,

(1.) This envying of others' gifts casts great contempt upon God, and that more ways than one.

(a) When thou enviest the gifts of thy brethren, thou takest upon thee, to teach God what he shall give and to whom; as if the great God should take counsel, or ask leave of thee, before he dispenseth his gifts. And darest thou stand to thy own envious thoughts with this interpretation? such a one thou findest Christ himself give, 'Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?' *Matt. 20:15*, as if Christ had said, What hath any to do with cavil, at my disposal of what is not theirs, but mine, to give?

(b) Thou malignest the goodness of God. It troubles thee, it seems, that God hath a heart to do good to any besides thyself; thine eye is evil, because he is good. Wouldst not thou have God be good? you might as well say, you would not have him God. He can as soon cease to be God as to be good.

(c) Thou art an enemy to the glory of God, as thou defacest that which should set it forth. Every gift is a ray of divine excellency; and as all the beams declare the glory of the sun, so all the gifts of God imparts declare the glory of God. Now envy labours to deface and sully the representations of God; it hath ever something to disparage the excellency of another withal. God showed Miriam her sin by her punishment. She went to bespatter Moses that shone so eminently with the gifts and graces of God, and God spits in her face, *Num. 12*, yea, fills her all over with a noisome scab. Dost thou cordially wish well to the honour of God? why then hangest thou thy head, and dost not rather rejoice to see him glorified by the gifts of others? Could a heathen take it so well, when himself was passed by, and others chosen to places of honour and government, that he said he was glad his city could find so many more worthy than himself; and shall a Christian repine that any are found fit to honour God besides himself?

(2.) By this envying of others' gifts, thou wrongest thy brother, as thou sinnest against the law of love, which obligeth thee to rejoice in his good as thy own, yea, to prefer him in honour before thyself. Thou

canst not love and envy the same person. Envy is as contrary to love, as the hectical feverish fire in the body is to the kindly heat of nature. 'Charity envieth not,' *1 Cor. 13:4*. How can it, when it lives where it loves? And when thou ceasest to love thy brother, thou beginnest to beginnest to hate and kill him; and dost not thou tremble to be found a murderer at last?

(3.) By this envying of others' gifts, thou consultest worst of all for thyself. God is out of thy reach. What thou spittest against heaven, thou art sure to have fall on thy own face at last; and thy brother whom thou enviest, God stands bound to defend against thy envy, because he is maligned for what he hath of God in him. Thus did God plead Joseph's cause against his envious brethren, and David's against wicked Saul. Thyself only hast real hurt.

(a) Thou deprivest thyself of what thou mightst reap from the gifts of others. That old saying is true, 'What thou hast is mine, and what I have thine, when envy is gone.'<sup>37</sup> Whereas now, like the leech—which they say draws out the worst blood—thou suckest nothing but what swells thy mind with discontent, and is after vomited out in strife and contention. O what a sad thing it is, that one should go from a precious sermon, a sweet prayer, and bring nothing away but a grudge against the instrument God used; as we see in the Pharisees and others at Christ preaching!

(b) Thou robbest thyself of the joy of thy life. "He that is cruel troubleth his own flesh," *Prov. 11:17*. The envious man doth it to purpose; he sticks the honour and esteem of others as thorns in his own heart; he cannot think of them without pain and anguish, and he must needs pine that is ever in pain.

(c) Thou throwest thyself into the mouth of temptation, thou needest give the devil no greater advantage; it is a stalk any sin almost will grow upon. What will not the patriarchs do to rid their hands of Joseph whom they envied? That very pride which made them disdain the thought of bowing to his sheaf, made them stoop far lower, even to debase themselves as low as hell, and be the devil's instruments to sell their dear brother into slavery, which might have been worse for him—if God had not provided otherwise—than if they had slain him on the

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37. Tolle invidiam, mea tua sunt, et tua mea.

place. What an impotent mind, and cruel, did Saul show against David, when once envy had envenomed his heart! From that day [on] which he heard David preferred in the women's songs above himself, he could never get that sound out of his head, but did ever after devote this innocent man to death in his thoughts, who had done him no other wrong, but in being an instrument to keep the crown on his head, by the hazard of his own life with Goliath. O it is a bloody sin! It is the womb wherein a whole litter of other sins are formed, Rom. 1:29, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, &c.; and therefore, except you be resolved to bid the devil welcome and his whole train, resist him in this, that comes before to take up quarters for the rest.

[Second kind of spiritual pride—PRIDE OF GRACE.]

SECOND. Another way Satan assaults the Christian is through pride of grace. It is true, grace cannot be proud, yet it is possible a saint may be proud of his grace. There is nothing the Christian hath or doth, but this worm of pride will breed in it. The world we live in is corruptible, and all here is subject to purify, as things kept in a rafty muggish room<sup>38</sup> [are] subject to mould. It is not the nature of grace, but the salt of covenant, keeps and preserves the purity of it. In heaven indeed we shall be safe. But how can a saint be said to be proud of his grace? Then a soul is proud of his grace, when he trusts in his grace. Trust and confidence is an incommunicable flower of God's crown as Sovereign Lord;—even among men it goes along with royalty. Set up a king, and as such he expects you should give him this, as the undoubted prerogative of his place, and therefore to seek protection from any other is, as it were, to set up another king. 'If indeed you anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust under my shadow,' Judges 9:15. Therefore when a soul puts his trust in anything beside God, he sets up a prince, a king, an idol, to which he gives God's glory away. Now it doth not make the sin less, that it is the grace of God we crown, than if it were a lust we crowned. It is idolatry to worship a holy angel as well as a cursed devil, to

make our grace a god as well as our belly our god; nay, rather it adds to it, because that is now used to rob him of his glory which should have brought him in the greatest revenue of glory. Certainly the more treasure you put into your servant's hands, the greater wrong to you for him to run away with it. I doubt not but David could have borne it better to have seen a Philistine drive him from his throne than a son—an Absalom. But how can, or may, a saint be said to trust in his grace? First. By trusting on the strength of his grace. Second. By trusting on the worth of his grace, I conceive, cannot stand with grace: but there is an oblique kind of trust, or that which by interpretation may savour of it. Satan is sly in his assaults.

[Pride of grace is to trust in the STRENGTH  
of our grace.]

First. A Christian may be proud of his grace, by trusting in the strength of his grace. To trust in the strength of grace is to be proud of grace. This is opposed to that poverty of spirit so commended by our Saviour, Matt. 5, by which a man lives in the continual sense of his spiritual beggary and nothingness, and so hath his recourse to Christ, as the poor to the rich man's door, knowing he hath nothing at home to maintain him. Such a one was Paul, not able to do anything of himself. He is not ashamed to let the world know that Christ carries his purse for him. 'Our sufficiency is of God;' yea, after many years trading, this holy man sees nothing he hath got. 'I count not myself to have apprehended,' Php 3:13. He is still pressing forward. Ask him how he lives, he will tell you who keeps house for him, 'I live, yet not I,' Gal. 2:20. Ask a beggar where he hath his meat, clothes, &c., he will say, 'I thank my good master.' Now Satan chiefly labours to puff the soul up with an overweening conceit of his own ability, as the readiest means to bring him into his snare. Satan knows it is God's method to give his children into his hands, when once they grow proud and self-confident. Hezekiah was left to a temptation, 'to try him,' II Chr. 32:31. Why? God had tried him to purpose a little before in an affliction; what needs this? O, Hezekiah's heart was lift up after his affliction. It was time for God to let the tempter alone a little to foil him. Probably now Hezekiah had high thoughts of his

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38. A rafty muggish room, i.e., a damp close room. — ED.

grace—O he would never do as he had done before—and God will let him see what a weak creature he is. Peter makes a whip for his own back in that bravado, ‘Though all should forsake thee, yet will not I.’ Christ now in mere mercy must set Satan on him to lay him on his back, that seeing the weakness of his faith, he might be dismounted from the height of his pride. All that I shall say from this is, to entreat thee, Christian, to have a care of this kind of pride. You know what Joab said to David, when he perceived his heart lift up with the strength of his kingdom, and therefore would have the people numbered. ‘Now the Lord thy God add unto the people, how many soever they be, an hundredfold, but why doth my lord the king delight in this thing?’ II Sam. 24:3. The Lord add to the strength of thy grace an hundredfold, but why delightest thou in this? why shouldst thou be lift up? is it not grace? shall the groom be proud because he rides on his master’s horse? or the mud-wall because the sun shines on it? Mayest thou not say of every dram of grace, as the young man of his hatchet, ‘Alas, master, it is borrowed?’ nay, not only borrowed, but thou canst not use it without his skill and strength that lends it thee. O beware of this; let not those vain thoughts lodge in thee, lest thou enter into temptation. It is a breach a whole troop of sins may enter at, yea, will, except speedily filled up.

1. It will make thee soon grow loose and negligent in thy duty. It is sense of insufficiency [that] keeps a soul at work, to pray and hear—as want in the house and hutch holds up the market; no man comes thither to buy what he hath at home. ‘Up,’ saith Jacob, ‘go down to Egypt for corn, that we live and not die.’ Thus saith the needy Christian, ‘Up, soul, to thy God; thy faith is weak; thy patience almost spent; ply thee to the throne of grace; go with thy homer to the ordinances, and get some supplies.’ Now a soul conceited of his store, hath another song, ‘Soul, take thine ease, thou art richly laid in for many days. Let the doubting soul pray, thy faith is string; let the weak lie at the breast, thou art well grown up.’ Nay, it is well if it goes not further—to a despising of ordinances, except they have some more courtly fare than ordinary. Such a pass were the Corinthians come to, ‘Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us,’ I Cor. 4:8. I pray observe how he lays the accent on the particle now—now ye

are rich, as if he had said, I knew the time [when] if Paul had come to town, and news spread abroad in the city that Paul was to preach, you would have flocked to hear him, and blessed God for the season; but then you were poor and empty, now ye are full, you have got to a higher attainment—Paul is a plain fellow now, he may carry his cheer to a hungry people if he will; we are well apaid [satisfied]. And when once the heart is come to this, it is easy to judge what will follow.

2. This trusting to the strength of grace will make the soul bold and venturous. The humble Christian is the wary Christian. He knows his weakness, and this makes him afraid. ‘I have a weak head,’ saith he, ‘I may soon be disputed into an error and heresy, and therefore I dare not come where such stuff is broached, lest my weak head should be intoxicated.’ The confident man will sip of every cup, he fears none, no, he is stablished in the truth—a whole team of heretics shall not draw him aside. ‘I have a vain light heart,’ saith the humble soul—‘I dare not come among wicked debauched company, lest I should at last bring the naughty man home with me.’ But one, trusting to the strength of his grace, dares to venture into the devil’s quarters. Thus Peter [ventured] into the route of Christ’s enemies, and how he came off, you know. There his faith had been slain on the place, had not Christ sounded a retreat, by the seasonable look of love he gave him. Indeed I have read of some bragging philosophers, who did not think it enough to be temperate, except they had the object of intemperance present, and therefore they would go into taverns and whore-houses, as if they meant to beat the devil on his own ground. But the Christian knows an enemy nearer than so—which they were ignorant of—and that he need not go over his own threshold to challenge the devil. He hath lust in his bosom, that will be hard enough for him all his days, without giving it the vantage-ground. Christian, I know no sin, but thou mayest be left to commit it, except one. It was a bold speech of him—and yet a good man, as I have heard—‘If Clapham die of the plague, say Clapham had no faith;’ and this made him boldly go among the infected. If a Christian, thou shalt not die of spiritual plagues—yet such may have the plague-sores of gross sins running on them for a time; and is not his sad enough? therefore walk

humbly with thy God.

3. This high conceit of the strength of thy grace will make thee cruel and churlish to thy weak brethren in their infirmities—a sin that least becomes a saint. ‘If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness,’ Gal. 6:1. But how shall a soul get such a meek spirit? It follows—‘Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.’ What makes men hard to the poor? they think they shall never be so themselves. Why are many so sharp in their censures, but because they trust too much to their grace, as if they could never fall? O you are in the body, and the body of sin in you, therefore fear. Bernard used to say, when he heard any scandalous sin of a professor,<sup>39</sup> ‘He fell to-day, I may stumble tomorrow.’

[Pride of grace is to trust  
in the WORTH of our grace.]

Second. The second way a Christian may be proud of his grace, is by trusting on the worth of his grace—resting on it for his acceptance with God. The Scripture calls inherent grace ‘our own righteousness’—though God indeed be the efficient of it—and opposeth it to the righteousness of Christ, which alone is called ‘the righteousness of God,’ Rom. 10:1-4. Now, to rest on any grace inherent, is to exalt our own righteousness above the righteousness of God; and what pride will this amount to? If this were so, then a saint when he comes to heaven might say, ‘This is heaven which I have built—my grace hath purchased;’ and thus the God of heaven should become tenant to his creature in heaven. No, God hath cast the order of our salvation into another method—of grace, but not of grace in us, but grace to us. Inherent grace hath its place and office to accompany salvation, Heb. 6:9, but not [to] procure it. This is Christ’s work, not grace’s. When Israel waited on the Lord at Mount Sinai they had their bounds. Not a man must come up besides Moses to treat with God; no, not touch the mount, lest they die. Thus all the graces of the Spirit wait on God, but none come up to challenge any acceptance of God besides faith, which is a grace that

presents the soul not in its own garments. But you will say, ‘What needs all this? where is the man that trusts in his grace?’ Alas, where is the Christian that doth fully stand clear, and freely come off his own righteousness? He is a rare pilot, indeed, that can steer his faith in so direct a course, as not now and then knock upon this duty, and run on ground upon that grace. Abraham went in to Hagar, and the children of Abraham’s faith are not perfectly dead to the law, and may be found sometimes in Hagar’s arms. Witness the flux and reflux of our faith, according to the various aspect of our obedience. When this seems full, then our faith is at a spring-tide, and covers all the mountains of our fears; but let it seem to wane in any service or duty, then the Jordan of our faith flies back, and leaves the soul naked. The devil’s spite is at Christ, and therefore, since he could not hinder his landing—which he endeavoured all he could—nor work his will on his person when he was come, he goes now, in a more refined way, to darken the glory of his sufferings, and the sufficiency of his righteousness, by blending ours with his. This doctrine of justification by faith hath had more works and batteries made against it, than any other in the Scripture. Indeed many other errors were but his sly approaches to get nearer to undermine this. And lastly, when he cannot hide this truth—which now shines in the church like the sun in its strength—then he labours to hinder the practical improvement of it, that we (if he can help it) shall not live up to our own principles—making us, at the same time that, in our judgment, we profess acceptance only through Christ, in our practice confute ourselves.

Now there is a double pride in the soul he makes use of for this end—the one I may call a mannerly pride, the other a self-applauding pride.

First. [There is] a mannerly pride, which comes forth in the habit and guise of humility, and that discovers itself, either at the soul’s first coming to Christ, and keeps him from closing with the promise; or afterward in the daily course of a Christian’s walking with God, which keeps him from comfortable living on Christ.

1. When a poor soul is staved off the promise by the sense of his own unworthiness and great unrighteousness. Tell him of a pardon, alas! he is so wrapped up with the thoughts of his own vileness, that you

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39. Hodie illi cras mihi.

cannot fasten it upon him. What, will God ever take such a toad as he is into his bosom, discount so many great abominations at once, and receive him into his favour, that hath been so long in rebellious arms against him! He cannot believe it; no, though he hears what Christ hath done and suffered for sin, he refuseth to be comforted. Little doth the soul think what a bitter root such thoughts spring from. Thou thinkest thou doest well thus to declaim against thyself, and aggravate thy sins. Indeed, thou canst not paint them black enough, or entertain too low and base thoughts of thyself for them; but what wrong hath God and Christ done thee, that thou shouldst so unworthily reflect upon the mercy of the one, and merit of the other? Mayest thou not do this, and be tender of the good name of God also? Is there no way to show the sense of thy sin, except thou asperse thy Saviour? Canst thou not charge thyself, but thou must condemn God, and put Christ and his blood to shame before Satan, who triumphs more in this than all thy other sins? In a word, though thou, like a wretch, hast undone thyself, and damned thy soul by thy sins, yet art thou not willing God should have the glory of pardoning them, and Christ the honour of procuring the same? or art thou like him in the gospel, who could not dig, and to beg was ashamed? Luke 16:3. Thou canst not earn heaven by thy own righteousness; and is thy spirit so stout that thou wilt not beg it for Christ's sake? yea, take it at God's hands, who, in the gospel, comes a begging to thee, and beseecheth thee to be reconciled to him? Ah, soul! who would ever have thought there could have lain such pride under such a modest veil? and yet none like it. It is horrible pride for a beggar to starve rather than take an alms at a rich man's hands—[for] a malefactor rather to choose his halter than a pardon from his gracious prince's hand; but here is one infinitely surpassing both—a soul pining and perishing in sin, and yet rejecting the mercy of God, and the helping hand of Christ to save him! Though Abigail did not think herself worthy to be David's wife, yet she thought David was worthy of her, and therefore she humbly accepted his offer, and makes haste to go with the messengers. That is the sweet frame of heart indeed—to lie low in the sense of your own vileness, yet to believe; to renounce all conceit of worthiness in ourselves, yet not therefore to renounce all hope of mer-

cy, but the more speedily to make haste to Christ that woos us. All the pride and unmannerliness lies in making Christ stay for us, who bids his messengers invite poor sinners to come and tell them 'all things are ready.' But, may be thou wilt say still, it is not pride that keeps thee off, but thou canst not believe that ever God will entertain such as thou art. Truly thou mendest the matter but little with this. Either thou keepest some lust in thy heart, which thou wilt not part with, to obtain the benefit of the promise, and then thou art a notorious hypocrite, who under such an outcry for thy sins, canst drive a secret trade with hell at the same time; or if not so, thou dost discover the more pride in that thou darest stand out, when thou hast nothing to oppose against the many plain and clear promises of the gospel but thy peremptory unbelief. God bids the wicked forsake his ways, and turn to him, and he will abundantly pardon him; but thou sayest thou canst not believe this for thy own self. Now who speaks the truth? One of you two must be the liar; either thou must take it with shame to thyself, for what thou hast said against God and his promise—and that is thy best course; or thou must proudly, yea, blasphemously cast it upon God, as every unbeliever doth, 1 John 5:10. Nay, thou makest him foresworn, for God—to give poor sinners the greater security in flying for refuge to Christ, who is that 'hope set before them,' Heb. 6:17,18—hath sworn they should have strong consolation. 'O happy we, for whose sake God puts himself under an oath: but O miserable we, who will not believe God, no, not when he swears!'<sup>40</sup>

2. When the soul hath shot the great gulf, and got into a state of peace and life by closing with Christ, yet this mannerly pride Satan makes use of in the Christian's daily course of duty and obedience, to disturb him and hinder his peace and comfort. O how uncheerfully, yea, joylessly do many precious souls pass their days! If you inquire what is the cause, you shall find [that] all their joy runs out at their crannies of their imperfect duties and weak graces. They cannot pray as they would, and walk as they desire, with evenness and constancy; they see how far

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40. O beatos, quorum causâ Deus jurat! O miserimos, si nec juranti credamus! — Tertullian de Pœnitentia.

short they fall of the holy rule in the Word, and the pattern which others more eminent in grace do set before them; and this, though it doth not make them throw the promises away, and quite renounce all hope in Christ, yet it begets many sad fears and suspicions, yea, makes them sit at the feast Christ hath provided, and not know whether they may eat or not. In a word, as it robs them of their joy, so [it robs] Christ of that glory he should receive from their rejoicing in him. I do not say, Christian, thou oughtest not to mourn for those defects thou findest in thy graces and duties, nay, thou couldst not approve thyself to be sincere if thou didst not. A gracious heart—seeing how far short his renewed state, for the present, falls of man’s primitive holiness by creation—cannot but weep and mourn—as the Jews [did] to behold the second temple; yet, Christian, even while the tears are in thy eyes for thy imperfect graces—for a soul riseth with his grave-clothes on—thou shouldst rejoice, yea, triumph over all these thy defects by faith in Christ, in whom thou art complete, Col. 2:10, while imperfect in thyself. Christ’s presence in the second temple—which the first had not—made it, though comparatively mean, more glorious than the first, Hag. 2:9. How much more doth his presence in this spiritual temple of a gracious heart, imputing his righteousness to cover all uncomeliness, make the soul glorious above man at first? This is a garment for which—as Christ saith of the lily—we neither spin nor toil; yet Adam in all his created royalty was not so clad, as the weakest believer is with this on his soul. Now, Christian, consider well what thou doest, while thou sittest languishing under the sense of thy own weaknesses, and refuseth to rejoice in Christ, and live comfortably on the sweet privileges thou art interested in by thy marriage to him. Dost thou not bewray some of this spiritual pride working in thee? O, if thou couldst pray without wandering, walk without limping, believe without wavering, then thou couldst rejoice and walk cheerfully. It seems, soul, thou stayest to bring the ground of thy comfort with thee, and not to receive it purely from Christ. O how much better were it if thou wouldst say with David, ‘Although my house’—my heart—‘be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure; and this is all my desire, all my confidence. Christ I oppose to all my

sins, Christ to all my wants; he is my all in all, and all above all.’ Indeed, all those complaints of our wants and weaknesses, so far as they withdraw our hearts from relying cheerfully on Christ, they are but the language of pride hankering after the covenant of works. O it is hard to forget our mother-tongue, which is so natural to us; labour therefore to be sensible of it, [of] how grievous it is to the Spirit of Christ. What would a husband say, if his wife, instead of expressing her love to him, and delight in him, should day and night do nothing but weep and cry to think of her former husband that is dead? The law, as a covenant, and Christ, are compared to two husbands: ‘Ye are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead,’ Rom. 7:4. Now thy sorrow for the defect of thy own righteousness, when it hinders thy rejoicing in Christ, is but a whining after thy other husband, and this Christ cannot take but unkindly—that thou art not well pleased to lie in the bosom of Christ, and have thy happiness from him as with your old husband the law.

Second. [There is] a self-applauding pride; when the heart is secretly lift up, so as to promise itself acceptance at God’s hands, for any duty or act of obedience it performs, and doth not, when most assisted, go out of his own actings, to lay the weight of his expectation entirely upon Christ. Every such glance of the soul’s eye is adulterous, yea, idolatrous. If thy heart, Christian, at any time be secretly enticed—as Job saith of another kind of idolatry—or thy mouth doth kiss thy hand, that is, dote so far on thy own duties and righteousness, as to give them this inward worship of thy confidence and trust, this is a great iniquity indeed; for in this thou deniest the God that is above, who hath determined thy faith to another object. Thou comest to open heaven’s gate with the old key, when God hath set on a new lock. Dost thou not acknowledge that thy first entrance into thy justified state was of pure mercy? thou wert ‘justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,’ Rom. 3:24. And whom art thou beholden to, now thou art reconciled, for thy further acceptance or duty or holy action? to thy duty, thy obedience, thyself, or Christ? The same apostle will tell you, ‘By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand,’ Rom. 5:2. If Christ should not lead

thee in and all thou doest, thou art sure to find the door shut upon thee. There is no more place for desert now thou art gracious, than when thou wert graceless. 'The righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith,' for 'the just shall live by faith,' Rom. 1:17. We are not only made alive by Christ, but we live by Christ; faith sucks in continual pardoning, assisting, comforting mercy from him, as the lungs suck in the air. Heaven's way is paved with grace and mercy to the end.

[Use or Application.]

Use. Be exhorted above all to watch against this play of Satan, beware thou retest not in thy own righteousness. Thou standest under a tottering wall; the very cracks thou seest in thy graces and duties, when best, bid thee stand off, except thou wouldst have them fall on thy head. The greatest step to heaven, is out of our own doors, over our own threshold. It hath cost many a man his life when his house on fire—a grippleness<sup>41</sup> to save some of the stuff—which, venturing among the flames to preserve, they have perished themselves. More have lost their souls by thinking to carry some of their own stuff with them to heaven—such a good work or duty—while [until] they, like lingering Lot, have been loath to leave in point of confidence—have themselves perished. O sirs, come out, come out, leave what is your own in the fire. Fly to Christ naked; he hath gold—not like thine, which will consume and be found drossy in the fire, but such as hath in the fiery trial passed in God's righteous judgment for pure and full weight. You cannot be found in two places at once. Choose whether you will be found in your own righteousness or in Christ's. Those who have had more to show than thyself, have thrown away all, and gone a begging to Christ. Read Paul's inventory, Php. 3—what he had, what he did—yet all dross and loss. Give him Christ, and take the rest who will. So Job, as holy a man as trod on earth—God himself being witness—yet saith, 'Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul: I would despise my life,' Job 9:21. He had ac-

knowledged his imperfection before, now he makes a supposition—indeed, quod non est supponendum, which ought not to be made—'If I were perfect, yet would I not know my own soul. I would not entertain any such thoughts as would puff me up into such confidence of my holiness, as to make it my plea with God.' Like to our common phrase, we say, such a one hath excellent parts, but he knows it, that is, he is proud of it. Take heed of knowing thy own grace in this sense; thou canst not give a greater wound both to thy grace and comfort, than by thus priding thyself in it.

[Why the Christian should not rest on any inherent work of grace.]

First. Thy grace cannot thrive so long as thou thus retest upon it. A legal spirit is no friend to grace; nay, is a bitter enemy against it, as appeared by the Pharisees in Christ's time. Grace comes not by the law, but by Christ; thou mayest stand long enough by it, before thou gettest any life of grace into thy soul, or further life into thy grace. If thou wouldst have this, thou must set thyself under Christ's wings by faith. From his Spirit in the gospel alone comes this kindly natural heat to hatch thy soul to the life of holiness, and increase what thou hast; and thou canst not come under Christ's wings, till thou comest from under the shadow of the other, by renouncing all expectation from thy own works and services. You know Reuben's curse—that he should not excel, because he went up into his father's bed. When other tribes increased, he stood at a little number. By trusting in thy own works thou dost worse by Christ, and shalt thou excel in grace? Perhaps some of you have been long professors, and yet [have] come to little growth in love to God, humility, heavenly-mindedness, mortification; and it is worth the digging to see what lies at the root of your profession—whether there be not a legal principle that hath too much acted you. Have you not thought to carry all with God from your duties and services, and too much laid up your hopes in your own actings? Alas! this is as so much dead earth, which must be thrown out, and gospel principles laid in the room thereof. Try but this course, and see whether the spring of thy grace will not come on apace. David gives an account how he

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41. Grippleness: miserliness, avariciousness. From Webster's New World Dict. — SDB

came to stand and flourish, when some that were rich and mighty, on a sudden withered and came to nothing. ‘Lo,’ saith he, ‘this is the man that made not God his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his riches.’ ‘But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God; I trust in the mercy of God forever and ever,’ Ps. 52:7-8. While others trust in the riches of their own righteousness and services, and make not Christ their strength, do thou renounce all, and trust in the mercy of God in Christ, and thou shalt be like a green olive when they fade and wither.

Second. Christian, you will not thrive in true comfort so long as you rest in any inherent work of grace, and do not stand clear of your own actings and righteousness. Gospel-comfort springs from a gospel-root, which is Christ. ‘We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,’ Php. 3:3. Now a soul that rests on any holiness in himself, he grafts his comfort upon himself, not upon Christ; he sucks his own breast, not Christ’s, and so makes Christ a dry nurse; and what comfort can grow on that dry tree? The Spirit is our comforter as well as our teacher and counsellor. Now as the Spirit, when he teacheth, comes not with any new or strange truth, but takes of Christ’s own—what he finds in the Word; so where he comforts, he takes of Christ’s own—his righteousness, not our own. Christ is the matter and ground of his comfort. All cordials are but Christ distilled, and made up in several promises; his acting, not ours; his suffering, not ours; his holiness, not ours. He doth not say, ‘Soul, rejoice! thou art holy,’ but ‘Soul, triumph! Christ is righteous, and is the Lord thy righteousness;’ not, ‘Soul, thou prayest sweetly, fear not;’ but, ‘Thou hast an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;’ so that the first step to the receiving of comfort from the Spirit, is to send away all comforts of our own. As in learning of the Spirit, he that will be taught by him, must first become a fool—that is, no way lean to his own understanding; so he that would be comforted, must first be emptied of all self-supports, must not lean on his own comforts. As a physician first bids his patient cast off all others he hath tampered with, asks what physic he hath had from them, takes off their plasters, throws away their physic, and goes about the work *de novo*—anew; so the Spirit, when he comes to comfort

a poor soul, first persuades the soul to send away all its old physicians. O, saith the soul, I have been in the hand of such a duty, such a course of obedience, and have thought sure now I shall be well, and have comfort, now I do this duty, set upon such a holy course. Well, saith the Spirit, if you will have me do anything, these must all be dismissed in point of confidence. Now, and not till now, is the soul a subject fit to receive the Spirit’s comforts. And therefore, friends, as you love your inward peace, beware what vessel you draw your comfort from. Grace is finite, and so cannot afford much. It is leaking, and so cannot hold long; thou drinkest in a riven dish, that hast thy comfort from thy grace. It is mixed, and so weak; and weak grace cannot give strong consolation—and such thou needest, especially in strong conflicts. Nay, lastly, thy comfort which thou drawest from it, is stolen—thou dost not come honestly by it; and stolen comforts will not thrive with thee. O, what folly is it for the child to play the thief, for that which he may have freely and more fully from his father, who gives and reproacheth not! That comfort which thou wouldst filch out of thy own righteousness and duties, behold it is laid up for thee in Christ, from whose fulness thou mayest carry as much as thy faith can hold, and [there is] none to check thee, yea, the more thou improvest Christ for thy comfort, the more heartily welcome. We are bid to open our mouth wide, and he will fill it.

[Third kind of spiritual pride  
—PRIDE OF PRIVILEGES.]

THIRD. Pride of privileges is the third kind of spiritual pride, with which these wicked spirits labour to blow up the Christian. To name three [of these privileges]: First. When God calls a person to some eminent place, or useth him to do some special piece of service. Second. When God honours a saint to suffer for his truth or cause. Third. When God flows in with more than ordinary manifestations of his love, and fills the soul with joy and comfort. These are privileges not equally dispensed to all; and therefore, where they are, Satan takes advantage of assaulting such with pride.

First Privilege. When God calls a person to some eminent place, or useth him to do some special piece

of service. Indeed it requires a great measure of grace to keep the heart low, when the man stands high. The apostle, speaking how a minister of the gospel should be qualified, saith he must not be 'a novice,' or a young convert, 'lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil,' 1 Tim 3:6; as if he had said, 'This calling is honourable, if he be not well balanced with humility, a little gust from Satan will topple him into this sin.' The seventy that Christ first sent out to preach the gospel, and [who] prevailed so miraculously over Satan—even these, while they trod on the serpent's head, he turned again, and had like to have stung them with pride. This our Saviour perceived, when they returned in triumph, and told what great miracles they had wrought; and therefore he takes them off that glorying, lest it should degenerate into vainglory, and bids them 'rejoice not that spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven,' Luke 10:20. As if he had said, 'It is not the honour of your calling, and success of your ministry [that] will save you. There shall be some cast to the devils, who shall then say, "Lord, Lord, in thy name we have cast out devils," and therefore value not yourselves by that, but rather evidence to your souls, that you are mine elect ones, which will stand you more in stead at the great day than all this.'

Second Privilege. A second privilege is, when God honours a person to suffer for his truth. This is a great privilege. 'Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake,' Php. 1:29. God doth not use to give worthless gifts to his saints, there is some preciousness in it, which a carnal eye cannot see. Faith, you will say, is a great gift, but perseverance greater—without which faith would be little worth—and perseverance in suffering is, above both, honourable. This made John Careless, our English martyr—who, though he died not at the stake, yet [died] in prison for Christ—say, 'Such an honour it is, as angels are not permitted to have, therefore God forgive me mine unthankfulness.' Now when Satan cannot scare a soul from prison, yet then he will labour to puff him up in prison; when he cannot make him pity himself, then he will flatter him till he prides in himself. Affliction from God, exposeth to impatience, affliction for God, to pride; and therefore, Christians, la-

bour to fortify yourselves against this temptation of Satan. How soon you may be called to suffering work you know not—such clouds oft are not long arising. Now to keep thy heart humble when thou art honoured to suffer for the truth, consider,

1. Though thou dost not deserve those sufferings at man's hand, thou canst and mayst, in that regard, glory in thy innocency [that] thou sufferest not as an evildoer; yet thou canst not but confess it is a just affliction from God in regard of sin in thee, and this methinks should keep thee humble. The same suffering may be martyrdom in regard of man, and yet a fatherly chastening for sin in regard of God. None suffered without sin but Christ, and therefore none may glory in sufferings but he—Christ in his own, we in his. 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,' Gal. 6:14. This kept Mr. Bradford humble in his sufferings for the truth. None more rejoiced in them, and blessed God for them, yet none more humble under them, than he. And what kept him in this humble frame? Read his godly letters, and you shall find almost in all how he bemoans his sins, and the sins of the Protestants under the reign of king Edward, 'It was time,' saith he, 'for God to put his rod into the Papists' hands. We were grown so proud, formal, unfruitful, yea, to loathe and despise the means of grace, when we enjoyed the liberty thereof, and therefore God hath brought the wheel of persecution on us.' As he looked at the honour to make him thankful, so to sin to make him humble.

2. Consider who bears thee up, and carries thee through thy sufferings for Christ. Is it thy grace, or his, that is sufficient for such a work? thy spirit, or Christ's, by which thou speakest when called to bear witness for the truth? How comes it to pass [that] thou art a sufferer and not a persecutor? a confessor, and not a denier, yea, betrayer of Christ and his gospel? This thou owest for to God. He is not beholden to thee, that thou wilt part with estate, credit, or life itself for his sake—if thou hadst a thousand lives, thou wouldst owe them all to him; but thou art beholden to God exceedingly, that he will call for these in this way, which has such an honour and reward attending it. He might have suffered thee to live in thy lusts, and at last to suffer the loss of all these for them. O how many die at the gallows as martyrs in

the devil's cause, for felonies, rapes and murders! Or, he might withdraw his grace, and leave thee to thy own cowardice and unbelief, and then thou wouldst soon show thyself in thy colours. The stoutest champions for Christ have been taught how weak they are if Christ steps aside. Some that have given great testimony of their faith and resolution in Christ's cause—even to come so near dying for his name as to give themselves to be bound to the stake, and [to the] fire to be kindled upon them—yet then their hearts have failed, as that holy man Mr. Benbridge, in our English martyrology, who thrust the faggots from him, and cried out, 'I recant, I recant.' Yet this man, when reinforced in his faith, and endued with power from above, was able, within the space of a week after that sad foil, to die at the stake cheerfully. 'He that once overcame death for us, is he that always overcomes death in us.'<sup>42</sup> And who should be thy song, but he that is thy strength? applaud not thyself, but bless him. It is one of God's names; he is called 'the glory of his people's strength,' Ps. 89:17. The more thou gloriest in God that gives thee strength to suffer for him, the less thou wilt boast of thyself. A thankful heart and a proud cannot dwell together in one bosom.

3. Consider what a foul blot pride gives to all thy sufferings; where it is not bewailed and resisted, it alters the case. The old saying is, that it is not the punishment but the cause [that] makes the martyr. We may safely say further, 'It is not barely the cause, but the sincere frame of the heart in suffering for a good cause, that makes a man a martyr in God's sight.' Though thou shouldst give thy body to be burned, if thou hast not the humble heart of a sufferer for Christ, thou turnest merchant for thyself. Thou deniest but one self, to set up another; runnest the hazard of thy estate and life, to gain some applause may be, and rear up a monument to thy honour in the opinions of men. Thou doest no more, in this case, than a soldier, who for a name of valour will venture into the mouth of death and danger; only thou showest thy pride under a religious disguise; but that helps it not, but makes it the worse. If thou wilt

in thy sufferings be a sacrifice acceptable to God, thou must not only be ready to offer up thy life for his truth, but [to] sacrifice thy pride also, or else thou mayst tumble out of one fire into another—suffer here from man as a seeming champion for the gospel, and in another world from God, for robbing him of his glory in thy sufferings.

Third Privilege. A third privilege is, when God flows in with more than ordinary manifestations of his love. Then the Christian is in danger of having his heart secretly lift up in pride. Indeed, the genuine and natural effect which such discoveries of divine love have on a gracious soul is to humble it. The sight of mercy increaseth the sense of sin, and that sense dissolves the soul kindly into sorrow, as we see in Magdalene. The heart which possibly was hard and frozen in the shade, will give and thaw in the sunshine of love, and so long is pride hid from the creature's eye. 'Then,' saith God, 'shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight,' &c., Eze. 36:31. And when shall this be, but when God would save them from all their uncleannesses? as appears, ver. 25; yet notwithstanding this, there remain such dregs of corruption unpurged out of the best, that Satan finds it not impossible to make the manifestations of God's love an occasion of pride to the Christian. And truly God lets us see our proneness to this sin in the short stay he makes, when he comes with any greater discoveries of his love. The Comforter, it is true, abides for ever in the saint's bosom; but his joys, they come and are gone again quickly. They are as exceedings with which he feasts the believer, but the cloth is soon drawn; and why so, but because we cannot bear them for our everyday food? A short interview of heaven, and a vision of love now and then upon the mount of an ordinance, or affliction, cheers the spirits of drooping Christians, who—might they have leave to build their tabernacles there, and dwell under a constant shine of such manifestations—would be prone to forget themselves, and think they were lords of their own comforts. If holy Paul was in danger of falling into this distemper of pride from his short rapture—to prevent which, God saw it needful to let him bleed with a thorn in the flesh—would not our blood much more grow too rank, and we too crank and wanton, if we should feed

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42. Qui pro nobis mortem semel vicit, semper in nobis vincit.

long on such luscious food? And therefore, if ever, Christian, thou hadst need to watch, then is the time—when comforts abound, and God dandles thee most on the knee of his love—when his face shines with clearest manifestations; lest this sin of pride, as a thief in the candle, should swale<sup>43</sup> out thy joy. To prevent which, thou shouldst do well,

1. To look that thou measurest not thy grace by thy comfort, lest so thou beest led into a false opinion that thy grace is strong, because thy comforts are so. Satan will be ready to help forward such thought as a fir medium to lift thee up, and slacken thy care in duty for the future. Such discoveries do indeed bear witness to the truth of thy grace, but not to the degree and measure of it. The weak child may be, yea, is, oftener in the lap than the strong.

2. Do not so much applaud thyself in thy present comfort, as labour to improve it, for the glory of God. 'Arise and eat,' saith the angel to the prophet, 'because the journey is too great for thee.' The manifestations of God's love are to fit us for our work. It is one thing to rejoice in the light of our comfort, and another to go forth in the power of the Spirit comforting us—as giants refreshed with this wine—to run our race of duty and obedience with more strength and alacrity. He shows his pride that spends his time in telling his money merely to see how rich he is; but he his wisdom, that lays out his money and trades with it. The boaster of his comforts will lose what he hath, when he that improves his comforts in a fuller trade of duty shall add more to what he hath.

3. Remember thou dependest on God for the continuance of thy comfort. They are not the smiles thou hadst yesterday [that] make thee joyous to-day, any more than the bread thou didst then eat can make thee strong without more. Thou needest new discoveries for new comforts. Let God hide his face, and thou wilt soon lose the sight, and forget the taste, of what thou even now hadst. It is beyond our skill or power to preserve those impressions of joy, and comfortable apprehensions of God's favour on our spirits, which sometimes we find; as God's presence brings

those, so, when he goes, he carries them away with him, as the setting sun doth the day. We would laugh heartily at him who, when the sun shines in at his window, should think by shutting that to imprison the sunbeams in his chamber; and dost thou now show as much folly, who thinkest, because thou now hast comfort, thou therefore shalt never be in darkness of spirit more? The believer's comfort is like Israel's manna. It is not like the ordinary bread and provision we buy at market, and lock up in our cupboards where we can go to it when we will; no, it is rained, as that was, from heaven. Indeed, God provided for them after this sort to humble them: 'Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee,' Deut. 8:16. It was not because [it was] such mean food, that God is said to humble them, for it was delicious food, therefore called 'angels' food,' Ps. 78:25, such as if angels did eat, might serve them; but the manner of the dispensing it—from hand to mouth, every day their portion, and no more. Thus God kept the key of their cupboard—they stood to his immediate allowance; and thus God communicates our spiritual comforts for the same end, to humble us. So much for this second sort of spiritual wickedness.

I had thought to have instanced in some others, as hypocrisy, unbelief, formality; but possibly the subject being general, what I have already said may be thought but a digression, and that too long. I shall therefore conclude this branch of spiritual wickedness, in a word to those who are yet in a natural and unsanctified state—which is to stir them up, from what I have said concerning Satan's assaulting believers with such temptations, to consider seriously how that Satan's chief design against them also lies in the same sins. It is your seared conscience, blind mind, and dedolent impenitent heart, will be your undoing, if you miscarry finally. Other sins, the devil knows, are preparatory to these, and therefore he draws thee into them to bring thee into these. Two ways they prepare a way to spiritual sins: First. As they naturally dispose the sinner to them; it is the nature of sin to blind the mind, stupify the conscience, harden the heart, as is implied, 'Lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin,' Heb. 3:13. As the feet of travellers beat the highway hard, so does walking in carnal gross sins the heart. They benumb the con-

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43. To swale, otherwise written sweal, means to waste or melt away; as when a candle runs down without feeding the flame.

science, so that in time the sinner loses his feeling, and can carry his lusts in his heart, as bedlams their pins in their very flesh, without pain and remorse. Secondly, As they do provoke God by a judiciary act to give them up to these sins, 'Give them obstinacy of heart,' Lam. 3:65, so it is in your margin, 'thy curse unto them;' and when the devil hath got sinners at this pass, then he hath them under lock and key. They are the forerunners of damnation. If God leave thy heart hard and unbroken up, it is a sad sign he means not to sow the seed of grace there. O sinners, pray, as he, Acts 8:24, did request Peter for him, that none of these things may come upon you; which that they may not, take heed thou rejectest not the offers he makes to soften thee. God's hardening is a consequent of, and a punishment for, our hardening our own hearts. It is most true what Prosper saith,<sup>44</sup> 'A man may lose temporals against his will, but not spirituals.' God will harden none, damn none, against their will.

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#### BRANCH FIFTH.

'In high places,' or FOR HEAVENLY THINGS.

These words contain the last branch in the description of our grand enemy, which have in them some ambiguity—the adjective being only expressed in the original, ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις, that is, [the] heavenlies. The phrase being defective, our translators read it 'in high' or heavenly 'places,' as if the apostle intended to set out the advantage of place which this our enemy, by being above us, hath of us. Indeed this way most interpreters go, yet some both ancient and modern read the words, not 'in heavenly places,' but 'in heavenly things,' interpreting the apostle's mind to set out the matter about which, or prize for which, we wrestle with principalities and powers to be heavenly things; 'Ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις, saith Occumenius, is as much as if the

apostle had said,<sup>45</sup> 'We wrestle not for small and trivial things, but for heavenly,' yea, for heaven itself, and our adoption, as he goes on. The same way Chrysostom carries it—in heavenly things, that is, for the heavenly things of God;<sup>46</sup> and, after him, Musculus, and other modern writers. The reasons which are given for this interpretation are weighty.

Reason First. The word elsewhere indefinitely set down, is taken for things, not places, Heb. 8:5, nay, one observes this word used almost twenty times in the New Testament, and never for any aerial place, but always for things truly heavenly and spiritual. The word, indeed, properly signifies super-celestial, and if applied to places, would signify that where the devil never came since his fall.

Reason Second. There seems no great argument to render Satan formidable by his being above us in place. It is some advantage, indeed, to men, to gain the hill, or be above their enemies in some place of strength, but none at all to spirits. But now take it of things, and then it adds weight to all the other branches of the description. We wrestle with principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness, and against all these, not for such toys and trifles as the earth affords, which are inconsiderable, whether to keep or lose, but for such as heaven holds forth, such an enemy and such a prize makes it a matter of our greatest care how to manage the combat. The word thus opened, the note will be this.

[The prize which believers wrestle for is heavenly.]

DOCTRINE. The chief prize for which we wrestle against Satan is heavenly. Or thus, Satan's main design is to spoil and plunder the Christian of all that is heavenly. Indeed, all the Christian hath, or desires as a Christian, is heavenly. The world is extrinsical, both to his being and happiness, it is a stranger to the Christian, and intermeddles not with his joy or grief. Heap all the riches and honours of the world upon a

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44. Potest homo invitus amittere temporalia non nisi volens amittere spiritualia. — Prosper.

45. Ἡμῖν πάλη οὐ περὶ μικρῶν τινῶν ἀλλ' ὑπερ τῶν ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις πρέγματων.

46. In cœlestibus, id est, pro cœlestibus Dei.

—Chrysostom.

man, they will not make him a Christian; heap them on a Christian, they will not make him a better Christian. Again, take them all away—let every bird have his feather—when stripped and naked, he will still be a Christian, and may be a better Christian. It was a notable speech of Erasmus, if spoken in earnest, and his wit were not too quick for his conscience<sup>47</sup>—he said he desired wealth and honour no more than a feeble horse doth a heavy cloak-bag. And I think every Christian in his right temper would be of his mind. Satan should do the saint little hurt, if he did bend his forces only or chiefly against his outward enjoyments. Alas, the Christian doth not value them, or himself by them; this were as if one should think to hurt a man by beating of his clothes when he hath put them off. So far as the Spirit of grace prevails in the heart of a saint, he hath put off the world in the desire of it and joy in it, so that these blows are not much felt; and therefore they are his heavenly treasures, which are the booty Satan waits for.

First. The Christian's nature is heavenly, born from above. As Christ is the Lord from heaven, so all his offspring are heavenly and holy. Now Satan's design is to debase and deflower this; it is the precious life of this new creature that he hunts for; he hath lost that beauty of holiness which once shone so gloriously on his angelical nature; and now, like a true apostate, he endeavours to ruin that in a Christian which he hath lost himself. The seeds of this war are sown in the Christian's nature. You are holy. That he cannot endure. *Miles feri faciem*, was Cæsar's speech, when to fight with the Roman citizens, he bade his soldiers 'strike at their face,' these citizens, said he, love their beauty; mar that and mar all. The soul is the face whereon God's image is stamped, holiness is the beauty of this face, which makes us indeed like God. This, Satan knows, God loves, and the saint is chary of, and therefore he labours to wound and disfigure this, that he may at once glory in the Christian's shame, and pour contempt upon God in breaking his image. And is it not worth engaging limb and life in battle against this enemy, who would rob us of that

which makes us like God himself? Have you forgot the bloody articles of peace that Nahash offered to the men of Jabesh-Gilead? no peace to be had, except they would let him thrust out their right eyes, and lay it for a reproach upon all Israel. How was this entertained, read I Sam. 11:6. The face is not so deformed that hath lost its eye, as the soul is that loseth its holiness, and no peace is to be expected at Satan's hands, except he may deprive us of this. Methinks at the thought of this, the Spirit of the Lord should come upon the Christian, and his anger be kindled much more against this cursed spirit, than Saul's, and the men of Israel's was against Nahash.

Second. The Christian's trade is heavenly, The merchandise he deals for is the growth of that heavenly country. 'Our conversation is in heaven,' Php. 3:20. Every man's conversation is suitable to his calling. He whose trade lies in the earth minds earthly things, and he whose trade is heavenly follows that close. Every man minds his own business, the apostle tells us. You may possibly find a tradesman out of his shop now and then, but he is as a fish out of the water, never in his element till he be in his calling again. Thus when the Christian is about the world, and the worldling about heavenly matters, both are men out of their way, not right girt, till they get into their employment again. Now this heavenly trade is that which Satan doth in an especial manner labour to stop. Could the Christian enjoy but a free trade with heaven a few years without molestation, he would soon grow a rich man, too rich indeed for earth. But what with losses sustained by the hands of this pirate Satan, and also the wrong he receives by the treachery of some, in his own bosom, that like unfaithful servants hold correspondence with this robber, he is kept but low in this life, and much of his gains are lost. Now the Christian's heavenly trade lies either within doors or abroad; he can be free in neither, Satan is at his heels in both.

1. Within doors. This I may call his home-trade, which is spent in secret, between God and his own soul. Here the Christian drives an unknown trade, he is at heaven, and home again richly laden in his thoughts and heavenly meditations before the world knows where he hath been. Every creature he sees is a text for his heart to raise some spiritual matter and observations from. Every sermon he

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47. *Nihilo magis ambio opes et dignitates, quàm elumbis equus gravis sarcinas.*

hears cuts him out work to make up and enlarge upon when he gets alone. Every providence is as wind to his sails, and sets his heart a moving in some heavenly action or other suitable to the occasion. One while he is wrapped up with joy in the consideration of mercy, another while melted into godly sorrow for the sense of his sins; sometimes exalting God in his praises, anon abusing himself before God for his own vileness. One while he is at the breast of the covenant, milking out the consolations of the promises; at another time working his heart into a holy awe, and fear of the threatenings. Thus the Christian walks aloft, while the base worldling is licking the dust below. One of these heavenly pearls which the Christian trades for, is more worth than the worldling gets with all his sweat and travail in his whole life. The Christian's feet stand where other men's heads are. He treads on the moon, and is clothed with the sun, he looks down on earthly men—as one from a high hill doth upon those that live in some fen or moor—and sees them buried in a fog of carnal pleasures and profits, while he breathes in a pure heavenly air, but yet not so high as to be free from all storms and tempests. Many a sad gust he hath from sin and Satan without. What else mean those sad complaints and groans, which come from the children of God—that their hearts are so dead and dull, their thoughts so roving and unfixed in duty, yea, many times so wicked and filthy, that they dare hardly tell what they are, for fear of staining their own lips, and offending the ears of others by naming them? Surely, the Christian finds it in his heart to will and desire he could meditate, pray, hear, and live after another sort than this, doth he not? yes, I durst be his surety he doth. But so long as there is a devil [who] tempts, and we continue within his walk, it will be thus, more or less. As fast as we labour to clear the spring of our hearts, he will be labouring to royle or stop it again; so that we have two works to do at once, to perform a duty, and watch him that opposeth us—trowel and sword both in our hands. They had need work hard indeed, who have others continually endeavouring to pull down, as they are labouring to rear up, the building.

2. Abroad. That part of the Christian's trade, which lies abroad, is heavenly also. Take a Christian in his relations, calling, neighbourhood; he is a heav-

only trader in all. The great business of his life is to be doing or receiving some good. That company is not for him, that will neither give nor take this. What should a merchant be, where there is no buying or selling? Every one labours, as his calling is, to seat himself where trade is quickest, and he is likeliest to have most takings. The Christian, where he may choose, takes such in relations near to himself, husband, wife, servants, as may suit with his heavenly trade, and not such as will be a pull-back to him. He falls in with the holiest persons as his dearest acquaintance; if there be a saint in the town where he lives, he will find him out, and this will be the man he will consort with. And in his conversation with these and all else, his chief work is for heaven, his heavenly principle within inclines him to it. Now, this alarms hell. What! not contented to go to heaven himself, but by his holy example, gracious speeches, sweet counsels, seasonable reproofs, will he be trading with others, and labour to carry them along with him also? This brings the lion fell and mad out of his den. Such to be sure shall find the devil in their way to oppose them. I would have come, saith Paul, but Satan hindered me. He that will vouch God, and let it appear by the tenor of his conversation that he trades for him, shall have enemies enough, if the devil can help him to such.

Third. The Christian's hopes are all heavenly; he lots not upon anything the world hath to give him. Indeed he would think himself the most miserable man of all others, if here were all he could make of his religion. No, it is heaven and eternal life that he expects; and though he be so poor as not to be able to make a will of a groat, yet he counts himself a greater heir, than if he were child to the greatest prince on earth. This inheritance he sees by faith, and can rejoice in the hope of the glory which it will bring him. The maskery and cheating glory of the great ones of this world moves him not to envy their fanciful pomp; but when on the dunghill himself, he can forget his own present sorrows, to pity them in all their bravery, knowing that within a few days the cross will be off his back, and the crowns off their heads together—their portion will be spent, when he shall be to receive all his. These things entertain him with such joy that they will not suffer him to acknowledge himself miserable, when others think him, and the devil tells

him, he is such. This, this torments the very soul of the devil, to see the Christian under sail for heaven, filled with the sweet hope of his joyful entertainment when he comes there; and therefore he raiseth what storms and tempests he can, either to hinder his arrival in that blessed port—which he most desires, and doth not wholly despair of—or at least to make it a troublesome winter voyage, such as Paul’s was, in which they suffered so much loss. And this indeed very often he obtains in such a degree, that by his violent impetuous temptations, beating long upon the Christian, he makes him throw over much precious lading of his joys and comforts; yea, sometimes he brings the soul through the stress of temptation to think of quitting the ship, while for the present all hope of being saved seems to be taken away. Thus you see what we wrestle with devils for. We come to the

[Use or Application.

A word of reproof to four sorts of persons.]

Use First. This is a word of reproof to four sorts of persons.

1. Sort. Is a word of reproof to those that are so far from wrestling against Satan for this heavenly prize, that they resist the offer of it. Instead of taking heaven by force, they keep it off by force. How long hath the Lord been crying in our streets, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand?’ how long have gospel offers rung in our ears? and yet to this day many devil-deluded souls furiously drive on towards hell, and will not be persuaded back—who refuse to be called the children of God, and choose rather the devil’s bondage, than the glorious liberty with which Christ would make them free; esteeming the pleasures of sin for a season greater treasures than the riches of heaven. It is storied of Cato, who was Cæsar’s bitter enemy, that when he saw Cæsar prevail, rather than fall into his hand and stand to his mercy, he laid violent hands on himself, which Cæsar hearing of, passionately broke out into these words, ‘O Cato, why didst thou grudge me the honour of

saving thy life?’<sup>48</sup> And do not many walk as if they grudged Christ the honour of saving their souls? What other account can ye give, sinners, of rejecting his grace? Are not heaven and happiness things desirable, and to be preferred before sin and misery? Why then do you not embrace them? Or are they the worse because they come swimming to you in the blood of Christ? O how ill must Christ take it to be thus used, when he comes on such a gracious embassy! May he not say to thee, as once he did to those officers sent to attach him, ‘Be ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves?’ If he be a thief, it is only in this, that he would steal your sins from you, and leave heaven in the room. O, for the love of God, think what you do; it is eternal life you put away from you, in doing of which, you judge yourselves unworthy of it, Acts 13:46.

2. Sort. It reproves those who are Satan’s instruments to rob souls of what is heavenly. Among thieves there are some ye call setters,<sup>49</sup> who inquire where a booty is to be had; which, when they have found, and know [that] such a one travels with a charge about him, then they employ some other to rob him, and are themselves not seen in the business. The devil is the grand setter, he observes the Christian how he walks—what place and company he frequents, what grace or heavenly treasure he carries in his bosom—which, when he hath done, he hath his instruments for the purpose to execute his design. Thus he considered the admirable graces of Job, and casts about how he might best rob him of his heavenly treasure. And who but his wife and friends must do this for him?—well knowing that his tale would receive credit from their mouths. O friends, ask your consciences whether you have not done the devil some service of this kind in your days. Possibly you have a child or servant who once looked heavenward, but your brow-beating of them scared them back, and now, may be, they are as carnal as you would have them. Or possibly thy wife, before acquainted with thee, was full of life in the ways of God, but since she hath been transplanted into thy cold soil, what by thy

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48. O Cato, cur invidisti mihi salutem tuam?

49. Setter, from the dog used for searching out game.

—Ed.

frothy speeches and unsavoury conversation, at best thy worldliness and formality, she is now both decayed in her graces and a loser in her comforts. O man, what an indictment will be brought against thee for this at God's bar? You would come off better were it for robbing one of his money and jewels, than of his grace and comforts.

3. Sort. It reproves the woeful negligence [which] most show in labouring for this heavenly prize. None but would be glad their souls might be saved at last; but where is the man or woman that makes it appear by their vigorous endeavour that they mean in earnest? What warlike preparation do they make against Satan, who lies between them and home? where are their arms? where their skill to use them, their resolution to stand to them, and conscientious care to exercise themselves daily in the use of them? Alas, this is a rarity indeed, not to be found in every house where the profession of religion is hanged out at the door. If woulding and wishing will bring them to heaven, then they may come thither; but as for this wrestling and fighting, this making religion our business, they are as far from these as at last they are like to be from heaven. They are of his mind in Tully, who in a summer's day, as he lay lazing himself on the grass, would say, 'O that this were to work!'<sup>50</sup> that I would lie here and do my day labour. Thus many melt and waste their lives in sloth, and say in their hearts, 'O that this were the way to heaven!' but will use no means to furnish themselves with grace for such an enterprise. I have read of a great prince in Germany, invaded by a more potent enemy than himself, yet from his friends and allies, who flocked in to his help, he soon had a goodly army, but had no money, as he said, to pay them; but the truth is, he was loath to part with it, for which some in discontent went away, others did not vigorously attend his business, and so he was soon beaten out of his kingdom, and his coffers, when his palace was rifled, were found thracked<sup>51</sup> with treasure. Thus he was ruined, as some sick men die because unwilling to be at cost to pay the physician. It will add to the misery

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50. O utinam hic esset laborare!

51. Thracked means properly, loaded, burdened, thence filled, packed, as here. — ED.

of damned souls, when they shall have leisure enough to consider what they have lost in losing God, to remember what means, offers, and talents they once had towards the obtaining of everlasting life, but had not a heart to use them.

4. Sort. It reproves those who make a great bustle and noise in religion, who are forward in profession—very busy to meddle with the strictest duties, as if heaven had monopolized their whole hearts; but like the eagle, when they tower highest, their prey is below, where their eye is also. Such a generation there ever was and will be—that mingle themselves with the saints of God—who pretend heaven, and have their outward garb faced and fringed, as it were, with heavenly speeches and duties, while their hearts are lined with hypocrisy—whereby they deceive others, but most of all themselves. Such may be the world's saints, but [they are] devils in Christ's account. 'Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil!' And truly of all devils, none so bad as the professing devil, the preaching, praying devil. O sirs, be plain-hearted. Religion is as tender as your eye, it will not be jested with. Remember the vengeance which fell on Belshazzar, while he caroused in the bowls of the sanctuary. Religion and the duties of it are consecrated things, not made for thee to drink thy lusts out of. God hath remarkably appeared in discovering and confounding such as have prostituted sacred things to worldly ends. Jezebel fasts and prays, the better to devour Naboth's vineyard, but was devoured by it. Absalom was as sick till he had ravished his father's crown, as his brother Amnon, till he had done the like to his sister, and to hide his treason he puts on a religious cloak, and therefore begs leave to go and pay his vow in Hebron, when he had another game in chase; and did he not fall by the hand of his hypocrisy? Of all men their judgment is endorsed with most speed, who silver over worldly or wicked enterprises with heavenly semblances. Of this gang were those concerning whom the apostle saith, 'their damnation slumbereth not,' II Peter 2:3; and those to whom God saith, 'I the Lord will answer him by myself, and I will set my face against that man, and will make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of my people; and ye shall know that I am the Lord,' Eze. 14:7,8.

[How the Christian might know whether heaven be the prize he chiefly desires.]

Use Second. Try whether they be heavenly things or earthly thou chiefly pursuest. Certainly, friends, we need not be so ignorant of our souls' state and affairs, did we oftener converse with our thoughts, and observe the haunts of our hearts. We soon can tell what dish pleaseth our palate best; and may you not tell whether heaven or earth be the most savoury meat to your souls? And if you should ask how you might know whether heaven be the prize you chiefly desire, I would put you only upon this double trial.

1. Trial. Art thou uniform in thy pursuit? Dost thou contend for heaven, and that which leads to heaven also? Earthly things God is pleased to retail—all have some, none have all; but in heavenly treasure he will not break the whole piece, and cut it into remnants. If thou wilt have heaven, thou must have Christ; if Christ, thou must like his service as well as his sacrifice. No holiness, no happiness. If God would cut off so much as would serve men's turns, he might have customers enough. Balaam himself likes one end of the piece, he would 'die like a righteous man,' though living like a wizard as he was. No, God will not deal with such peddling merchants; that man alone is for God, and God for him, who will come roundly up to God's offer, and take all off his hands. One fitly compares holiness and happiness to those two sisters, Leah and Rachel. Happiness, like Rachel, seems the fairer—even a carnal heart may fall in love with that; but holiness, like Leah, is the elder and beautiful also, though in this life it appears with some disadvantage—her eyes being bleared with tears of repentance, and her face furrowed with the works of mortification; but this is the law of that heavenly country, that the younger sister must not be bestowed before the elder. We cannot enjoy fair Rachel—heaven and happiness, except first we embrace tender-eyed Leah—holiness, with all her severe duties of repentance and mortification. Now, sirs, how like you this method? Art thou content to marry Christ and his grace; and then—serving a hard apprenticeship in temptations both of prosperity and adversity—enduring the heat of the one and the cold of the other—to wait till at last the other be given into thy

bosom?

2. Trial. If, indeed, heaven and heavenly things be the prize thou wrestlest for, thou wilt discover a heavenly deportment of heart, even in earthly things. Wherever you meet a Christian, he is going to heaven. Heaven is at the bottom of his lowest actions. Now observe thy heart in three particulars, in getting, in using, and in keeping earthly things, whether it be after a heavenly manner.

(1.) Particular. [Observe thy heart] in getting earthly things. If heaven be thy chief prize, then thou wilt be ruled by a heavenly law in the gathering of these. Take a carnal wretch, and what his heart is set on he will have, though it be by hook or crook. A lie fits Gehazi's mouth well enough, so he may fill his pockets by it. Jezebel dares [to] mock God, and murder an innocent man, for an acre or two of ground. Absalom, 'for the sake of governing,'<sup>52</sup> what will he not do? God's fence is too low to keep a graceless heart in bounds, when the game is before him; but a soul that hath heaven in its eye is ruled by heaven's law, and dares not step out of heaven's road to take up a crown, as we see in David's carriage towards Saul. Indeed, in so doing he should cross himself in his own grand design, which is the glory of God, and the happiness of his own soul in enjoying of him. Upon these very terms the servants of God have refused to be rich and great in the world, when either of these lay at stake. Moses threw his court-preferment at his heels, refusing 'to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.' Abraham scorned to be made rich by the king of Sodom, Gen. 14:23, that he might avoid the suspicion of covetousness and self-seeking; it shall not be said another day that he came to enrich himself with the spoil, more than to rescue his kinsmen. Nehemiah would not take the tax and tribute to maintain his state, when he knew they were a poor peeled people, 'because of the fear of the Lord.' Dost thou walk by this rule? wouldst thou gather no more estate or honour than thou mayest have with God's leave, and will stand with thy hopes of heaven?

(2.) Particular. [Observe thy heart] in using earthly things. Dost thou discover a heavenly spirit in using these things?

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52. regnandi causa.

(a) The saint improves his earthly things for an heavenly end. Where layest up thy treasure? dost thou bestow it on thy voluptuous paunch, thy hawks and thy hounds, or lockest thou it up in the bosom of Christ's poor members? what use makest thou of thy honour and greatness, to strengthen the hands of the godly or the wicked? And so of all thy other temporal enjoyments—a gracious heart improves them for God. When a saint prays for these things, he hath an eye to some heavenly end. If David prays for life, it is not that he may live, but live and praise God, Ps. 119:175. When he was driven from his regal throne by the rebellious arms of Absalom, see what his desire was and hope, 'The king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and shew me both it, and his habitation,' II Sam. 15:25. Mark, not 'show me my crown, my palace,' but 'the ark, the house of God.'

(b) A gracious heart pursues earthly things with a holy indifference, saving the violence and zeal of his spirit for the things of heaven. He useth the former as if he used them not—with a kind of non-attendancy; his head and his heart is taken up with higher matters, how he may please God, thrive in his grace, enjoy more intimate communion with Christ in his ordinances; in all these he spreads all his sails, plies all his oars, strains every part and power. Thus we find David upon his full speed, 'My soul presseth hard after thee,' Ps. 63. And, before the ark, we find him dancing with all his might. Now a carnal heart is clean contrary, his zeal is for the world, and his indifference in the things of God; he prays as if he did not pray, &c., he sweats in his shop, but chills and grows cold in his closet. O how hard to pulley him up to a duty of God's worship, or to get him out to an ordinance? No weather shall keep him from the market; [let it] rain, blow, or snow, he goes thither; but if the church-path be a little wet, or the air somewhat cold, it is apology enough for him if his pew be empty. When he is about any worldly business, he is as earnest at it as the idolatrous smith in hammering of his image, who, the prophet saith, 'worketh it with the strength of his arms: yea, he is hungry, and his strength faileth: he drinketh not, and is faint,' Isa. 44:12. So zealous is the muck-worm in his worldly employments, that he will pinch his carcase, and deny

himself his repast in due season, to pursue that. The kitchen there will wait on the shop; but in the worship of God, it is enough to make him sick of the sermon, and angry with the preacher, if he be kept beyond his hour. Here the sermon must give place to the kitchen. So the man for his pleasures and carnal pastime; he tells no clock at his sports, and knows not how the day goes; when night comes he is angry that it takes him off. But at any heavenly work, O how is the man punished! time now hath leaden heels he thinks. All he does at a sermon is to tell the clock, and see how the glass runs. If men were not willing to deceive themselves, surely they might know which way their heart goes, by the swift motion, or the hard tugging, and slow pace it stirs, as well as they know in a boat, whether they row against the tide, or with it.

(c) The Christian useth these things with a holy fear, lest earth should rob heaven, and his outward enjoyments prejudice his heavenly interest. He eats in fear, works in fear, rejoiceth in his abundance with fear. As Job sanctified his children by offering a sacrifice, out of a fear lest they had sinned; so the Christian is continually sanctifying his earthly enjoyments by prayer, that so he may be delivered from the snare of them.

3. Particular. [Observe thy heart] in keeping of earthly things. The same heavenly law, which the Christian went by in getting, he observes in holding, them. As he dares not say he will be rich and honourable in the world, but if God will; so neither that he will hold what he hath. He only keeps them, until his heavenly Father calls for them, that at first gave them. If God will continue them to him, and entail them on his posterity too, he blesseth God; and so he desires to do also when he takes them away. Indeed, God's meaning in the great things of the world, which sometimes he throws in upon the saints, is chiefly to give them the greater advantage of expressing their love to him, in denying them for his sake. God never intended by that strange providence, in bringing Moses to Pharaoh's court, to settle him there in worldly pomp and grandeur. A carnal heart, indeed, would have expounded providence, and interpreted it as a fair occasion put into his hands by God, to have advanced himself into the throne—which some say he might in time have done—but as an opportunity to make his faith and self-denial more

eminently conspicuous, in throwing all these at his heels, for which he hath so honourable a remembrance among the Lord's worthies, Heb. 11:24,25. And truly a gracious soul reckons he cannot make so much of his worldly interests any other way, as by offering them up for Christ's sake. However that traitor thought Mary's ointment might have been carried to a better market, yet no doubt that good woman herself was only troubled that she had not one more precious to pour on her dear Saviour's head. This makes the Christian ever to hold the sacrificing knife at the throat of his worldly enjoyments, ready to offer them up when God calls. Overboard they shall go, rather than hazard a wreck to faith or a good conscience; he sought them in the last place, and therefore he will part with them in the first. Naboth will hazard the king's anger—which at last cost him his life—rather than sell an acre or two of land which was his birthright. The Christian will expose all he hath in this world to preserve his hopes for another. Jacob, in his march towards Esau, sent his servants with his flocks before, and came himself with his wives behind; if he can save anything from his brother's rage, it shall be what he loves best: if the Christian can save anything, it shall be his soul, his interest in Christ and heaven, and then no matter if the rest go, even then he can say, not as Esau to Jacob, I have רב (rōv), a great deal, but as Jacob to him, I have כֹּל (kōl), all, all I want, all I desire, Gen. 33:9,11; as David expresseth it, 'This is all my salvation, and all my desire,' II Sam. 23:5. Now try whether thy heart be tuned to this note: Does heaven give law to thy earthly enjoyments?—wouldst thou not keep thy honour, estate, no, not life itself, to prejudice thy heavenly nature and hopes? Which wouldst thou choose, if thou couldst not keep both—a whole skin or a sound conscience? It was a strange answer, if true, which the historian saith Henry V. gave to his father, who had usurped the crown, and now dying, sent for his son, to whom he said, 'Fair son, take the crown (which stood on his pillow by his head), but God knows how I came by it.' He answered, 'I care not how you came by it; now I have it, I will keep it as long as my sword can defend it.' He that keeps earth by wrong, cannot expect heaven by right.

[An exhortation to the pursuit of  
heaven and heavenly things.]

Use Third. Is heaven and all that is heavenly that Satan seeks to hinder us of? let this provoke us the more earnestly to contend for them. Had we to do with an enemy that came only to plunder us of earthly trifles, would honours, estates, and what this world affords us stay his stomach; it might suffer a debate, in a soul that hath hopes of heaven, whether it were worth fighting to keep this lumber; but Christ and heaven sure are too precious to part withal upon any terms. 'Ask the kingdom for him also,' said Solomon to Bathsheba, when she begged Abishag for Adonijah. What can the devil leave thee worth, if he deprive thee of these? and yet, I confess, I have heard of one that wished God would let him alone, and not take him from what he had here. Vile brute! the voice of a swine and not a man, that could choose to wallow in the dung and ordure of his carnal pleasures, and wish himself for ever shut up with his swill<sup>53</sup> in the hog's coat of this dunghill earth, rather than leave these, to dwell in heaven's palace, and be admitted to no meaner pleasures than what God himself with his saints enjoy. It were even just if God gave such brutes as these a swine's face to their swinish hearts; but alas! how few then should we meet that would have the countenance of a man? the greatest part of the world—even all that are carnal and worldly—being of the same mind, though not so impudent, as that wretch, to speak what they think. The lives of men tell plain enough that they say in their hearts, it is good being here—that they wish they could build tabernacles on earth for all the mansions that are prepared in heaven. 'The transgression of the wicked,' saith in David's heart, 'that the fear of God was not before them,' Ps. 36:1; and may not the worldliness of a muck-worm say in the heart of any rational man, that heaven and heavenly excellences are not before their eyes or thoughts? O what a deep silence is there concerning these in the conversations of men! Heaven is such stranger to the most, that very few are heard to inquire the way thither, or so much as ask

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53. Swill, large draughts of liquor; drink taken in excess.  
—Ed.

the question in earnest, What shall they do to be saved? The most express no more desires of obtaining heaven, than those blessed souls now in heaven do of coming again to dwell on earth. Alas! their heads are full of other projects; they are either, as Israel, scattered over the face of the earth to gather straw, or busied in picking that straw they have gathered, labouring to get the world, or pleasing themselves with what they got. So that it is no more than needs to use some arguments to call men off the world to the pursuit of heaven, and what is heavenly.

First Argument. As for earthly things, it is not necessary that thou hast them. That is necessary which cannot be supplied per vicarium—with somewhat besides itself. Now there is no such earthly enjoyment but may be so supplied, as to make its room more desirable than its company. In heaven there shall be light and no sun, a rich feast and yet no meat; glorious robes and yet no clothes, there shall want nothing, and yet none of this worldly glory [shall] be found there. Yea, even while we are here these may be recompensed; thou mayest be under infirmities of body, and yet better than if thou hadst health. ‘The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick, the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity,’ Isa. 33:24. Thou mayest miss of worldly honour, and obtain, with those worthies of Christ, Heb. 11, a good report by faith, and that is a name that is better than [that] of the great ones of the earth; thou mayest be poor in the world, and yet rich in grace, and ‘godliness with contentment is great gain;’ in a word, if thou partest with thy temporal life, and findest an eternal, what dost thou lose by the change? But heaven and heavenly things are such as cannot be recompensed with any other. Thou hast a heavenly soul in thy bosom; lose that, and where canst thou have another? There is but one heaven; miss that, and where can you take up your lodging but in hell? One Christ that can lead you thither; reject him, and ‘there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.’ O that men would think on these things. Go, sinner, to the world, and see what it can afford you in lieu of these. May be it will offer to entertain you with its pleasures and delights. O poor reward for the loss of Christ and heaven! Is this all thou canst get? Doth Satan rob thee of heaven and happiness, and only give thee posy to smell on as thou art going to thy execution?

Will these quench hellfire, or so much as cool those flames thou art falling into? Who but those who have foregone their understandings, would take these toys and new nothings for Christ and heaven? While Satan is pleasing your fancies with these rattles and babbles, his hand is in your treasure, robbing you of that which is only necessary. It is more necessary to be saved, than to be; better not to be, than to have a being in hell.

Second Argument. Earthly things are such as it is a great uncertainty whether, with all our labour, we can have them or not. The world, though so many thousand years old, hath not learned the merchant such a method of trading, as from it he may infallibly conclude he shall at last get an estate by his trade, nor the courtier such rules of comporting himself to the humour of his prince as to assure him he shall rise. They are but few that carry away the prize in the world’s lottery; the greater number have only their labour for their pains, and a sorrowful remembrance left them of their egregious folly, to be led such a wild-goose chase after that which hath deceived them at last. But now for the heaven and the things of heaven, there is such a clear and certain rule laid down, that if we will but take the counsel of the Word we can neither mistake the way, nor in that way miscarry of the end. ‘And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God,’ Gal. 6:16. There are some indeed who run, and yet obtain not this prize; that seek, and find not; [that] knock, and find the door shut upon them; but it is because they do it either not in the right manner, or in the right season.

Some would have heaven, but if God save them he must save their sins also, for they do not mean to part with them; and how heaven can hold God and such company together, judge you. As they come in at one door, Christ and all those holy spirits with him would run out at the other. Ungrateful wretches, that will not come to this glorious feast, unless they may bring that with them which would disturb the joy of that blissful state, and offend all the guests that sit at the table with them, yea, drive God out of his own mansion-house.

A second sort would have heaven, but—like him in Ruth, chap. 4:2-4, who had a mind to his kinsman Elimelech’s land, and would have paid for the pur-

chase, but liked not to have it by marrying Ruth, and so missed of it—some seem very forward to have heaven and salvation, if their own righteousness could procure the same—all the good they do, and duties they perform, they lay up for this purchase—but at last perish, because they close not with Christ, and take not heaven in his right.

A third sort are content to have it by Christ, but their desires are so impotent and listless, that they put them upon no vigorous use of means to obtain him; and so, like the sluggard, they starve, because they will not pull their hands out of their bosom of sloth to reach their food that is before them. For the world they have mettle enough, and too much; they trudge far and near for that, and when they have run themselves out of breath, can stand and ‘pant after the dust of the earth,’ as the prophet phraseth it, *Amos 2:7*. But for Christ and obtaining interest in him, O how key-cold are they! There is a kind of cramp invades all the powers of their souls, when they should pray, hear, examine their hearts, draw out their affections in hungerings and thirstings after his grace and Spirit. It is strange to see how they [who] even now went full soop to the world, are suddenly becalmed—not a breath of wind stirring to any purpose in their souls after these things—and is it any wonder that Christ and heaven should be denied to them, that have no more mind to them?

Lastly. Some have zeal enough to have Christ and heaven, but it is when the Master of the house is risen, and hath shut to the door, and truly then they may stand long enough rapping, before any come to let them in. There is no gospel preached in another world. But as for thee, poor soul, who art persuaded to renounce thy lusts, to throw away the conceit of thy own righteousness, that thou mayest run with more speed to Christ, and art so possessed with the excellency of Christ, thy own present need of him, and [of] salvation by him, that thou pantest after him more than [after] life itself, in God’s name go and speed, be of good comfort; he calls thee by name to come unto him, that thou mayest have rest for thy soul. There is an office in the Word where thou mayest have thy soul and its eternal happiness insured to thee. Those that come to him, as he will himself in no wise cast away, so [he will] not suffer any other to pluck them away. ‘This day,’ saith Christ to Zacchaeus, ‘is sal-

vation come to this house,’ *Luke 19:9*. Salvation comes to thee, poor soul, that openest thy heart to receive Christ; thou hast eternal life already, as sure as if thou wert a glorified saint now walking in that heavenly city. O sirs, if there were a free trade proclaimed to the Indies, enough gold for all that went, and a certainty of making a safe voyage, who would stay at home? But alas, this can never be had. All this, and infinitely more, may be said for heaven; and yet how few leave their uncertain hopes of the world to trade for it? What account can be given for this, but the desperate atheism of men’s hearts? They are not yet fully persuaded whether the Scripture speaks true or not; whether they may rely upon the discovery that God makes in his Word of this new found land, and those mines of spiritual treasure there to be had, as certain. God open the eyes of the unbelieving world, as he did the prophet’s servants, that they may see these things in our hearts. By faith Moses saw him that was invisible.

Third Argument. Earthly things, when we have them, we are not sure of them. Like birds, they hop up and down, now on this hedge, and anon upon that; none can call them his own. [We may be] rich to-day, and poor to-morrow; in health when we lie down, and arrested with pangs of death before midnight; joyful parents, one while solacing ourselves with the hopes of our budding posterity, and may be, ere long, knocks one of Job’s messengers at our door to tell us they are all dead; now in honour, but who knows whether we shall not live to see that buried in scorn and reproach? The Scripture compares the multitude of people to waters—the great ones of the world sit upon these waters. As the ship floats upon the waves, so do their honours upon the breath and favour of the multitude; and how long is he like to sit that is carried upon a wave? One while they are mounted up to heaven, as David speaks of the ship, and then down again they fall into the deep. ‘We have ten parts in the king,’ say the men of Israel, *II Sam. 19:43*; and in the very next verse Sheba doth but sound a trumpet of sedition, saying, ‘We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse;’ and the wind is in another corner presently, for it is said, ‘Every man of Israel went up from after David, and followed Sheba.’ Thus was David cried up and down, and that almost in the same breath.

Unhappy man he, that hath no surer portion than what this variable world will afford him. The time of mourning for the departure of all earthly enjoyments is at hand. We shall see them, as Eglon's servants did their lord, fallen down dead before us, and weep because they are not. What folly then is it to dandle this vain world in our affections, whose joy, like the child's laughter on the mother's knee, is sure to end in a cry at last, and [to] neglect heaven and heavenly things, which endure forever? O remember Dives stirring up his pillow, and composing himself to rest!—how he was called up with the tidings of death before he was warm in this his bed of ease, which God had made for him in flames; from whence we hear him roaring in the anguish of his conscience. O soul! couldst thou get but an interest in the heavenly things we are speaking of, these would not thus slip from under thee. Heaven is a kingdom that cannot be shaken—Christ an abiding portion—his graces and comforts, sure waters that fail not, but spring up into eternal life. The quails that were food for the Israelites' lust soon ceased, but the rock that was drink to their faith followed them. This rock is Christ. Make sure of him, and he will make sure of thee; he will follow thee to thy sick-bed, and lie in thy bosom, cheering thy heart with his sweet comforts, when worldly joys lie in cold upon thee, as David's clothes on him, and [when] no warmth of comfort [is] to be got from them. When thy outward senses are locked up, that thou canst neither see the face of thy dear friends, nor hear the counsel and comfort they would give thee, then he will come, though these doors be shut, and say, 'Peace be to thee, my dear child; fear not death or devils; I stay to receive thy last breath, and have here my angels waiting, that as soon as thy soul is breathed out of thy body, they may carry and lay it in my bosom of love, where I will nourish thee with those eternal joys that my blood hath purchased, and my love prepared for thee.'

Fourth Argument. Earthly things are empty and unsatisfying. We may have too much, but never enough of them. They oft breed loathing, but never content; and indeed how should they, being so disproportionate to the vast desires of these immortal spirits that dwell in our bosoms? A spirit hath not flesh and bones, neither can it be fed with such; and what hath the world, but a few bones covered over

with some fleshly delights to give it? 'The less is blessed of the greater,' not the greater of the less. These things therefore being so far inferior to the nature of man, he must look higher if he will be blessed, even to God himself, who is the Father of spirits. God intended these things for our use, not enjoyment, and what folly is it to think we can squeeze that from them, which God never put in them? They are breasts, that, moderately drawn, yield good milk, sweet, refreshing; but, wring them too hard, and you will suck nothing but wind or blood from them. We lose what they have, by expecting to find what they have not. None find less sweetness and less and more dissatisfaction in these things, than those who strive most to please themselves with them. The cream of the creature floats atop, and he that is not content to fleet<sup>54</sup> it, but thinks by drinking a deeper draught to find yet more, goes further to speed worse, being sure by the disappointment he shall meet to pierce himself through with many sorrows. But all these fears might happily be escaped, if thou wouldst turn thy back on the creature, and face about for heaven. Labour to get Christ, and through him hopes of heaven, and thou takest the right road to content; thou shalt see it before thee, and enjoy the prospect of it as thou goest, yea, find that every step thou drawest nearer and nearer to it. O what a sweet change wouldst thou find! As a sick man coming out of an impure unwholesome climate, where he never was well, [finds] when he gets into fresh air or his native soil, so also wilt thou find a cheering of thy spirits, and a reviving [of] thy soul with unspeakable content and peace. Having once closed with Christ,

1. The guilt of all thy sins is gone, and this spoiled all thy mirth before. All your dancing of a child, when some pin pricks it, will not make it quiet or merry; well, now, that pin is taken out which robbed thee of the joy of thy life.

2. Thy nature is renewed and sanctified. And when is a man at ease, if not when he is in health? and what is holiness, but the creature restored to his right temper, in which God created him?

3. Thou becomest a child of God, and that can-

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54. Fleet, to skim the surface; thence, to skim milk.

not but please thee well, I hope, to be a son or daughter to so great a King.

4. Thou hast a right to heaven's glory, whither thou shalt ere long be conducted to take and hold possession of that thy inheritance for ever, and who can tell what that is? Nicephorus tells us of one Agbarus, a great man, that—hearing so much of Christ's fame, by reason of the miracles he wrought—sent a painter to take his picture, and that the painter when he came was not able to do it, because of the radiancy and splendour which sat on Christ's face. Whether this be true or no, I leave it; but, to be sure, there is such a brightness on the face of Christ glorified, and that happiness which in heaven saints shall have with him, as forbids us that dwell in mortal flesh to conceive of it aright, much more to express [it]. It is best going thither to be informed, and then we shall confess [that] we on earth heard not half of what we there find, yea, that our present conceptions are no more like to that vision of glory we shall there have, than the sun in the painter's table is to the sun itself in the heavens. And if all this be so, why then do you spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not, yea, for that which keeps you from that which can satisfy? Earthly things are like some trash, which doth not only not nourish, but takes away the appetite from that which

would. Heaven and heavenly things are not relished by a soul vitiated with these. Manna, though for deliciousness called angels' food, [is] yet but light bread to an Egyptian palate. But these spiritual things depend not [so] on thy opinion, O man, whoever thou art—as earthly things in a great measure do—that the value of them should rise or fall as the world's exchange doth, and as vain man is pleased to rate them. Think gold dirt, and it is so, for all the royal stamp on it. Count the swelling titles of worldly honour—that proud dust brags so in—vanity, and they are such; but have base thoughts of Christ, and he is not the worse. Slight heaven as much as you will, it will be heaven still. And when thou comest so far to thy wits, with the prodigal, as to know which is best fare, husks or bread, where best living, among hogs in the field or in thy Father's house, then thou wilt know how to judge of these heavenly things better. Till then, go and make the best market thou canst of the world, but look not to find this pearl of price—true satisfaction to thy soul—in any of the creature's shops; and were it not better to take it when thou mayest have it, than after thou hast wearied thyself in vain in following the creature, to come back with shame, and may be miss it here also, because thou wouldst not have it when it was offered?